

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LORD STREET NURSERY SCHOOL**

Allenton, Derby

LEA area: Derby

Unique reference number: 112471

Acting Headteacher: Mrs C McCrone

Lead inspector: Mrs E Linley

Dates of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 269867

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery with Early Excellence Centre  
School category: Maintained nursery  
Age range of pupils: 3 – 4  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 102

School address: Lord Street  
Allenton  
Derby  
Derbyshire  
Postcode: DE24 9AX

Telephone number: 01332 349363  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr A Howe

Date of previous inspection: January 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Lord Street Nursery School is situated in Allenton to the south side of the city of Derby and serves an area where there are high levels of unemployment. There are 102 children on roll who attend nursery on a part time basis and children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below what might be expected for their age. Nine of the children who attend the school are from minority ethnic and cultural groups and one is at an early stage of English language acquisition. The school provides an enhanced resource for up to ten children, from the local community and beyond, who have special educational needs. There are ten children within nursery who are on the register of special educational needs and four have a formal statement of special educational need. The school is an Early Excellence Centre and works effectively with 'Sure Start' to offer a wide range of community provision. Lord Street Nursery School received a School Achievement award in 2002 and in 2003 received the 'Healthy Schools' award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**Lord Street Nursery School is a highly effective and inclusive school.** As a result of very good teaching, children achieve very well. The school provides a very good curriculum that meets the needs of all its children very well. Very good leadership is provided by the acting headteacher and by other key staff. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school's commitment to inclusion is excellent.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Children achieve very well in all the areas of learning.
- Provision for special educational needs is excellent.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning and curriculum development is under developed.
- Relationships in school are excellent and support children's very good behaviour.
- The quality of care, welfare, health and safety is very good.
- Very good links are established with the community and parents, and parents are very supportive of the school.

The school has improved well overall since the last inspection. The strengths noted at that time have been maintained or improved upon and progress has also been made against the key issues. The school has worked very well to be an active and supportive organisation within the community and as an Early Excellence Centre offers high quality training to parents and shares good practice with colleagues in other settings and schools. Since the last inspection, Lord Street Nursery has received a school achievement award in 2002, and a 'Healthy Schools' award in 2003. The governing body also received fully delegated powers in April 2004. Further to full delegation, the acting headteacher has rightly identified monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education provided as a priority for action within the school development plan. The school is working very effectively in partnership with Sure Start and the local education authority as it prepares to become a Children's Centre in September 2004.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

**Children achieve very well.** Very good teaching enables children to make a very good start in nursery and they are on course to meet the goals they are expected to reach by the end of their reception year, except in their communication, language and literacy skills where standards are lower. As a result of very good teaching throughout the nursery the achievement of all children, including those who have special educational needs, is very good.

**Children's personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good overall.** The school's commitment to inclusion is excellent and this underpins the very good ethos of the school the outcome of which is apparent in the excellent relationships that exist in school, and children's very good behaviour. Attendance is very good and the majority of children arrive on time.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good and is enhanced by the very good quality of teaching that children receive.** Nonetheless the school has identified the need to improve monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in order to improve still further. Assessment is equally very good and is supported very effectively by teachers' ongoing assessment which is of a very high quality. Staff are consistently questioning children

very well to assess their understanding and to promote further learning. The school provides a very good curriculum to develop children's learning both academically and socially. The opportunities for learning are both stimulating and exciting and the provision for children who have special educational needs is excellent. The school provides a very good level of care for the emotional and physical needs of its children and works very well in partnership with parents and outside agencies; in this way the school provides a very good range of extended services. This has a direct impact on the provision because parents are provided with training and much information that enables them to become actively involved in their children's education. Links with the community are very good as are the links and partnerships with other settings, schools and colleges. Transfer arrangements for pupils moving on to the reception class in other schools are good overall. The staff are seeking to further develop the good practice that exists for children's transfer so that similar arrangements are in place with all schools that the children move on to.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the acting headteacher and key staff is very good.** The management of the school is good. Together with all staff the leaders in school have created an excellent team. School development planning is thorough and constructive and has rightly identified priorities for development, for example, with respect to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and of curriculum development. Management of special educational needs is excellent. The governance of the school is satisfactory and they ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Governors show a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The role of the governors to monitor and evaluate the quality of education provided is underdeveloped; this is because the governing body is in the early stages of its operation with fully delegated powers. The governors have, however, systematically identified and planned the steps that they need to take to develop their roles effectively.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents expressed very positive views about school. The school is valued as a significant part of the community and valued for its high quality provision and care provided for children and parents alike. During the inspection it was evident that children are also very happy in school. They enjoy the many very good opportunities and experiences that are provided for them.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- The school should improve and implement procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of education provided.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning**

Children achieve very well and most are on course to reach the goals that are expected of them by the end of their reception year except in their communication, language and literacy skills.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well in all the areas of learning.
- Good progress has been made since the time of the last inspection in children's achievement of their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their physical development.
- The needs of all children, including those with special educational needs, are met very well and so they make very good progress.

#### **Commentary**

1 When children start nursery, the majority have skills that are well below what might be expected for children of their age. However, as result of very good teaching and very good provision in all the areas of learning, children make very good progress and so achieve very well. Parents are very pleased with the progress that their children make in school.

2 The excellent level of support and encouragement and the emphasis on early intervention ensures that those pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve very well. This is because all activities are planned to interest and excite the children who are very well motivated to persist. Specific tasks are very well matched to their personalities and to their individual education plans (IEPs). Teachers and assistants support them very well in whole class, group and individual work. In this way children with special educational needs feel they are valued and encouraged to do their best, and they do.

3 Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. From the moment children start school, all staff place great importance on developing children's personal and social skills to enable them to become independent learners. The school is highly successful in this way. As a result, children demonstrate confidence; they are very well behaved and form excellent relationships with each other and with the adults who work with them. Children show very good attitudes to learning and this supports their achievement across all areas of learning.

4 Children make very good progress in their communication, language and literacy development. This is because a significant emphasis is placed on developing pupils' language skills across all areas of learning. No opportunity is missed to engage children in conversation, by asking them questions and so developing their thinking skills. More able children are beginning to develop their speech so that they answer questions in full sentences and opportunities are provided for them to develop their emerging writing skills. Many of the children with special educational needs have delayed communication skills, but expert teaching and support enables them also to achieve very well in small yet significant steps.

5 Children make very good progress in developing their mathematical skills. Again, every opportunity is used to engage children in thinking about mathematical problems across all areas of learning. As a result, children's mathematical development progresses very well and they make



links and apply their knowledge and understanding of numbers very well in other area of learning. Similarly teachers and classroom assistants reinforce children's counting skills through songs and stories. Shape and space is explored through model making and building with large and small construction equipment, and so children achieve very well.

6 Of particular note is the progress that children make in knowledge and understanding of the world. At the time of the last inspection children's confidence in using information and communication technology (ICT) was noted as an area for improvement. Children are now very confident to use different programmes on the computer and are fascinated by the programmable toy and how they can program it to move a certain number of spaces on a given line.

7 Similarly in physical development, because of improved provision since the time of the last inspection, children now achieve very well. They have regular access to outdoor provision that provides many exciting opportunities for physical development. Such opportunities are linked well to indoor provision, and children develop both fine and large movements very well.

8 Children achieve very well in their creative development. They sing with enthusiasm and enjoy playing musical instruments following the direction of their teacher to start and stop very well. They achieve well in their model making and painting and experiment and mix colours with confidence.

9 A particular feature of the school's success is its commitment to the inclusion of every child, which is excellent. As a result, all children's needs are identified early and met very well through very good support and opportunities for learning. All children are challenged very well to achieve their best. As a result, there are no significant differences evident between the achievement of boys and girls or in the achievement of those children from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language. The school's commitment to inclusion is further exemplified in its enhanced resource for special educational needs, which is also excellent, and, as a result, children with special educational needs achieve equally very well. The very good procedures for identifying the particular needs of children with special educational needs, the well-focused individual education plans, intervention and very thorough monitoring of their progress, nourishes these children and so they flourish and do as well as they can.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Children's personal development is very good. Attendance is very good. Children come to the nursery eagerly with very positive attitudes towards the interesting learning activities they expect to find and behave very well. Their spiritual, moral and social development is very good and their cultural development is good. This reflects the parents' views that their children are very happy at school and would come at the weekends if they could.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All children, including those from other cultural backgrounds and those with special educational needs are very successfully included in the life and work of the nursery.
- Children eagerly arrive, enthusiastically participate in the activities and have a strong desire to succeed.
- Children are encouraged to become independent learners – and they do so.
- The relationships between children themselves and with adults are excellent.

### **Commentary**

10 Children's very good personal development is successfully enriched by the values and beliefs embedded in the nursery's aims and carefully nurtured by all staff as they consistently

expect and set very good examples of desirable conduct and courtesy. The provision is very well planned to meet individual needs and emphasised in each of the areas of learning.

11 Children enjoy coming to school and develop both confidence and self-esteem in their learning. They try hard to meet the high expectations of staff, do their best and achieve very well, and have made very good progress to be at the levels expected of them. They are willing, and often eager, to talk about what they are doing, for example, when making the 'Pixie' programmable toy obey them.

12 The school very effectively meets the needs and includes all children to develop independence, to make friends with others and to join in games, story groups and activities. Children with severe learning difficulties are expertly and positively nurtured to do things for themselves, so that they flourish and experience the joy of success, for instance, children learn to put cards together and 'read' a sentence using pictures to say the next song they want to sing. Children with special educational needs are happy and eager to learn. They take part in activities with gusto, work hard and take great pride in their achievements.

13 Behaviour is very good. All adults cultivate an ethos of mutual respect and care for others. They share a consistent application of clear strategies for helping children to understand right and wrong and know the clear boundaries for behaviour. The relationships that are formed are excellent.

14 Their spiritual, moral and social development is very good and their cultural development is good. Children frequently experience spirituality through well-planned activities in which successful learning feeds their growing sense of self-esteem. Occasionally they experience the joy of discovery as reflected in the excitement when they found a snail shell only to realise it had a living creature living in it – proved when it showed it's horns. Children are encouraged to take responsibility and to recognise the consequences of their own and others' actions. For example, they learn how to take turns, and that other children may need specific help because their legs do not work as well as theirs do. Such activities help them to successfully understand right from wrong and improve both their moral and social development. They grow in understanding of their own culture through stories, learning about the locality and by living in a multi-cultural environment and through planned events. However, development is required to make this an integral part of the daily curriculum to enhance provision further.

## Attendance

15 Children come happily to school, they arrive with reasonable punctuality for their age and their attendance is very good. There have been no exclusions.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll
White – British	92
White – Irish	1
White – any other White background	1
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3
Black or Black British – African	1
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2
Any other ethnic group	2

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is very good. The opportunities for learning are both stimulating and exciting and the provision for children who have special educational needs is excellent. Teaching and learning is very good and so the school meets the needs of its children very well. The school also provides a very good level of care for the emotional and physical needs of its children and works very well in partnership with parents and the local community.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good and children's individual needs are met very well because ongoing assessment is also of a very high quality.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff promote excellent relationships with the children they teach and this has a significant impact on children's learning.
- Teachers plan for children to experience a wide range of stimulating and exciting activities to aid their learning very well.
- The teaching of children who have special educational needs is of a very high quality.
- Staff are constantly providing for children's language and mathematical development across all areas of learning and this contributes well to children's very good achievement.
- The staff's very good use of questioning ensures that children's understanding is assessed very well on an ongoing basis.

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 13 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	12	0	0	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

### Commentary

16 Lord Street nursery school is characterised by the excellent relationships that exist within it, between children and between all adults who work with them. The quality of these relationships have a significant impact on the very good learning that takes place throughout the time that children are in school. Teachers, nursery nurses and adult helpers foster confidence and exude enthusiasm for their work and so children respond very well to the exciting opportunities that are planned for them. Parents express very positive views about the quality of teaching and learning and are very happy with the progress that their children make.

17 The nursery is a place that is buzzing with activity and enjoyment. The activities that teachers plan are very varied and meet individual children's needs so that they sustain children's interest very well. Staff make optimum use of time in order to enhance teaching and learning. All staff demonstrate very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They form an excellent team and they work very effectively to plan for activities, or to adapt them to ensure they are meeting children's developing needs, and to assess how children are learning and what needs to happen next. An example of high quality teaching and learning is that provided for children who have special educational needs. In one excellent lesson, the teacher provided a stimulating opportunity for a child to listen to a story and to promote inquisitiveness as they investigated together where the different

monsters were hiding. The teacher's excellent use of questioning and praise were rewarded with the delight of the child as he turned the page to find more pictures. In spite of a very short concentration span, the child's learning was sustained owing to the expertise, encouragement and care of the teacher.

18 Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very well focused with detailed planning. Most support is provided within normal activities, in a group or for an individual pupil. Occasionally a small number, or one child or a small group is withdrawn for specific support for short times. Children are very well and patiently supported by staff and gain in self-esteem and confidence. This is because staff know the children extremely well and so individuals have support with for example, Makaton signing, or using cards to communicate their choice of the next song to sing. Teaching assistants gently encourage children to perform the actions themselves. As a result of such very well focused, encouraging support, children and pupils with special educational needs learn very well and make very good progress.

19 Similar high quality teaching was observed on many occasions when staff planned to further children's speaking and listening skills across the curriculum. For example, in role play a nursery nurse engaged children in very good opportunities to speak about a visit from the dental nurse due to happen later in the morning. Children took turns to sit in the chair, where they practiced brushing a large set of teeth and all the time they were encouraged to talk about what they were doing. In a high ability story group, the teacher promoted very good learning through her very high expectations of the children. She reminded them that an objective of the activity was to answer questions in full sentences and so children tried hard and answered, for example, 'The little boy is on top of the cow'. Again teachers plan to promote mathematical development very well across all areas of learning and during the inspection all staff were promoting children's understanding of positional language very well through all activities.

20 All staff are expert at asking questions. They never miss an opportunity to find out whether children understand the activity and what they feel about it and continually assess their progress. Assessment of children's progress who have special educational needs is very detailed and leads to well planned activities for the next stage of learning. The IEPs are very good. They have a good, clear format with useful headings detailing support needs from school, home and other agencies for help such as speech therapy. Targets are appropriate to the identified individual needs and are reviewed once a term with parents when new targets are agreed. This very high quality assessment, supported effectively by more formal recording of observational assessments for all children, is a key to ensuring that activities meet children's individual needs very well and that teaching and learning are consistently very good.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides its children with a very good range of learning opportunities specifically matched to their individual needs and these contribute very well to the enrichment of the curriculum. Accommodation and resources for learning are very good. There is good improvement from the last inspection as children achieve very well. ICT is now integral to the curriculum and so children are confident users.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A strong emphasis is placed on children's language and social development.
- The provision for children with special educational needs is excellent.
- The committed staff work as a team to provide a very good range of interesting and stimulating activities that interest children and ensure their very good achievement.

## **Commentary**

21 The school very carefully and thoughtfully plans work within the national guidelines to ensure children achieve very well in the prescribed areas of learning. Planning takes good account of national initiatives such as 'Healthy Schools' for which they have an external award. Emphasis on personal and language development, particularly on entry to school helps children to do as well as they can. As a result, they all achieve very well. The school offers an enhanced resource for children with special educational needs and provision for them is excellent. Extremely knowledgeable staff make every effort to ensure that these children (including those with complex and multiple needs) engage in the full curriculum, whilst meeting their very specific needs with group and individual activities. Parents of all children particularly value the staff's knowledge and commitment to cater for the needs of their children.

22 All staff share in the planning, and importantly, the extensive evaluation of the weekly curriculum. This evaluation, based on children's responses, sets out targets for individuals, including higher attaining children, as they progress along the 'Stepping Stones' towards the Early Learning Goals. Themes, such as 'People who help us' help teachers to plan interesting activities, visits and visitors which make meaningful learning links for the children. Computer programs and programmable toys are linked to all planned teaching and learning and children confidently use both. Very useful information maps are available for use in addition to suitable programmes for staff to use in each area of learning.

23 There is a very good, rich and interesting range of indoor and outdoor activities that is always available for children's selection and they enrich the curriculum very well. All staff focus on the intended learning. They do this very successfully because they know the plans and each child very well and so are able to use their undoubted expertise to give help where required, whilst always encouraging independence.

24 Children respond to the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. They are in a climate which allows them to grow and flourish, to feel good about themselves and see awe and wonder in nature, for instance when a snail shell is found that has a real snail in it, or when, using ICT, they program a toy to move and it does what they asked. They learn, however difficult it is, to take turns using equipment, to tidy up and work in small groups. They are encouraged to take care of their personal hygiene, to dress themselves and learn about healthy eating. Children learn their own heritage well through traditional stories and visits to the local environment. There is some awareness of cultures through festivals such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year, but these are one off events rather than embracing other cultures as an integral part of the planned curriculum.

25 Accommodation and resources are both very good. Relatively extensive grounds have several areas of interest and good opportunities for learning. All resources are used very well to support pupils' learning and offer extensive community and parental involvement. In respect to special educational needs, there are specific books, tapes and computer programs available that are used to very good effect to meet individual children's needs in each activity; for example, bubble tubes, computer programmes, and a variety of equipment to help them communicate. Levels of staffing are good and staff are deployed very effectively to the benefit of all the children.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school provides very effective care for its children. The provision of support, advice and monitoring is very good as it is based on thorough monitoring of individual needs and progress. Children's views are taken into account and acted on very well.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The welfare and well-being of children are paramount.
- Excellent and trusting relationships are forged with children.
- Induction arrangements are very good; children of all abilities settle quickly and happily.
- The monitoring of progress is first-rate, particularly for children who have special educational needs.
- Planned activities are reviewed and amended if necessary to match children's individual needs and preferences.

## **Commentary**

26 All pastoral care procedures show the total commitment to ensuring that all children are valued and develop as independent learners in a safe, healthy and secure environment. The site is secure both in and outdoors and there is a high level of supervision at all times. Children are taught to care for themselves and learn about personal hygiene, such as washing their hands and eating healthy snacks.

27 Parents very much appreciate the care taken to prepare children for entry to the nursery. From the beginning of a child's association with the school, very good and trusting relationships are forged with children. Information about each child is discussed with parents and carers. When children have special educational needs, great care is taken to produce beautifully presented booklets called 'passports'. These share the children's specific physical, emotional and learning needs and also list their favourite activities and their strengths. As they start school, the daily warmth of welcome, a key worker and other adults they trust, all enable children to feel secure and they blossom.

28 All staff are highly trained and well-qualified to ensure that children's interests are safeguarded and that they receive very good guidance. Child protection procedures are very good. Those caring for children with special educational needs have additional training to enable very effective, specific support, for example, in sign language. Staff know children's individual needs very well. The special educational needs co-ordinator works very closely with the teachers, assistants and parents. She has an excellent understanding and overview of special educational needs; because of this, the school has clear priorities that make the best use of provision and ensures that care, guidance and support is of an excellent standard.

29 Children are closely observed when engaged in activities and notes taken are used in discussion about progress and subsequent learning needs. In this way, a clear profile of children's progress and their growing personal, emotional and learning development is built over time. This is exemplified by the very good progress children make in personal, social and emotional development. Similarly, children's views and preferences about their activities are listened to very keenly. In response, staff will amend or change activities to ensure that they meet the developmental needs of the children but also to ensure that the activities are enjoyed as well.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

There are very good links with parents, other settings and schools. The very good links established with the community are enhanced by the very high quality extended services and support programmes that are in place.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- An excellent range of opportunities for parents, carers and very young children prepares them well for school and supports them throughout their stay.
- Strong links with the 'Sure Start' initiative enriches the school's provision for adults and children alike.
- Local schools and settings benefit from the expertise within school that is celebrated and shared.
- Children's transition to their next school are inconsistent at the current time but have been identified by the nursery staff as an area for further development.

## **Commentary**

30 The school's commitment to the provision of high quality training for parents and members of the community is greatly valued by parents and carers alike. Central to this is the effective use of the community room where parents join staff, for example, for 'coffee and chat' and learn new skills such as crocheting. Opportunities are also available to support their children's learning before they come to school through 'PEEPs' groups (Peers Early Education Partnership) for babies up to school age. Similarly the school's toy library provides children and their parents with the opportunity to try out new toys and parents see this as a very good way to support their children's learning. In this way, and through the very effective support of staff, parents and their younger children benefit.

31 Strong links with Sure Start ensure that partnership working is central to the school's achievement. Adult education courses run by Sure Start on, for example, 'Basic Numeracy Skills', provide very good training and are much appreciated by the students who attend. The position of the family outreach worker, managed by Sure Start and funded by the school as an Early Excellence Centre, is greatly valued by parents and is making a very positive difference within the community. Similarly, the teacher with responsibility for special educational needs offers a drop in session at Sure Start's 'First Steps' nursery on a regular basis for parents of children who are placed in Lord Street Nursery for enhanced special educational needs support. Such dialogue is central not only to the very positive partnership that is in place with parents but also to the school's excellent provision for special educational needs.

32 The school seeks to share its expertise with colleagues in other schools and settings. An example of this is where 'drop in sessions' are organised with the Early Years team to provide opportunities for other early years practitioners to observe and share the school's practice. Arrangements for children's transition to their next school are good overall and very good practice exists with one of the receiving schools. The staff are currently seeking to improve overall arrangements for transition to ensure that all children receive similar experiences as they move school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school is good overall. The acting headteacher's leadership is very good as is the leadership of key staff. This reflects the very positive comments of parents. Governance is satisfactory overall. There has been significant change in management and governance since the previous inspection, nonetheless the school deals very well with any identified aids and barriers to achievement.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the changes needed to become a Children's Centre and use this to help guide the direction of the school.
- All staff work as a close-knit team have a very clear vision for the school, share high aspirations and so give an excellent example to children.
- All teachers are co-ordinators and fulfil their roles very effectively.
- Leadership, management and governance together ensure that all children, including those with special and very specific educational needs are given equal opportunities to achieve as well as they can.
- Leadership and management of special educational needs is excellent.
- The School Improvement Plan is very good, clearly outlining the programme of changes to tackle, strengths to maintain and priorities for improvement.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education is underdeveloped.
- Induction procedures for staff are too informal, although plans are already in place to remedy this position.

## Commentary

33 The school is tackling the significant change in leadership, management and governance since the start of this year very well. The governing body has recently received a fully delegated budget and the school will move from being an Early Excellence Centre to become a Children's Centre in September 2004.

34 In the short time they have been established, governors are already playing an active part in the life of the school, helping to shape the direction and guide the changes as the school moves towards a Children's Centre. They are very proud of their school. Committees are set up to monitor the curriculum, finance and personnel and they are actively pursuing a planned programme of training to enable them to fulfil their duties more effectively. Statutory duties and policies are either fully or partly in place. For example the Race Relations policy has been agreed and is being monitored effectively through informal discussion with the acting headteacher. Governors have knowledge of the current school improvement plan and aim to be fully involved in its establishment and review in the near future.

35 The acting headteacher is completing her second term of secondment to the school and has very successfully ensured the seamless progression of the school aims. The very good achievement, strong family ethos, high quality relationships and very good teaching are the result of excellent teamwork, extremely high aspirations and a highly focused sense of purpose. Together, all staff show an outstanding commitment to including children with differing needs and abilities into the full curriculum. Children benefit hugely from the excellent examples set by adults and develop excellent relationships. There is no deputy headteacher. The three teachers are all leading, knowledgeable and committed professionals who are very effective in leading their areas of responsibility. The school improvement plan is thorough and comprehensive with priorities for improvement and change identified accurately, clear success criteria and carefully considered timescales and funding. The school has rightly identified within the school development plan the need to implement a more rigorous process for monitoring and evaluating the quality of education provided, in which governors and staff are equally involved, to aid school improvement further.

36 At the heart of management is a very effective self-evaluation system based on a total commitment to the analysis of the needs and progress of the children. This begins with very good use of information when children first start at the school. In this way the school is very successful in combating the very low levels of language and social skills that present barriers to learning, by emphasizing these across all the areas of learning and in very good support for parents. The management of the provision for, and support of, pupils with special educational needs is excellent. The co-ordinator works closely with the staff and parents.



37 Performance management systems are well established and as they are linked to whole school targets for improvement, they help to provide a manageable method of monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning. This in turn leads to well-matched and effective professional development. Overall, however, the regular monitoring of teaching, learning and curriculum development is underdeveloped and has been identified as a priority for action by the school. There are no written induction procedures for staff who work in this small school, however informal support is given. There is no staff handbook. Improvement of this is planned but there is no time scale for completion. Very good use is made of a range of external agencies, such as 'Sure Start' and speech therapists. This provides very good support for parents and children before they enter school and contributes to the excellent provision for those with special educational needs.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	235651	Balance from previous year	2470
Total expenditure	224815	Balance carried forward to the next	13306
Expenditure per pupil	2204		

38 The school manages its finances well. The recently trained secretary administers day-to-day matters very efficiently. Very good, appropriate use is made of different funding such as that for community support and special educational needs. The school uses specific funds to provide extra support from teaching assistants, training and such things as books, tapes, equipment and computer programs for these pupils. The governing body is yet to have formal training in financial management, however, the school applies some of the principles of best value, for example, in seeking the highest quality resources for the most competitive price. In relation to the effectiveness of provision, the very high quality of education provided and children's very good achievement, the school provides very good value for money.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

39 **Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.** Children settle very well into the nursery because of the very good routines that are in place. Children are happy and secure. Teaching and learning are very good, activities are exciting and stimulating and as a result, children achieve very well.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very clear routines are understood and enjoyed by the children who feel safe, secure and confident enough to try all the activities.
- Relationships are excellent because staff give excellent examples to children.
- Teaching has a very good emphasis on developing personal skills in all the areas of learning, as a result children learn to become independent.
- Teaching has very high expectations, is consistently very good and so children achieve very well and make rapid progress from initially very low levels of achievement.

#### **Commentary**

40 Children of all abilities achieve very well, whether they have special educational needs or are more able. Because they are very well supported to become confident, independent learners, most children are at the levels expected for their age or are well on the way to achieving the Early Learning Goals. All children behave remarkably well in this warm, supportive environment and have a strong sense of belonging.

41 A great deal of thought is given to establishing routines, providing very interesting activities and setting an excellent example for children to follow. Calm music plays in the main areas as children enter for each session. Immediately they arrive, they keenly explore the experiences on offer, because they feel secure in an environment where they understand the very clear routines and the boundaries of behaviour. They are confident, curious and eager to try new things and accept changes to routine, such as a visit from the dental nurse. They independently select easily accessible activities and often sustain concentration for long periods. A very good emphasis is placed on developing children's personal skills across all areas of learning and so teachers and support staff observe children closely and encourage them to join in and to persevere with activities. Excellent relationships underpin the success of teaching and learning in this area of learning which is consistently very good.

42 Children are very patiently encouraged to take care of their own needs, take turns, listen to each other, share and play happily with one another. Many children are vulnerable and need constant adult support and praise to achieve this. Stories, puppets and soft toys are used to very good effect to encourage children to discuss feelings, such as, happy, sad and cross. Children learn to take turns, even though they find this really hard. Using an egg timer helps them to do this independently when they use the computers. Snack times are social occasions because adults sit with children to encourage conversation and tempt children to taste different foods.

43 Children often recognise when others need help, such as when one child carefully helped another, who has difficulty walking, to move to the floor. In 'Circle Time' children with special educational needs are delighted when they recognise the sound of their name, tap themselves and shake hands with friends.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures that learning is fun and so children of all abilities achieve very well.
- Children's communication, language and literacy skills are very well developed across all areas of learning.
- Planned opportunities to meet all children's needs in specific groups for story time ensure that children achieve as well as they can.

### Commentary

44 When children start nursery many of them have very limited skills in language and communication. In addition many of the children with special educational needs who attend school for its enhanced provision, have significant learning difficulties in relation to this area of learning. Because of the children's needs, the school places great emphasis on the importance of speaking and listening and all activities are planned with this in mind. Teachers and support staff have very good knowledge of this area of learning and use very good questioning skills to encourage children to think, to develop their speech and to listen carefully. Assessments of children's needs are very comprehensive and supported well by ongoing observation. Highly effective teaching is provided, for example, on a one to one basis, for children who have profound and severe learning difficulties or who have English as an additional language. As a result of the nursery staffs' very good expertise, and learning that is purposeful and fun, children make very good progress and they achieve very well regardless of need or ability.

45 A particular feature of provision is the opportunity for children to develop their communication and language skills across all the areas of learning. No opportunity is ever missed for staff to promote children's skills in speaking and listening. For example, in sand activities children are encouraged to talk about what they are doing, what they can see and what they are planning to do next. Children are encouraged to look for print in the environment, for example, on car number plates. They use clip boards as they explore mark-making and develop their emerging writing skills, for example, one child plays at being the dentist and listens carefully and takes notes about his patient in the dentist's chair.

46 Children love to share books. They enjoy hearing stories read to them and listen to story tapes and retell stories they have heard. The nursery staff have recently grouped children for story time to ensure that children work in groups of similar abilities and this is particularly successful. For example, in a very good lesson a nursery nurse 'mesmerised' her group as she read the story of 'the Rainbow Fish'. The nursery nurse used excellent expression to bring the story to life and shared 'jewels' with the children so they could 'empathise' with how the characters in the book felt. Children's speaking and listening skills were very well developed and they achieved very well during the lesson. Similarly children who have special educational needs achieve very well in this context because of the excellent provision that they receive on a one to one basis.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for developing children's mathematical skills are integrated into activities very well across all areas of learning.

- A very good range of strategies are used by staff to encourage mathematical understanding.
- Practical activities are planned to promote children's interest and a love of learning.

## Commentary

47 The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers do not view mathematical development as an isolated experience and so they plan very well to integrate it into all areas of learning. This enhances children's enjoyment and makes the activities very worthwhile and purposeful. For example, in a planned activity for children to play on the carpet with the doll's house; they were challenged to consider where the toy 'people' were hiding in the house. Very good prompt questions encouraged children to use positional language and were key to the children's very good progress; for example, 'Is he in front', 'on top', 'below' or 'above?' Children begin to use language such as 'in', 'on' and 'under' as they thought carefully of good places to hide the people. They were encouraged to count 'how many are left?' or 'how many are there left to find?' The child who waited patiently, while others hid the toys, closed their eyes and counted accurately to three and with support on to ten.

48 At all times staff are mindful of using different strategies to enable children to learn as well as they can. This is supported by the use of very good observational assessments, which means that children's needs are very well met and activities are planned purposefully. For example, in a very good mathematical activity designed to support a child with special educational needs three other children joined in to roll the dice and call out in turn as they counted the number of spots. This small group experience supported all children's developing skills very well in addition to developing their confidence 'to have a go'.

49 The practical experiences provided to promote children's mathematical development sustain children's interest and concentration. For example, children have the opportunity to explore real materials to find out whether they are light or heavy. They use construction toys to explore and understand height and balance. Sand and water are used very well to enable children to understand the concept of full and empty and opportunities are available for children to self initiate the drawing of patterns. As a result, learning is fun and helps to ensure children's very good achievement.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because of very good teaching and well planned interesting activities.
- Teaching is carefully linked using themes to make learning meaningful.
- Children are very confident when using computers and programmable toys.

## Commentary

50 When they start in nursery, many children have had very limited experience of the world around them. Children of all ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs achieve very well, make very good progress and are achieving the levels expected of them. They have a firm foundation on which to build the later subjects of science, design and technology, ICT, geography and history. This is because all the staff plan a range of interesting activities to enable the children to explore and investigate to widen their experience with themes, such as 'People who help us', to help their learning to be linked and so more meaningful.

51 Children use all their senses in everyday activities because of a wonderful array of linked themes and experiences that are provided for them. They use natural objects with different textures to build miniature habitats for jungle animals. Resources, such as 'bubble tubes' delight them as

they watch the bubbles move and colours change. They investigate sand and know that you need wet sand to mould it and that dry sand runs through a sieve. Using magnifying lenses to observe and draw insects' helps them discover more about beetles and woodlice. Healthy snacks give children the chance to try new tastes. One child tasted a peach tentatively and declared 'I like it!' They watch carefully and re-enact the visit from the dental nurse in the 'dentists' role-play area. In these ways they begin to learn about health and hygiene.

52 Children develop fine control skills when they learn how to join boxes with tape and glue to make models of 'Humpty Dumpty' and when they work with large and small construction kits with different fixings and fastenings to make recognisable models. Children are very confident using computers. They use a mouse to click and drag on icons to make screen characters sing and dance and to burst balloons to reveal hidden animals and their sounds. The carefully mapped programs for use across the areas of learning are occasionally changed, as the children know how to select their own. They practise counting and positional language such as 'on' and 'next to' and pair animals as they carefully use arrow keys to make a programmable toy obey their instructions.

53 Very good use is made of the digital camera to record and share progress and events, such as the visit for 'leavers' to a local primary school. As they remember about people in their world, such as the police, fire and ambulance services, they use photographs and large scale maps of the local area to take vehicles on a variety of routes. Children talk about themselves, their birthdays and babies and begin to become aware of past and present events. Children gain an awareness of other cultures by, for instance, celebrating festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outdoor provision contributes very well to children's physical development.
- Children enjoy activities; they work very well together and demonstrate excellent relationships in their work and play.
- Clear guidance is offered to children to ensure their safety.

### Commentary

54 Provision in the outdoor area is very good and includes large climbing apparatus, a slide, and opportunities for ball games and dressing up. The school's good range of scooters, tricycles and other wheeled toys enables children to develop their skills of riding and keeping their balance very well. Children who have specific physical disabilities enjoy the opportunity to ride on specially designed wheeled toys. They are supported very well by the very careful attention of the nursery staff and this is another demonstration of the excellent provision that is in place for their needs.

55 When children use the wheeled toys they know that they have to keep to the track area that is reserved for this activity. They share the toys very well and wait patiently as they take turns to have a ride. Children work very well together and demonstrate the excellent relationships that exist in the nursery. The riders know the importance of 'road safety' as it is reinforced carefully by staff. They drive carefully around the one-way system and stop when they reach the zebra crossing. Such activities help support children's very good achievement.

56 Children enjoy the many different activities that are available for them to develop their physical skills. Opportunities to paint very large-scale paintings encourages large arm movements. Water play enables children to co-ordinate pouring skills and work out when to stop pouring from a jug to another container. Children's fine motor and manipulative skills are developed very well through access to opportunities to build with different materials, to use scissors, pencils, paintbrushes and use small construction equipment. The very good planning for the available range of activities ensures that all children are purposely involved and achieve very well.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's imagination and creativity are developed very well through a stimulating range of activities.
- Very good links are made to other areas of learning to aid children's learning.
- Children enjoy making music very much.

### Commentary

57 Very good provision in this area of learning ensures that children have very good opportunities to experience a wide range of creative activities. Children explore different media and develop a range of different skills. For example, children experimented with different colours as they dipped their toy 'big trucks' into paint and drove them over a large piece of paper. Working in groups of four, children created a large picture that mixed colours very well. Very good questioning by the teacher again supported language and mathematical development: 'Can you make it go backwards?' When children are engaged in 'dough' activities, teachers promote their understanding of shape very well: 'What shape would you like to make?' and 'Can you make a star shape?' Children develop their observational skills as they choose colour for a purpose, they look at similarities and differences. They interpret what they see using different media. For example, they have produced pencil drawings of insects using a magnifying glass to help them in their task. Children's very good achievement is enhanced by the effectiveness of the provision that is planned.

58 Singing and music making is an activity that children particularly enjoy. In small groups, children's needs are very well met. For example, children who have special educational needs join in to the taped music, they listen and move to the music and most children join in with the actions well. Song is an important feature of the excellent provision for children with multiple and complex learning difficulties. In a very good lesson, teachers sang the children's names and the 'how do you do' song and used Makaton sign language to help one child in particular. All children enjoy the opportunity to sing and play instruments. Instruments are available for children to select for themselves and play. In singing time, children learn to follow the teacher and play 'in time' to the music. Children's enjoyment aids their very good achievement.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*