

INSPECTION REPORT

BENSHAM GROVE NURSERY SCHOOL

Bensham, Gateshead

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108320

Headteacher: Miss Karen Little

Lead inspector: Mr Steve Bywater

Dates of inspection: 7th – 8th February 2005

Inspection number: 272037

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery
School category: Maintained
Age range of pupils: 3 - 5
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 51

School address: Sidney Grove
Bensham
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
Postcode: NE8 2XD

Telephone number: 0191 4334090
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Jean Pringle
governors:

Date of previous March 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves an urban area with a mixture of local authority housing, association and privately owned houses. The ward in which the school is situated is in the top 20 per cent of most deprived wards in England. Most houses nearby have no gardens. Many children travel to school from other wards – and transfer to 11 different primary schools after nursery. Children are normally admitted to the nursery school soon after their third birthday and most attend part-time for three terms. The nursery currently has 51 children on its roll and 34 of these attend the school. Sixteen children attend the nursery full time but only three attend full time in the school. Two pupils have special educational needs. Two children come from a home where English is not the first language. Overall children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. It includes the full range of attainment but a significant proportion have poor skills. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had only been in post for a few weeks and the children had only just transferred to this purpose built building. The school holds a Healthy Schools Award (2004) and a school achievement award (2003).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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			English as an additional language
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very inclusive and very effective school that has many strengths. It provides a high quality education for its children and they achieve very well. The very good leadership and management of the school reflect the strong commitment and expertise of the staff team and newly appointed governing body. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children achieve very well.
- The headteacher and key staff provide very good leadership.
- Teaching in all areas of learning is very good and most children are well on the way to meeting the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the time they move on.
- The school's provision for children with special educational needs is very good.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and relationships are very good.
- The school provides very good care, support and guidance for children.
- The school's partnership with parents and the community is very good.
- The school's curriculum does not have a clear long term plan.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. High standards have been maintained. A strong and effective staff team is in place. The provision for children's learning has improved from good to very good. The quality of teaching has improved; with all lessons seen being good or very good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children's achievement is very good overall. On entry to the school some children have poorly developed skills and experiences and others have skills and experiences which are well above those normally expected for their age. Overall, inspectors judge that attainment on entry is well below that expected for children's age. A significant number have limited competencies in communication, language and literacy. Their achievement in the Foundation Stage¹ is very good in all areas of learning. When they transfer to reception classes, children are well on their way to meeting the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. Children with special educational needs achieve very well.

Children's personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Attitudes to the school are very good. Children are very enthusiastic and keen to learn. They are happy and concentrate well when working either independently or as a member of a group. They are very interested and involved in all activities. Behaviour and relationships are very good. Children have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. They willingly help each other and are very sensitive to the needs of others. They are very ready to share resources and welcome other children to join their imaginative play. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good across the areas of learning. Staff have a very good command of the way in which young children learn. Very good use is made of learning resources. Children are keen to learn and apply themselves enthusiastically to their work. The high quality work of nursery nurses makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. Assessment procedures are good and enable staff to plan the next steps in children's learning. The school provides a very good range of

¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also include: knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development.

worthwhile curricular opportunities for its children but there is currently no long term plan to underpin the progressive development of knowledge skills and understanding. The provision for children with special educational needs is very good. The quality and quantity of learning resources are very good. The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils throughout the school is very good and contributes positively to the warm and welcoming ethos of the school. The school's partnership with parents and the community is very good. The partnership with other schools is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are very good. Leadership by the headteacher and other key staff is very good. Together, the headteacher, staff and governors share a very clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations to ensure that the school develops and improves. Elements such as self-evaluation, monitoring of performance data and continuing professional development of staff are very good. The impact of such high quality leadership is clear from the very good achievement by children and the high quality teaching. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are new to their roles but they are fully committed to and supportive of the school. The school provides very good value for money.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents agree that the school provides very well for their children. Parents expressed unanimous views that the school was very caring towards their children and children were happy. They value the links before children start nursery and feel this makes for a good start to school life. Children enjoy coming to school and all willingly leave their parents.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Develop a long term curriculum plan to ensure that children cover all areas of learning systematically and build on previous work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children achieve very well. By the time they transfer to reception classes, most are well on the way to achieving the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop their knowledge, skills and understanding very well.
- Children with special educational needs make very good progress.

Commentary

1 On entry to the school some children have poorly developed skills and experiences and others have skills and experiences which are well above those normally expected for their age. Overall, inspectors judge that attainment on entry is well below that expected for children's age. Most children start school with limited skills in literacy and numeracy. Their knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical and creative skills are also well below average. The school agrees with this judgement. The standards achieved over the past two school years show that a significant number of children at Bensham Grove have better than average skills and experiences when they leave the nursery. Inspection evidence bears out the school's evidence that children achieve very well across all areas of learning.

2 In their personal, social and emotional development, they achieve very well. From an early stage, children are encouraged to work and play cooperatively; this is largely successful. Older children are confident; they develop constructive relationships with each other and their teachers. They are equally happy working as part of a group or on their own. Many of them persevere with their work but will seek help when they need to. Children of all ages are inquisitive and eager to explore what the activities have to offer. Boys and girls achieve similarly in all the areas of learning. Most children achieve very well when they are working with adults individually or in small groups. Where children are working on activities they choose themselves, most achieve well.

3 In their communication, language and literacy, older four year olds talk clearly about their experiences. All children listen well and older children sustain interest for extended periods. They benefit from the strong emphasis that is given to developing talking and listening across the areas of learning. Children of all ages enjoy books. They handle them carefully and older children understand that print carries meaning. They talk about what is happening in the pictures, retell familiar stories and discuss the action of characters. Three-year-olds are developing a suitable interest in books. Children listen to stories with close attention, enjoy joining in and ask questions to help them make sense of what is happening. All children enjoy starting to write. Older four year olds show a developing use of individual letters and some simple words in their writing. Some higher attaining children make appropriate attempts at writing their own names. Younger children and those who have recently started school show a keen interest in writing. Older children handle pens and pencils correctly and with developing control. All children benefit from the rich variety of writing experiences. Children's achievement in language and literacy is very good.

4 Children's mathematical, skills, knowledge and understanding develop very well. The focused mathematics activities and the range of planned opportunities in other areas of learning are effective in consolidating and extending children's mathematical learning. Older four year olds count up to 20 accurately. They recognise most numbers up to ten and some higher attaining children add and subtract numbers between nought and five correctly. Children confidently sort, order and match objects by size, shape and colour. Children of all ages develop their mathematical understanding by testing out their ideas, for example, building towers and making patterns with construction equipment. They develop a good understanding of measures when working in the sand or water. Children with special educational needs have very good support and their

mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding are developed well through carefully stepped activities that build on their previous learning successfully.

5 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world develops very well. The rich and varied opportunities provided throughout the curriculum for children to extend what they know about where they live and the lives of others, contribute very well to their learning. The children are naturally curious and this enhances their learning because they are eager to explore and discover for themselves. Children use tape recorders appropriately; switching them on or off correctly. They manipulate the computer mouse correctly to click and drag objects on the screen.

6 Children's physical development improves very well. Although the outdoor space is currently limited, physical skills are developed successfully. Children are developing control and co-ordination. They make very good progress in understanding the need for safety and they use the space well. All children are learning to manipulate small equipment and tools, such as scissors, paintbrushes and saws, with increasing control.

7 Children's creative development builds very effectively on what has been experienced before. Children achieve very well; mainly due to the high quality provision and the very good teaching. Children of all ages explore sound, colour, shape and form across a wide range of activities. They make good use of a wide range of media to express their ideas and feelings confidently. Role-play plays a significant part in developing children's imaginations,

8 Children with special educational needs make very good progress from when they start school in all areas of experience. They benefit from the very good individual support of the teacher and nursery nurses. They take part fully in activities and their self-esteem and confidence develop well. There is no significant difference in the progress that children of differing attainments make. Their needs are met well through the careful planning of activities and the very good use of staff to support children's learning. Staff have a clear overview of the learning undertaken in the six areas of experience and any special educational needs provision is purposefully linked to this planning. They use assessment well to identify individual need and to support ongoing learning. The number of staff working within the school is higher than usual and children can readily turn to an adult for help with their learning.

9 The small numbers of children who speak English as an additional language achieve very well. They are fully included in all lessons and receive carefully planned support from staff. Other children readily help them and contribute to their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes to the school are very good. Behaviour, in and out of classrooms is very good. Personal development is very good. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Attendance is good. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are very enthusiastic and keen to learn.
- The school sets high standards for behaviour and pupils respond positively.
- Pupils' social and moral development is promoted very well.
- Children willingly share with and help to care for each other.
- Children get on very well together.

Commentary

10 The school successfully promotes a sense of belonging and pride, and there are very good relationships between children and staff. Children often talk and work together, learning to relate to others. Children's attitudes to learning are very good. They enjoy their work and show interest in all that they do. They stay on task well and do not flit from activity to activity. They sustain good

concentration, working hard and persevering until they have finished. They ask for help when they need it and happily join in discussions. They handle and use materials and equipment confidently and eagerly explore the wide range of activities on offer. They take great care with their work and show it with pride to the adults in the school.

11 Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline, behaviour and attendance are very good. There is a strong sense of moral behaviour throughout the school which is built on positive principles within an atmosphere of mutual respect. There are many stories told relating to moral dilemmas and children are encouraged to take part in sensitive discussions about sharing with and caring for others. Children are successfully taught right from wrong and what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Children are very polite and courteous towards their classmates, adults and property; observing and handling objects, such as the display of African artefacts and shells with care. Irrespective of their ethnic groups, children form very good relationships with one another. They understand the need for, and respond well to, the staff's guidance, such as the need to listen when others are speaking and taking turns.

12 Children's personal development is very good. Children select resources and equipment, such as paper, scissors and glue, for themselves and tidy them away again when they have finished their task of decorating the dolls house. They quickly, and without fuss, choose the activities they wish to take part in and organise themselves and their time in school very well.

13 These findings represent an improvement since the last inspection when attitudes, behaviour and personal development were judged to be good.

14 There are many opportunities throughout the school day for children to wonder at their world. They watch spellbound as, for example, water flows upwards from one water trough to another and changes colour as it mixes with blue colouring. They listen attentively to stories, such as 'Elmer' and 'The Rainbow Fish', promoting an understanding and appreciation for natural beauty and sensitivity to others. They listen with excitement to music. Different cultural festivals and traditions are celebrated well, such as Divali, the Chinese New Year and Pancake Day, giving children an insight into their own cultural heritage and that of others.

15 Children's attendance is good and they usually arrive at school before registration begins. Children, with a little help from their parents register themselves and the staff ensure that attendance registers are correctly marked and properly maintained. Staff follow up any unexplained absences. Most parents co-operate and inform the school of illness or other reason for absence. Parents expressed the view that because their children were happy in school they had few problems getting them to attend.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good and the school has a good curriculum. Assessment procedures are good. The school provides a high quality of care and the support and guidance for its children is very good. The school's partnership with parents and the community is very good. The partnership with other schools is good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff have a very good command of the areas of learning.
- The staff's expectations of what the children can achieve are very high.
- The staff team work very well together.

- Staff make very good use of resources and successfully capture children's interest and enjoyment.
- Staff manage children extremely well.
- Children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are taught very well.
- Assessment is effective in helping staff plan the next steps in children's learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 10 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	4	0	0	0	0

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

16 Teaching is very good and represents an improvement since the previous inspection.

17 The teacher and nursery nurses are very secure in their knowledge and understanding of how young children learn. They give clear instructions, activities are well paced and children gain new learning at a very good rate. All staff take every opportunity to engage children in talk. This successfully meets one of the main priorities to develop children's speaking and listening skills. Teachers and nursery nurses act as very good role models for children's language.

18 Children's efforts are valued and praise is given effectively to spur children on with their learning. Staff encourage children to make decisions about their work; secure in the knowledge of what the children can achieve. Children are encouraged to talk about their choices and this further extends their vocabulary. The staff's expectations of children working independently, entering into conversation and their ability to sustain interest are very high. Children rise well to these expectations and their attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are very good. Work is well matched to children's intellectual as well as personal needs and this is based upon the clear assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in what children can do, know and understand.

19 The teacher's planning provides a good balance across the areas of learning and meets the needs of individual children effectively.

20 This is done by; supporting children in groups and individually; framing questions at different levels of difficulty to extend thinking for the higher attaining; and providing a rich selection of experiences for children to observe and explore. Teachers are clear about what they want children to learn from the activities they plan. Key words to extend children's vocabulary are used well throughout lessons. This is particularly evident in well-planned and exciting activities, such as the visit of musicians, which interest and motivate children well. Staff use a good range of methods and organisations to implement their planning and to ensure that children benefit from a very good level of support. Most interactions with children are very effective, particularly in reinforcing key language skills and personal and social development.

21 The teacher works as an effective team with the nursery nurses. Each one is very clear about their roles and responsibilities and carries them out very well. Staff prepare for lessons thoroughly. Resources and equipment for activities are easily accessible and fit for the task. There is a sense of purpose to what children are doing and this develops interest and concentration. As a result, activities run smoothly and good use is made of time to extend children's learning. Staff are very aware of the backgrounds of the children. They produce interesting displays of children's work. They also make informative displays about the curriculum. This values the children's efforts.

22 Staff treat children fairly and with respect, and as a result children are very well behaved and their attitudes to learning are very positive. Praise is well directed and staff know the children well. There are very good relationships with the children and these are effective in maintaining the children's positive response. Good facial expression, use of the voice and effective resources such as puppets in story times, captures children's interest and makes learning enjoyable. This is very effective at ensuring the full involvement of the children who speak English as an additional language.

23 Teaching of children with special educational needs is very good overall. Individual learning targets are realistic and attainable. Staff encourage children to take part in all activities, and the high level of adult help readily supports them.

24 Staff make careful observations of what the children are doing. They question children to check their understanding and this also deepens children's thinking and encourages them to give extended answers. They encourage children to improve their work and invite the children to question adults, to help them make greater sense of what they are seeing or doing. Children read at home. Children are encouraged to select books to take home and this enhances the curriculum in school and extends their language effectively.

25 Procedures for assessing children's attainment are good. Assessments made when children first start school are well conceived. They provide a clear picture of the child's experiences in the home and so help the school to focus support very effectively. The children's individual profiles are very good and provide a clear view of their progress over time. They effectively identify areas for improvement. These documents are very informative for parents, teachers and the receiving school. They are clearly written which not only ensures that parents have a clear view of their child's achievements but also enables them to become involved in their child's learning.

26 Assessments are carried out systematically and used well to inform planning in the short as well as the long term. Assessments are made through careful observations of children working; evaluations of activities and of how well children coped; and evaluating how much children benefited from the experience. They provide a clear summary of achievements that is useful to direct teaching and extra support for children.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good. It is enriched by a very good range of stimulating and relevant activities. Accommodation and resources are good overall. Resources are very good and the accommodation is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of children's personal and social skills has a high priority.
- There is no long-term overview of planning.
- Provision for children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is very good because it focuses on meeting individual need.
- The nursery includes all school groups in all experiences.
- The accommodation and high quality resources support learning well.

Commentary

27 The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs and interests of all children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. It provides a very good range of rich and purposeful opportunities for children to learn across all the areas of learning and is effective in developing children's skills, knowledge and understanding. Every opportunity is taken by staff to reinforce children's language.

28 There are very good opportunities for children to discover and explore and try things for themselves. The wide range of visits out of school and visitors into school, such as musicians and fire-fighters, provide relevant and exciting opportunities for learning.

29 The provision for children's personal and social development is very good. It underpins the work of the school and contributes significantly to children's confidence and self-esteem. Activities are well planned across all the areas of learning and encourage children to be independent, use their initiative and work co-operatively in small groups. Staff treat children with respect and value their efforts. This provides very good role models for the children to copy. The children are very happy and secure in their learning.

30 Although the short-term planning and medium-term planning is very effective in providing a suitable balance across the areas of learning, long-term planning is less effective. Long-term planning currently describes the early learning goals and does not provide an overview of what

children will learn or when they will learn it. Consequently, it does not fully ensure that it will meet the needs of children in the longer term or build effectively on what has been taught before.

31 There is very good and equal access to the curriculum. Children with special educational needs are given very good access due to the well-directed support for them and the detailed knowledge staff have of their individual needs. The curriculum for these children meets their needs well and ensures they are fully involved in activities.

32 The new accommodation in a purpose built building is good and provides very well for the effective delivery of the curriculum with the exception of outdoor activities at present. The appearance is enhanced by imaginative displays of work and artefacts. Outside there will be good space for large outdoor play equipment and a grassed area, which can be used in good weather. At present, this is being landscaped so there is little outdoor space available.

33 There are very good quality resources to support the school's curriculum. The range and deployment of resources enhance children's learning successfully. Resources are relevant to the ages and interests of the children. Books and equipment, for example, dolls present gender and cultural diversity in a positive way. The condition of books, materials the children work with and equipment is of a high standard. Although there is a good range of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment, there is only one computer and this is barely adequate to ensure that children extend their computer skills appropriately. However, an interactive whiteboard has already been ordered and the school is awaiting its delivery.

Care, guidance and support

The school's procedures for the care, welfare, health and safety of the children are very good. The support and guidance given to all children is very good. The school seeks and acts on pupils' views very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know the children and their families well and are very supportive of them.
- There is very good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Arrangements for first aid and care of the children are very good.
- Child protection procedures are well established.

Commentary

34 Procedures for monitoring children's progress and personal development are very good. Staff know all the children and their families well and respond to their needs by providing effective support and guidance. Children benefit from a welcoming and caring environment in which they develop confidence and self-esteem. Staff maintain detailed assessment profiles for each child which are illustrated by photographs and samples of work; they provide a clear picture of the child's progress.

35 Children with special educational needs are given a high level of support. The attainment of all children in the nursery is checked and noted regularly as part of the school's good assessment procedures and this ensures that children's special educational needs are readily identified at an early stage.

36 Staff's management of children is unobtrusive and effective. The emphasis is placed on praising children for their work and building their self-esteem. This helps children to develop respect for themselves and others. Children respond positively and behave very well. Staff seek children's views about the things they like and dislike in the nursery. These views are carefully analysed and taken on board. Parents say that the school achieves high standards of good behaviour and the inspection findings support this view.

37 Procedures for child protection and promoting children's well being, health and safety are very good and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. Health education is promoted through activities, which aim to teach children the importance of hygiene, healthy eating and the care of their bodies. Visitors to the school teach children about road safety. There are very good health and safety procedures and all staff are aware of health and safety issues and take appropriate measures to safeguard children.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents and the community is very good. Links with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works very closely with parents.
- It provides very good quality information about children's progress, and about school life.
- Very good community links enable children to enhance their learning.

Commentary

38 Parents have a very high regard for the school. They express the view that it offers children a high standard of care and support. They believe that the school enables their children to do their best and, as a result, they achieve a good standard of work. Parents praise the welcoming environment and the willingness of staff to involve them in their child's education. The support of parents is well deserved and the school has achieved a very good partnership approach to education, which is well planned to enrich children's lives.

39 The quality of information that parents receive about the school and its curriculum is very good. Staff visit children in their homes before they begin school and parents are prepared with very useful information about the school. These provide a useful introduction to the school, which means support can be clearly focussed, for example, to support any child with special educational needs or those who speak English as an additional language. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about school activities and notice boards give parents access to a wide variety of information about the school, health education, child care and other issues. Around the classroom, notices are prominently displayed which are dedicated to explaining the curriculum and the areas of learning.

40 When children leave the school, parents are supplied with a comprehensive report about their child's achievements, which directly relate to the Early Learning Goals. Parental involvement in children's learning is good. There is an effective home reading scheme and parents are given useful information to help them support children's learning. Parents are encouraged to help in the school but few do.

41 The very good links with the community are clearly designed to enhance children's knowledge and understanding. Many children have little experience of the world outside their own homes. Activities are imaginative and well planned and involve visits to the park and local bridges, for example, and involve visitors such as a baker and the fire service. There are good links with other local schools to facilitate the smooth transfer of children into the next stage of education. The difficulty arises because children transfer to so many schools and not all of the other school's staff visit the nursery. However, the nursery takes photographs of the new classrooms and arranges visits for children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is very good. The management of the school is very good. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and staff work as a cohesive team with clarity of vision.
- Governors keep in close touch with all aspects of school life and are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The commitment to inclusion is very good.
- The school's self-evaluation is very accurate and the monitoring and evaluating of all aspects of the school is of high quality.
- School improvement planning impacts strongly on standards.
- There is a strong commitment to the professional development of staff.

Commentary

42 The headteacher has a very clear vision for the development of the school and enjoys the full support of staff and governors in realising this. She successfully promotes a strong sense of teamwork in all aspects of the school's work. There is a strong resolve to achieving the highest possible standards and overcome the barriers to learning which include low standards on entry. The school's strategic planning builds well upon its self-evaluation work and sets challenging but achievable targets for improvement. Priorities are carefully costed, and provision made from the outset for progress to be monitored and evaluated.

43 The headteacher is particularly knowledgeable and has a very good understanding of current thinking and developments in the provision for children of nursery age. She, and the staff, successfully inspire the trust and confidence of parents. The ease with which children settle at the start of each session reflects this well. The school enjoys a very good reputation in the community. Parents and carers highly value the very good commitment of the staff to inclusion and their very caring concern for needs of individuals.

44 The school benefits greatly from a number of experienced and enthusiastic governors who have quickly got down to business and successfully identified the priorities, strengths and areas to develop in their new school building. They are still new to their roles but have made a really good start in strategic planning.

45 The very good leadership of the special educational needs provision ensures that the nursery has effective procedures whereby the staff team can respond to learning needs by quickly identifying any area of particular difficulty.

46 The school has clear and effective systems in place to monitor standards and successfully tracks the attainment and achievement of children over time; analyses of the information gathered looks at the progress of different groups as well as overall trends.

47 With only the headteacher and one other teacher, there is a heavy burden to share the leadership of all areas of learning. However, the new headteacher has plans to develop the staff team and share responsibilities with nursery nurses, so actively involving them in developing aspects of the curriculum alongside teaching staff. There are effective systems in place for monitoring the quality of teaching, reflected in the increased proportions of good and very good teaching since the last inspection. The school does not have any problems in respect of the recruitment and retention of staff. Staff are effectively deployed and their workload carefully monitored.

48 Staff performance management is well established; it is successfully heralding improvements in the quality of children's learning and the standards they achieve. The school's arrangements for the continuing professional development of staff are very good; there is a good balance between personal development and the wider developmental needs of the whole school.

49 The school is highly regarded in the local educational establishments and welcomes students undertaking child-related courses at further and higher education institutions.

50 Daily routines are very well established and the school runs smoothly. Financial management is rigorous and ICT is well used to support day-to-day administration. The school actively seeks best value in all its purchases. Since full budgetary delegation in April 2004, the headteacher and governing body have been working closely with finance officers. The school currently administers its budget very well and makes very good use of the resources available. The standards achieved indicate that it provides very good value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

51 Staff share the leadership and management of all areas of learning. School guidance is clear and sets down the context well. Leadership of all areas are very well managed. All staff are fully aware of what goes on around the school and there is a clear sense of direction for each subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of activities to develop routines, good behaviour and good work habits is very effective.
- The children are happy and well settled.
- Relationships with adults and peers are very good.
- Experiences encourage interest and a positive start to learning.

Commentary

52 The provision for children's personal and social development is very good, and consequently, children achieve very well during their time in school. The oldest four year olds in school are on course to reach and in a significant number of cases exceed the expected levels by the time that they leave the school.

53 Teachers provide effective opportunities to develop children's confidence, independence and self-esteem. For example, through well chosen stories such as the 'Owl Babies' and 'Can't You Sleep Little Bear', children can face up to their fears of being separated from their mums and having a fear of the dark. As a result, children are happy and secure in the school and leave their parents willingly at the beginning of the school session. The older children in particular are confident and enjoy effective relationships with one another and the adults in the school. They talk to others with confidence and explore new activities eagerly. They work and play happily on their own, but are just as happy working with others, particularly in the role-play areas.

54 The quality of teaching is very good. The development of children's personal and social skills permeates the entire curriculum and underpins the work of the whole school. Consequently children concentrate very well and persevere with their tasks. Children seek help from adults when they need it and they are not afraid to leave their teacher to explore the activities set up in the classroom; often selecting for themselves what to do next. They are sensitive to the feelings of others and socialise well. Children wait their turn and share adults and equipment fairly, for example, when mixing the batter for pancakes. They behave very well around the school and know right from wrong. They eat snacks with very good manners, waiting patiently for others to receive their snack before beginning to eat their own.

55 Teaching meets the needs of both the youngest and oldest children. All planning documents include sections on developing children's personal and social skills, ensuring staff seize every opportunity possible to promote these effectively. Children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are supported particularly well.

Consequently, their self-esteem is enhanced and they are able to take part in all activities confidently and with a sense of success.

56 This area of learning was particularly impressive during the last inspection and the high standards have been consolidated.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures well planned, interesting activities and purposeful, enjoyable learning that enables children of all ages and abilities to achieve very well.
- Short-term planning ensures that children's skills are very well developed across all the areas of learning.
- Writing is the least well developed skill on entry and the well focused attention is a strength.

Commentary

57 Many children start nursery with language and communication skills below what can be expected for their age. The school places a high emphasis on this aspect of development. As a result, children of all ages and abilities make very good progress, achieve very well and most achieve the early learning goals by the age of five. There are a number of reasons for this achievement. Very well focused adult-led sessions; very good opportunities across all the areas of learning; linking learning through themes, such as 'patterns' and 'safari' and well structured role play make learning purposeful and enjoyable for children. The nursery environment celebrates the printed word and displays positively invite comment and discussion.

58 Skilful intervention by all staff moves learning on rapidly, encourages independence and misses no opportunity to extend and enhance skills across the different areas of learning. Children with special educational needs are very well supported and eagerly take part in small and large group sessions as well as making the most of all the on-going activities available throughout the day.

59 Group work successfully focuses on meeting the needs of different ages and abilities, allowing all to achieve their best in sessions and over time. This supports very well the learning of children who speak English as an additional language. A small group of four year olds became actively engaged and totally engrossed in the reading process following the events in the story of 'Mrs Honeypot's Hat'. A 'story sack' using a doll enlivened the story and the teacher skilfully explained new vocabulary such as 'alley cat' and 'hermit crab' without destroying the flow of the story.

60 Writing is the least well developed aspect of children's skills when they start nursery and so has a specific focus. For example, the theme of 'pattern' which allows opportunities for a range of mark-making using a wide range of tools evident when designing wall paper to select and buy in the 'DIY shop'. Large and small scale paintings and working in the 'office' all improve skills purposefully and with fun.

61 Speaking and listening are developed very well. Listening skills are outstanding for this young age. The close links with personal and social development and in particular to music-making activities enhance and accelerate learning. Children invariably listen actively and sustain concentration because they expect learning to be interesting and fun - and it is.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are frequent opportunities for children to investigate number.
- Learning resources are very good.
- Children are taught to readily use correct mathematical vocabulary.
- Children receive high quality teaching.

Commentary

62 Standards by the age of five reach levels normally expected in mathematical development and a significant number exceed them. Many children start school with poorly developed mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding. The provision for mathematical development promotes children's learning very well. This results in very good achievement for children in investigational mathematics, the recognition and use of numbers in everyday life, measures, shapes and pattern.

63 Staff provide children with a good range of opportunities to develop their mathematical skills and understanding. The role-play DIY shop gives them an understanding of buying; through this imaginative play they develop an idea of using money. They develop a suitable understanding of weight and capacity as they explore the dry and wet sand and work in the water. Four-year-olds show an understanding of ordering numbers, for example, as they work with the teacher to count plastic elephants and talk about how many are left and how many have been removed. Some older children sort plastic animals and models, for example, by colour, pattern and size. They explain the reasons why they choose these ways of sorting, clearly and confidently. Mathematical language develops well. Children match the correct number of objects to numerals up to five. A number of older children count up to 20 accurately.

64 Teachers and adults effectively focus upon key words during activities. They explain the activities well which ensures that understanding of terms, such as smaller and larger, or stripy and spotty, are consolidated well. Children with special educational needs receive effective individual support. This ensures they have access to investigations and develop their skills well. They are gaining an appropriate understanding of positional language as they place their photograph on a poster of a bus. They correctly identify 'on top', 'next to' and 'behind'. Through play in wet and dry sand and in water they are gaining an appropriate understanding of capacity and weight and how measuring is used, for example, 'full' and 'empty'. They understand tall and short as they compare a giraffe with a monkey and heavy and light and relate this to the weights of an elephant and lion cub. Children copy patterns seen in nature and from being motivated by observing the spiral patterns on shells and the patterns on animals such as zebras and giraffes. They copy recurrent patterns of shape and colour when printing with a variety of materials which they have created and by building with construction equipment. They appropriately develop their ideas of pattern by weaving wool in horizontal and vertical lines.

65 Teaching is very good. Staff are very secure in their knowledge of how young children learn. This is evident in the manner in which instructions are given and the clear explanation of mathematical terms. They are very careful to set their explanations at levels that suit the varying needs and experiences of the children. As a result, children have very good attitudes to learning. They settle very quickly to their work and are equally happy to work individually; in pairs; groups or with adults. They concentrate well either working independently or with an adult. Children's efforts are valued and staff are clear about what the children can achieve. Consequently, children respond very positively to adults, smiling, engaging them in talk and involving adults in their activities. Their relationships with each other are also very positive and children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are supported by their classmates. They share equipment and co-operate well. The staff's expectations are suitably high of what young children can do, particularly in their ability to concentrate and to sustain interest. Because of this the children's needs are met effectively and they achieve very well. Teachers' planning is clear and sets out what they want the children to learn from the activities. Small group work is effective in providing well-structured support. Praise is well directed and this proves successful in maintaining children's interests and in encouraging the children to behave well. There are effective relationships between adults and children and this promotes a secure and happy environment for learning. Children are engaged purposefully. They enjoy their success and are keen to share it with others. Older children are able to sustain their interest and engage the teacher in discussion. Younger children's inquisitiveness aids their learning well.

66 Resources are very good and entirely suitable. Staff adapt the use of these to cater for either older or younger children or those of differing attainment. Questioning is effective in

supporting children's more extended answers and developing their mathematical language. Observations of children's achievements are recorded; these are evaluative and provide a secure picture of children's achievements and progress over time.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are well-planned and linked to first-hand experiences.
- Activities are imaginative and enjoyable.
- Adult support helps children to communicate orally.

Commentary

67 Most children reach the levels expected by the time they reach statutory school age. Their observational skills are particularly well developed.

68 The quality of teaching is good and often very good, and children achieve very well during their time in school. Teachers provide opportunities for children to explore and select materials and cut, join and build using tools effectively. For example, children use saws to cut balsa wood and make boats. They build 'enclosures' in which to keep their toy animals and keep the 'safari' people safe, using construction equipment. They enjoy making food and particularly enjoyed making a birthday cake to celebrate a classmate's birthday and making pancakes to celebrate Shrove Tuesday.

69 There is a very good range of well-planned opportunities for three and four year olds to experience. Children's scientific skills are also very well developed. Children were thrilled to see the siphon effect as they poured water through a tube and watched water transfer from a lower trough to a higher one. They have planted a variety of bulbs and confidently name roots, shoots and petals. Children are aware that plants need soil, light, food and water to live and they enjoy watering them. They know that lions roar, and that fish have skin and scales and that animals move in different ways such as crawling and running. Staff use correct terminology when talking with or explaining things to children. They encourage children to use books to find things out for themselves and help them to interpret what they see, feel and hear. They prepare resources well, such as the wide variety of fruits, which are cut up by the children to be shared with the class. Staff frame their questions carefully and children think carefully and respond well to what the adult is saying.

70 Children use the computer confidently; enabling them to see the relationship between the 'mouse' movement and effect seen on the screen. Children have had very good opportunities to use a wide range of equipment. For example, they use the digital camera to photograph 'Barney Bear', photocopy their 'print' patterns and use 'Walky talkies'. Children sit happily, operate and listen to stories and music on the cassette player. In the role play shop, children thrill at using the 'card scanner' which helps to remind children of the every day uses of ICT. Outdoors, children are excited to use the remote controlled cars. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when children's computer skills in particular were underdeveloped.

71 Specific features of their world are promoted well. For example, staff have prepared very good displays which encourage an understanding of other cultures, such as Ndebele artwork. Children are aware that there are festivals such as Divali and the Chinese New Year which are celebrated by people of other cultures. Children have visits out of school, to, for example, the new Tyne Bridge and visitors, such as fire-fighters enhance children's learning very effectively.

72 Because of the good teaching and excellent opportunities they are given, children soon become more confident at finding things out for themselves through observation and exploration. They are well motivated and consequently have very good attitudes to learning. They are naturally

curious and inquisitive and this helps them in their work. Children know that smoking can make people ill. They make touching references to members of their family who cough and have a sore throat because of the habit.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outdoor play is currently restricted.
- Staff provide a very good range of classroom activities to help children develop their handling and manipulative skills.
- Very good teaching ensures that the needs of the children are being met well.
- There is a good blend of direct teaching and support for independent learning.

Commentary

73 Since the last inspection, the provision for outdoor play has deteriorated because the space created on the new site for this area of learning still needs landscaping. This outdoor space is very limited but this is a short-term issue because this purpose built building has very good outdoor accommodation planned. Despite the lack of space, staff have worked hard to provide sufficient activities to ensure the needs of the children are being met very well.

74 Most children start school with limited skills, for example, in climbing, balancing and using small equipment such as pencils and tools. Four year olds attain the Early Learning Goals in physical development by their fifth birthday. They achieve very well overall. Older children move confidently on the slide and show increasing control and co-ordination of their movements as they pedal the wheeled toys around the limited outdoor space. All children treat equipment sensibly and make good use of the outdoor area to crawl through a tunnel and climb and slide whilst showing a suitable sense of safety.

75 Teaching is very good. The staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They take every opportunity to extend children's language through role-play and action rhymes or songs. Their expectations of children are suitably high, they expect children to co-operate and play effectively together. In the physical education lessons that take place inside, children explain that a warm up is needed because 'your muscles are cold'. Staff ensure that children make the best use of space and children respond well to the teaching. There is a very good level of independence and children enjoy moving different parts of their body and managing to move without bumping. The participation by the teacher and other helpers encourages children who are a little self-conscious and this raises children's confidence. Children develop a wide vocabulary related to movement and the items they use. This is due to the strong emphasis on key words that staff use.

76 Staff have very good relationships with children. They are sensitive to the varying needs and development of the children. They are skilful in redirecting children's interest and this ensures that children gain from the activity and their time is used well. Resources are easily accessible and time is used well to allow children to try out ideas and for staff to work with children to develop understanding. On-going observations are evaluative and record children's achievements effectively as well as identifying areas for improvement.

77 Children have very good attitudes towards the activities to promote their physical development. They co-operate and behave very well; showing a great deal of interest in what they are doing.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision and children's development in music is outstanding.
- Imagination, creativity and independent learning are valued and respected across the areas of learning.
- Well planned opportunities and well organised materials, linked to themes are available for children to select throughout the day.
- Very good use of visiting musicians enhances learning and development and ensures that all children make very good progress and achieve very well.

Commentary

78 Children have very good opportunities to gain from experiencing a wide range of creative activities. Teaching staff value such activities and link them in meaningful ways so that children find them enjoyable and purposeful. Skilful support encourages independence and enhances learning without doing it for them. Because of this, children make very good progress and achieve very well to attain the early learning goals. In music, the majority have already attained these, and those with special educational needs are exceeding the expectations for their age.

79 There are many opportunities to explore and use colour, texture, shape, form and space in large and small scale and in two and three dimensions. For example, within the theme of 'pattern', the colour blue, printing, wallpaper designs using line and pattern, mathematical development using 'Elmer the Elephant', were all available. Children paint well with large and small brushes and large rollers with water when developing individual and group paintings.

80 Children use their imaginative language with relish when involved in role play such as the home corner and building 'safari parks' acting out their growing knowledge and experiences using all the senses to express their ideas.

81 Music is special here. The class teacher is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and with the other staff ensures an abundance of instruments and opportunities for development, which also has a significant impact on children's listening skills. Visiting musicians from the Local Education Authority and from SAGE Gateshead Music Centre make an impressive contribution. In one such session the full group took part for around an hour in a highly successful session, which had excellent pace and variety. They learned about the guitar, the flute, the names and how to shake, scrape and tap a large variety of un-tuned percussion instruments. They learned the dynamics of soft and loud, the pitch of higher and lower, sang in tune, moved to music and played together keeping a steady beat. One three year old summed up the judgement admirably - 'that was fantastic'.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
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	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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