

INSPECTION REPORT

SLOUGH CENTRE NURSERY

Slough

LEA area: Slough

Unique reference number: 109760

Headteacher: Mrs D. Lister

Lead inspector: Mrs S. M. Barnes

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th February 2005

Inspection number: 272963

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 children: 3-5
Gender of children: Mixed
Number on roll: 129

School address: Buckingham Avenue East
Slough
Berkshire
Postcode: SL1 3EA

Telephone number: 01753 521975
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Mrs J. Badger-Sakal
governors:

Date of previous 10th May 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Slough and is part of an Early Years Centre. One hundred and twenty-nine boys and girls attend for two to five terms between the ages of three and five. Some children attend on a part-time basis, either in the morning or in the afternoon, and some for the whole day. The children come from a very mixed range of backgrounds, some living nearby and others who travel a considerable distance to get to school. Forty children speak English as an additional language. Many of these are at an early stage of learning English. The main languages spoken by these children at home are Punjabi and Urdu. Twelve children are on the school's special educational needs register and of these two children have a statement of their need. The special needs of these children include moderate learning, social, emotional and behavioural, multi sensory impairment and speech and physical and communication difficulties. The children's attainment when they join the nursery is below the nationally expected level for their ages overall. It is well below in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. The school is involved in the Healthy Schools initiative and has been awarded with Investors in People and the *Gold smiling for life* award. Sessions are planned by teachers and also by nursery nurses. One person who takes overall responsibility for the planning at that time leads each session. All children have a *key worker* who is responsible for keeping up to date records of their progress throughout their time in school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| 16249 | Sheelagh Barnes | Lead inspector | Provision for special educational needs, provision for children with English as an additional language, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative development |
| 9173 | Sarah McDermott | Lay inspector | |
| 22434 | Sandra Bradshaw | Team inspector | Knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, personal, social and emotional development |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school that provides a **good** quality of education for all children. Overall, the children's achievement is good and their attainment when they leave school is at the level expected for their age. Teaching and learning are good and the provision for children with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. The school is well led and managed and gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- The ethos of the school is very good and children have very good attitudes and behave very well as a result.
- Leadership of the school is strongly committed to inclusion and children from diverse backgrounds and with a wide range of ability are integrated well.
- Procedures to ensure that children are well looked after and kept safe are very good and systems for the induction of new children are excellent.
- Assessment is very thorough and information provided for parents about their children is excellent.
- The school does not yet have simple systems to analyse data and evaluate progress of groups.
- Lesson planning is good. However, session leaders do not monitor during lessons that all adults follow these plans exactly when they are working with small groups of children.
- Provision for children with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs is good. Provision for children with special educational needs of a profound nature is very good.
- Mid-day supervision is satisfactory, but does not match the quality of provision of the rest of the day.
- Systems to monitor attendance and punctuality are cumbersome and some parents still do not fully appreciate the importance of trying to arrive on time.

There has been good improvement overall since the time of the last inspection. There are good policies and guidelines in place for all areas of the curriculum. Planning is good and assessment is used well by key workers to monitor the progress of each child. All children, including older and more able, are challenged in the tasks they are set. Supervision in the garden area is good. While attendance is now satisfactory, punctuality is still not good enough. Provision for children's care, welfare, health and safety has also improved and is now very good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The achievement of children of all ages and abilities is **good** and by the time they leave school their attainment is at the expected level for their age in all areas of learning.

When the children join the nursery, their attainment is varied and, taken overall, is lower than expected for their ages. It is much lower in communication, language and literacy, where a high percentage of children have English as an additional language, and in personal, social and emotional development. Children achieve well in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. In personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy their achievement is very good. By the time children leave school they are likely to attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of their nursery education in all six areas of the curriculum for young children. Children with English as an additional language are well supported and achieve well. Children with special educational needs

achieve well and those with special educational needs of a profound nature achieve very well due to the very good quality of support they are given.

Provision for children's moral, social and cultural development is **very good** and for their spiritual development it is good. The children have very positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is very good. Attendance is satisfactory. The school has satisfactory systems for ensuring that children attend on a regular basis, and absences are almost always because of illness, but it gives an insufficiently clear message to parents of the importance of attending punctually.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides children with a **good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is good overall. The assessment of the progress and attainment of individual children is good. It is very detailed and thorough. It is the result of an extremely large amount of work by all staff and is highly appreciated by parents, who can read and contribute to it at any time and take it when their child leaves school. However, while key workers know the children in their care very well, there are no simple systems in place to analyse the data produced by assessment and to monitor the progress of individuals and groups over time. The curriculum is good overall as a result of high levels of expertise of all staff and provides a wide range of exciting and interesting activities to develop children's skill and knowledge in all six areas of learning for young children. Planning is good but group leaders do not always monitor during sessions to ensure that other adults have interpreted the tasks they have planned exactly. Provision at lunchtime is satisfactory and takes full regard for children's health and well-being, but some opportunities to develop children's social and cultural skills at that time are missed. The provision for children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good overall and provision for children with special educational needs of a profound nature is very good. The school provides a good range of activities to enrich the curriculum. The accommodation is good. The school has a good range of resources which all staff use very effectively. The school provides very good levels of care, support and guidance. Partnership with parents is very good and there are exceptionally high levels of parental satisfaction. Procedures for induction of children into school and information provided for parents are excellent. Links with other schools and the community are very good. The school takes full regard of the needs of parents and families with young children and is sympathetic, for example, when parents who travel long distances are late. However, there are no easy systems in place to monitor attendance and lateness and parents are not all sufficiently aware of the importance of trying to bring their children on time.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are **good** overall. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are good. Governance is good. The governing body effectively fulfils its leadership role. Governors are regular visitors to the school and ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive opinions of the school. They are very pleased with the efforts staff make to ensure that all children are happy and secure in their learning. They appreciate being made to feel included in charting the progress their children make. Children enjoy coming to school and quickly learn to settle and take a full part in all activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- refine assessment and analysis procedures to provide simple information to monitor the progress of individual children and groups; *
- ensure leaders consistently monitor all aspects of teaching in their group so that children all receive what has been planned and variations in interpretation are known and taken into consideration when planning future work;
- ensure provision for children who stay at lunchtime matches the good standard of the rest of the day; *
- establish simple systems to monitor punctuality and attendance and to continue to highlight for parents and carers when they are not making full use of the placement for their child.*

(* These have been highlighted by the school, as areas for improvement, in the school development plan.)

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN

Standards achieved in areas of learning

Children's achievements are **good** overall and they are likely to attain the expected levels for their age in all areas of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development.
- Children with special educational needs achieve well and those with needs of a profound nature achieve very well due to the very good support they are given.
- Achievement of children with English as an additional language and those from different minority ethnic groups is good.

Commentary

1. Children enter nursery school with levels of attainment that overall are below those expected for their age. This is broadly similar to the judgements of the previous inspection. However, currently standards in communication, language and literacy and personal and emotional development are generally well below those expected when children start school. About one- third of the children speak English as an additional language and many of these start nursery school with very few words of English. These children are well supported by all staff, many of whom speak a number of community languages and all of whom also communicate using a simple form of sign language. Children attend for between two and five terms until they move on to a range of other schools and early years settings. Most children attend for either the morning or the afternoon, but a small number attend for the whole day and stay to lunch. All of these groups make good gains in their learning during their time in school.
2. There are no standardised assessments for children of nursery school age, but inspection evidence shows that their achievement is good and that they make good progress overall. In communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development, children's skills are developed extremely well, achievements are very good and standards are likely to be in line with those expected by the time they leave. In mathematical, creative and physical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world children's achievements are good and they are likely to attain the standards expected by the time they finish the Foundation Stage. This indicates a good maintenance of standards since the previous inspection, when children were judged to be making good progress in most areas. However, at that time progress in physical development was only satisfactory.
3. Currently, all children achieve well and make good overall progress, due to the good teaching and well-structured curriculum. Children with special educational needs make good progress commensurate with their age and ability in all aspects of learning and their achievements are good. Those with special educational needs of a profound nature achieve very well due to the high quality of the support they are given. Children with English as an additional language make good progress in their learning and achieve well.

Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children's attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** overall. The attendance of the children is **satisfactory**, but punctuality is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of children have very positive attitudes and enjoy learning.
- The behaviour of most children in and around the school is very good.
- Provision for children's moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Many children arrive late and miss the important time for greeting and settling in.
- Provision at lunchtime does not match the good quality of the rest of the day.

Commentary

4. Children enjoy coming to nursery school and most try hard to do their best. In the classroom they try to listen carefully to the teacher and nursery nurses and they work happily together, sharing resources sensibly. Very good relationships exist between children and with all adults involved with teaching. The home-base and key worker systems enable children to feel secure when working in small groups or moving around the classes independently. Teachers and nursery nurses have high expectations of children's behaviour and most children respond well to these clear expectations. These high standards are major strengths of the school and have been maintained since the previous inspection.
5. Children behave very well. They sit comfortably together and all, including those with special educational needs and those children whose mother tongue is not English, are keen to listen and respond. New children settle quickly, responding well to the established routines and very good communication systems. Children are keen to take responsibility by giving out fruit or helping to tidy up after an activity. There have been no exclusions.
6. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. It is very good for moral, social and cultural development and for spiritual development it is good. There is a good emphasis on developing spirituality and children are given time to think about the work they are creating. For example, when using paint rollers children were amazed at the marks and patterns they made. Children know right from wrong and they respond positively to the high expectations the staff have of them. The very good standards of social development can be seen in most lessons as children work in groups sharing equipment and resources and chatting together. Children's cultural development is also very good. They learn about the traditions and celebrations of many other cultures and benefit from the many sensitive displays around the school. Provision at lunchtime is satisfactory and takes full regard of children's health and well-being, but some opportunities to develop children's social and cultural skills at that time are missed. For example, fostering children's self-help skills in eating their food.
7. Most parents bring their children to school regularly and make the most of their valuable nursery school place. However, there are a significant minority of parents who keep their children off school for slight reasons or to spend lengthy periods abroad. The school maintains satisfactory registers. Nevertheless, there is no routine calculation of attendance figures and insufficient analysis of trends in absence to enable the school to work methodically to improve attendance. The children who attend school regularly gain well from the good teaching and achieve well.

8. Many parents bring their children to school late. Consequently, these children miss out on the sociable and calming routines at the beginning of their session. Parents who live far away or who need to deliver older siblings to other schools often are affected by traffic delays beyond their control. However, some other parents merely lack a sense of urgency in getting their children to school on time. Quite rightly the staff are always very welcoming to children whatever time they turn up or however long they have been away. However, attendance and punctuality has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|------|----------------------|-----|
| School data: | 16.6 | School data: | 1.3 |

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education for all children. Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment overall is **good**. The curriculum is **good** overall. **Good** use is made of visiting speakers and visits to enrich the children's learning. The accommodation and resources are good overall. The school provides **very good** levels of care, welfare, health and safety and support, advice and guidance. Links with parents, the community and other schools are **very good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Assessment overall is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and nursery nurses make very good use of the good resources the school has to make learning interesting and exciting.
- Assessment is very detailed and accurate for individuals, but its format makes it difficult to analyse and track the progress of individuals and groups.
- Adults make good use of a range of different languages, including sign language, to ensure all children are happy and know what it is they are required to do.
- Teachers and support staff are very caring of all children and ensure they all have equal access to activities.
- Session leaders do not always monitor the work of all groups to ensure the sessions go exactly as planned.
- All staff have high expectations of children's behaviour.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 3 | 18 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

9. The quality of teaching is good overall. This indicates maintenance of the good standard noted at the time of the previous inspection. All adults know the children well and teaching sessions are planned with good regard to the individual needs of all children. As a result, boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment and from all ethnic groups make good gains in their learning. During the current inspection none of the teaching was unsatisfactory and the great majority was at least good, with some very good teaching observed. Teaching of skills of communication, language and literacy and personal and social development are very good overall.

10. Staff all plan very effectively for all aspects of the curriculum for young children. They ensure that all children have equal access to the range of activities planned at a level appropriate to their needs. For example, when tossing *pancakes* those who required it were given suitable adult support and encouragement until they succeeded. Learning activities have clear objectives and staff make very good use of resources such as puppets, models and toys to make learning interesting and exciting. As a result, children respond readily to the challenges of the tasks they are set. The good relationships between staff and children, combined with consistent routines and high expectations of children, including their behaviour, result in them being happy, well adjusted and confident. Children trust their teachers, concentrate well and sustain their interest in work for quite long periods because the sessions are interesting and enjoyable.
11. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the children and of the curriculum. They give children good opportunities to use their initiative and to work within clear boundaries. They provide many good opportunities for children to question and explore, within a safe setting, to look for patterns and deeper understanding in the world around them, for example making hypotheses about whether an object will float or sink in water. Children in the nursery are involved in their work and keep on trying, and are persistent in their efforts to succeed. For example, children persisted with the task when learning to use a mouse on the computer to find a safe path for a penguin to cross the ice. Children know that all staff will listen to them and as a result of this good example their interactions with others are positive and they respond well to new experiences.
12. Teaching of children with English as an additional language is good and they are given good levels of support. This is particularly the case for those children who speak Urdu and Punjabi who frequently have translations in their first language that enable them to extend their learning and to take a full part in their play with other children. Adults who work in the nursery have made a point of learning simple phrases and also regularly make use of an internationally recognised simple form of sign language and, as a result, all children make good overall progress in their learning. Children with special educational needs are supported well and their key workers assess and monitor their progress carefully to ensure that they too make good progress. Children with special educational needs of a profound nature are given very good, considerate support and as a result they achieve very well in line with their abilities.
13. There are good systems in place for assessing children's work in all areas of learning and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Teachers begin their assessment of children when they make home visits prior to them starting in the nursery. Staff all continue to assess all aspects of children's work in school and this information is successfully transferred to the child's individual *Record of Achievement*. This is a very detailed and comprehensive document that is valued greatly by parents when children leave the school. Assessment of children's individual achievements becomes more specific as children become *focus children* twice each academic year. Individual curriculum plans are created and monitored by all staff. The school is very successful at gathering a very large amount of assessment information although this is often duplicated. However, analysis of this data is in the very early stages and does not provide staff with the detail of trends in performance to fully inform planning. Neither does it provide simple information of achievement over time. Although this information can be retrieved, it is a lengthy process. Staff discuss the success of planned activities in the classroom informally and formally each day and weekly, but there are occasions when the monitoring of activities during the session is weak and the leader is unaware of the success of all activities for all children or whether her planning has been carried out exactly.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** overall. There is **good** provision for extending and enriching the curriculum. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality and range of learning opportunities are good.
- The school prepares children very well for the next stage of education in primary school.
- Very good use is made of the well-qualified support staff.
- The accommodation and resources are used very well to support children's learning.
- The outside area is very well organised as a stimulating learning area.
- There is good provision for children outside the school day.

Commentary

14. The curriculum for children in the nursery is suitably planned to ensure all six areas of learning are covered well. Staff provide children with a broad range of relevant challenging experiences which promote good progress and achievement. Weaknesses identified in the previous report have been addressed and there is now a satisfactory balance between direct teaching and structured planned activities that the children choose for themselves.
15. Children benefit from the richness of their multi-cultural education, learning about various religious festivals and traditions. This promotes their spiritual, social, emotional and cultural development and knowledge and understanding of the world very well. Children are well prepared for the next stage of education.
16. There is a very good match of support staff to the curriculum and to the needs of children. Nursery nurses are well qualified and offer very good support in the planning and teaching of the curriculum. Staff who are fluent in more than one language provide direct support, such as bilingual stories and help in various languages. For example, whilst the teacher told the story of *Mr Pancake Man* a member of staff was able to tell the story in Punjabi, supporting the understanding of all the children in the group.
17. The accommodation and resources are good and used very effectively. Children benefit from the security of their home-base and the opportunities provided to explore activities in all the other areas. The outdoor garden area is very well used. This enclosed area is set up with stimulating resources to extend learning in all areas. The veranda area facilitates the use of construction toys and there is a large sandpit that provides very good opportunities for experimentation. A small play-house provides imaginative play opportunities, such as a *Chinese restaurant*. The school has worked effectively since the last inspection to improve the school environment and, in particular, this outside-play area. The installation of shutters to the veranda now allows children to use sand, water and wheeled equipment even in inclement weather. The outside area is used extensively for learning and play because it has been planned imaginatively and has a wide range of stimulating equipment. Inside, the classrooms are spacious and light, providing plenty of opportunity for children to move around freely, gain in independence and choose their own activity. Children's work is positively celebrated in the wall displays, bringing a vibrancy and colour to the nursery.
18. The school's provision of a breakfast club and an after-school tea club as well as a holiday club supports the curriculum for some children. These clubs are run by school staff who continue the very good level of care that is evident during the school day.

19. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, which judged the curriculum to be satisfactory overall.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare, health and safety of the children are **very good**. The provision of support, advice and guidance is **very good**. The school involves children very well in their learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very well organised systems to ensure children are safe and sound.
- Staff are very alert to the particular needs of each child.
- Children new to the school are settled in particularly effectively and very soon are able to cope with the routines of the day.
- Children have a very important say in their learning and know their views are valued.

Commentary

20. Children are very well looked after at Slough Centre Nursery. Health and safety procedures are very good and routine checks are meticulously recorded. The headteacher and governors ensure that all activities and outings are carefully assessed for risks and any potential hazards are removed. Child protection is very effective with all staff up to date with the required training. First aid systems are very well organised with an especially good number of staff competent and qualified to deal with accidents. Children with particular medical needs are given careful attention, even to the extent of staff undergoing special training to learn about a specific treatment. The school is a very worthy recipient of the bronze Healthy Schools Award and is working towards the silver award. It has very effectively included staff, families and children in recognising the importance of safe practices and a healthy lifestyle, as well as learning how to cope with emergencies and traumas.
21. The happiness and achievement of each pupil are paramount. All staff know the children well and can tell as soon as a child is not enjoying life or doing as well as expected. A particular strength is the role of the key worker. A special bond is formed between the key worker, parents and the child because of a consistent link and close communication. Although some families speak little English or have domestic troubles, they know that any concern will be dealt with sensitively, confidentially and for the good of the children's well-being. At lunch-time, the dinner supervisors are competent in ensuring that the children eat sensibly and play safely. However, a few of these supervisors do not make the most of all opportunities to extend the personal, social and language learning of the children to complement the provision of the rest of the day. The school supports children who have significant special educational needs very well by providing well-matched resources and activities.
22. Systems to settle new children and families into the routines of a school day are excellent. Right from the start the nursery school is a very welcoming place. Often new children are quickly at ease with their surroundings because they have attended the Parent and Toddler Group or come with their parents to one of the many open days or induction sessions preceding their start. Home visits by the allotted key worker mean that each child can confidently recognise a familiar face on their first day. A very well organised system of staggered start dates allows each child to have a special day of support and assistance as the only new child. The outstanding induction procedures lead to children achieving especially well in their personal and social development from day one.
23. The school involves children very well in their learning and in daily routines. The week allocated to each child to focus on their specific progress and achievement draws very effectively on the child's own feelings, their likes and their dislikes. There are plenty of chances for children to give their views and listen to others, whether informally or in organised group sessions. Around the classrooms and outside children are encouraged to have small jobs to help the school run smoothly and to learn to look after others. Each child's *Record of Achievement* is a lively and colourful testimony to their full participation in school life. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, which judged care and welfare to be good overall but with significant weaknesses in some aspects.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with parents. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are also **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is extremely welcoming and provides an excellent array of information and services to parents.
- Some parents find it difficult to contribute effectively to their children's learning.
- The school makes very good use of the local Slough area to extend the children's experiences.
- The school works very well with other nursery schools to increase professional development and to share expertise.

Commentary

24. The school has maintained its very strong commitment to working with families for the good of the children's care and education. It continues to provide extensive good quality support and information to parents. The school rightly looks upon close communication between home and school as a major contribution to effective support for the children. The key workers play a very effective pivotal role in linking home with school. The headteacher and her staff keep parents well up to date with what the children are learning. Of particular note is the transfer of the *Record of Achievement* from school to home at the end of each child's time in the nursery so that parents can share in the celebration of their children's accomplishments. A very good range of extended services, such as the breakfast, tea and holiday clubs and the adult education classes, help working parents and those looking to improve parenting skills. The school values the views of parents and regularly surveys them to check decisions are taken with the support of these important stakeholders.
25. Parents are very appreciative of everything that the school does for them and their children. Many travel a considerable distance to ferry children to the school of their choice. They feel welcome and at ease in the school. Often parents enjoy using the comfortable waiting area and a few parents are starting to help in school with activities such as putting together the story sacks. However, parents are not reciprocating as much as would be expected by helping in the classroom. The contribution to their children's learning at school and home is often limited by language and cultural barriers. Too often parents take their children off school for extended stays in their country of origin, with lax regard to the impact on their children's learning and the value of their child's nursery place.
26. The school arranges an interesting and highly appropriate range of trips out into the local Slough area to extend the children's life skills. Walking visits to the post office, pet shop, supermarket and parks are pitched at just the right level for nursery age children and introduce them very effectively to the locality around the school. Visits from local organisations, such as the police, fire and post services, teach the children the importance of those who help us in our local community. The headteacher has built up very good links with a range of agencies to promote health and road safety and to provide support for special and medical needs. With the introduction of the parent-toddler group and adult education classes the school is providing a valuable resource to community members beyond the immediate parent group. It has improved the good community links from the last inspection.
27. Slough Centre Nursery is an important member of the close knit group of nursery schools. Professional collaboration is a great help in increasing staff expertise and ultimately improving the achievement of the children. The school is working hard to establish useful links with primary schools to develop smooth transition arrangements for the children. The school welcomes work experience students and is linked closely with local colleges to support further education of nursery staff.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. The governing body is **effective**. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is good. Management is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very inclusive and caters very well for a diverse mix of children.
- The headteacher has a clear-sighted vision of how to develop the school further.
- The school improvement plan includes good systems for evaluating progress.
- The monitoring and development of the curriculum by senior staff are good, but session leaders do not always monitor the work of supporting adults rigorously enough.
- The governing body is well informed, knowledgeable and supportive, and effectively fulfils its duties.
- Good financial management systems are in place.

Commentary

28. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She has a clear vision of the high quality of education that the school should provide and a good understanding of how to achieve it. She has ensured that there have been effective opportunities for all staff to undertake regular additional training to improve their skills and to gain further understanding of how young children learn. This has led to the development of a school firmly committed to the principles of best practice in education, where all staff work together well and provide high levels of constantly good and very good teaching in an attractive and stimulating environment. The school has recently been awarded with Investors in People. The school aims to provide high quality learning experiences for all children and all staff are committed to this. Care is taken with all aspects of the provision, including bright and attractive displays that show children and their parents and carers how much they and their work are valued.
29. Teachers, nursery nurses and support staff work together effectively to refine and improve the quality of education provided and regularly evaluate how effective teaching sessions have been. The school improvement plan is effective in identifying areas for improvement and is used well to evaluate progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory and lacked sufficiently rigorous evaluation systems.
30. The school has a very strong commitment to inclusion and children of all abilities and backgrounds are warmly welcomed and fully involved in all of the day-to-day activities. Good support for children learning to speak English as an additional language ensures that these children achieve well and progress at the same rate as their classmates. The management for the provision for these children is efficient and effective. Leadership and management of the provision for children with special educational needs are good and they achieve well as a result. The provision for those with special educational needs of a profound nature is very good and is well managed so that they are sensitively integrated into activities. The school is very highly regarded by parents and has worked hard to ensure a warm and welcoming atmosphere, ensuring that children are happy to come to school.
31. The management of the school is good. All staff have targets for professional improvement and performance management is undertaken effectively. There are good overall systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, the targets the school sets itself are appropriate and the action taken to meet them is good. Leadership and management of provision of communication, language and literacy and personal and social development are very good overall. A

strength of the school is its shared commitment to improvement. However, monitoring of group work in individual sessions by the adult who has been responsible for co-ordinating the planning for that period is often cursory. As a result, adults supporting individual groups do not get the most from children, as envisioned in the original planning.

32. The governance of the school is good. The governing body has recently been given devolved powers and provides good levels of support for the school. Governors have taken part in a good range of training to ensure that they are clear about their individual and collective roles. Regular visits ensure that governors are up to date about what is going on in the school. They play an increasing role in shaping the direction of the school and have a good knowledge of its strengths and areas for improvement. They provide senior managers with a good level of challenge as well as support.
33. The school is in the first year of receiving a fully delegated budget, so no accurate financial figures are available for the year 2003/2004. The budget is well managed and financial procedures are good. Governors plan the budget well to ensure that the available funding is used to best effect. Careful monitoring ensures that expenditure and income are closely linked and that the principles of Best Value are applied effectively. The school is in a good position to maintain the high standards it achieves and to improve them still further. The school provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well through very good teaching.
- The caring atmosphere enables children to establish very good relationships.
- Well-established routines help children to learn about acceptable behaviour.
- Children are developing their ability to work independently.
- Some opportunities to develop children's social and cultural skills are missed during the lunchtime.

Commentary

34. Teaching in this important area of the curriculum is very good, due to the very good leadership and management of this aspect of learning. Many children start school at a level well below the expectation for their ages and have underdeveloped social skills. The school places great emphasis on this area of the curriculum and children make very good gains in their learning and their achievement is very good. The high standards noted by the previous inspection have been effectively maintained.
35. It is clear that children enjoy coming to nursery school. Most leave their parents confidently at the start of the session. They have very good attitudes towards the work they do in school and behave very well. The teachers and nursery nurses, who are kind and caring and work well together, promote children's personal and social development well. The very good quality of personal relationships established with adults underpins all the learning that takes place in the Foundation Stage. Most children are learning to concentrate and persevere with an activity. Many are co-operative and get on well with each other and with adults. Children know the routines, settle down to the activities and behave sensibly.
36. Children benefit greatly from the *welcome* activity at the beginning of each session when they pass round toast or fruit to share with each other. Most children respond politely and enjoy this valued social occasion. The majority of children are on course to meet the expected standards (the *early learning goals*) by the end of the reception year. However, the very good provision during the morning and afternoon sessions is not matched during lunchtime. While supervision is satisfactory overall at this time, some opportunities for children to develop social and self-help skills are missed.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and other adults take very good care to develop children's language and vocabulary.
- Good use is made of sign language and children's first languages to develop their vocabulary and communication skills.
- Good use is made of large books to read stories so that all children can see and enjoy the illustrations.
- Early writing skills are developed effectively.

- There is a good insistence on a quiet atmosphere to help children to concentrate when they listen.
- Very good use is made of bright and attractive resources to make learning interesting.

Commentary

37. Due to very good teaching children make very good progress in their learning of each aspect of communication, language and literacy. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when teaching and learning and children's achievements were judged to be good. Standards are currently likely to be in line with those expected for their age by the time they transfer to the next stage of their education. This represents very good levels of achievement for all of the children. The key workers and other staff create an environment in which children feel at ease. As a result, they are developing the self-confidence required to speak to other children and adults about their wants and interests. They use conversation to initiate exchanges and to gain attention and the school's policy to use an internationally recognised simple sign language in everyday conversation helps to develop children's confidence and vocabulary very well. Many children use simple statements linked to gestures, and a few attend carefully to what others say and use language to negotiate and to resolve disagreements. Many of the older children negotiate plans and activities and take turns in conversation as they play together or alongside each other. They speak clearly and build up a vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences, such as talking to their teacher about addresses and where they live. They learn to respond to simple instructions and join in with repeated refrains in simple songs and rhymes. Good use is made of the knowledge of the bi-lingual staff of a range of community languages, such as Urdu and Punjabi, and these are used effectively at all times.
38. There are good opportunities to look at books in small groups and also as part of the free choice activities. Teachers make very good use of resources such as large books with clear and attractive illustrations and, as a result, children listen with enthusiasm. They learn to enjoy books. They listen to stories with rapt attention and can recall the main events and characters, joining in with repeated phrases. They respond with relevant comments and questions, suggesting the next place Father Bear might look for a quiet place to sleep, for example. Teachers and nursery nurses ensure that these occasions are quiet and relaxing times so that all children can concentrate fully on the stories. They often choose to look at books, turning the pages in order and looking at the pictures with interest. Children for whom English is an additional language take great pleasure in listening to stories in simultaneous translation during whole group sessions.
39. Children develop early writing skills well. They are given good daily opportunities to learn to draw, paint and make marks. Some children are at a very early stage of representing their thoughts on paper, for example making a red round mark for a *rainbow*. However, many are starting to ascribe meaning to the marks they make, such as drawing a zig-zag and announcing proudly, "*That's my name!*". Each day children read their name and move it to the board to register their arrival. For some this is now a relatively easy task, but others require adult support and encouragement. A few children can write recognisable letters from their name. They label drawings and paintings with a range of skill and confidence, holding pencils with a reasonable grip. There are very many daily opportunities to write as part of the everyday life of the nursery. Adults provide good role models, making notes and transferring information into written form or acting as a scribe for the children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are supported well.
- There is good support from adults for the development of children's mathematical vocabulary.
- Attractive resources make learning fun.
- Many good opportunities are provided to develop counting skills and knowledge of space and measure, but opportunities for simple calculation practice are provided less often.
- The adults leading each session do not always monitor that their plans are fully adhered to in the manner they have anticipated.

Commentary

40. Children make good progress in their mathematical development and attain standards in line with those expected for their age. Due to the good quality of leadership and management, the good standards noted by the previous inspection have been effectively maintained. Teaching and learning are good and good opportunities are built into each part of the day, including registration time, so that the children start to learn to recognise, count and order numbers to ten. They know various rhymes which challenge them to count forwards and backwards and children sing these with enjoyment. Achievement of children from all groups, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, is good due to the good support they are given.
41. The range of activities provides well for children's understanding of shape and measures and timely interventions by adults ensure that the children are learning particular mathematical concepts and vocabulary. For example, adults place good emphasis on encouraging children to use size language such as *big* and *little* and positional language such as *on top* and *inside*. The children show an interest in shape and space by playing with shapes or making arrangements with objects such as shells. They use shapes appropriate for the task, such as building with blocks, and some can sustain interest for a considerable time. For example, one boy was fully immersed for a long period in his self-appointed task of arranging construction blocks in a particular pattern.
42. Teachers plan well and make good use of interesting and exciting resources to make learning fun. For example, positioning toy frogs on a log in the water tray for children to count reminded them of a simple counting rhyme they had learnt. However, opportunities to learn simple calculating skills, such as separating a group of objects in different ways, are sometimes missed. However the school has identified this in its development plan and in its recent mathematics audit Children are at a very early stage in this area of mathematical development and even higher-attaining and older children have difficulty in comparing two groups of objects in order to say when they have the same number.
43. Sometimes tasks are planned which are not undertaken exactly in the manner intended by the group leader. This mismatch is not always picked up by the adult leading the session as monitoring of colleagues is not fully embedded in daily practice.

For example, a group of children with special educational needs, supported in a pleasant manner by an adult, had difficulty matching numerals on a large set of floor dominoes, although the simpler and more appropriate task of matching the dots had been the aim of the session leader.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching provides children with many opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- Children have good opportunities to explore the properties of different materials.
- Children are given good opportunities to learn about different faiths and festivals.
- Monitoring systems for assessing the success of planning and learning in the classroom are not fully developed.

Commentary

44. Teaching and learning are good overall and help to ensure that all children achieve well. Leadership and management of this aspect of the curriculum are good. Children are provided with a wealth of opportunities to learn about their world, although occasionally some activities are not monitored well enough to ensure that the careful planning is carried out. This means that leaders are not always aware of the level of success of activities.
45. Children start the nursery with limited experience of the world other than their own family. High-quality resources strongly support this area of learning and most children are likely to reach the expected standards for their age by the time they move to their next school. The imaginative-play areas are changed regularly to keep interest levels high and whether it is in the shop or the puppet theatre the children are consistently challenged in their learning.
46. Teaching about various faiths and celebrations is a particular strength of this area of learning. Children are provided with a rich cultural programme as they celebrate a wide variety of religious festivals such as Eid, Christmas, Divali and Vasakhi. They loved making special foods, lanterns and dragons for the Chinese New Year. Children's knowledge of the passage of time was enhanced by the visit of a mother and baby to help them appreciate how much they have changed.
47. Investigations take place regularly. In a very good lesson, children were encouraged to predict which objects would float or sink in water before starting the investigation. Children were encouraged to use the correct terms to describe their findings. Already they are beginning to develop their understanding of technical language and skills of recording. They are given good opportunities to investigate the use of a variety of tools and equipment. Computers are used regularly. With support, many are able to move the mouse confidently to make pictures and patterns and select programs from a simple menu.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to develop skills of co-ordination, control and movement.
- Children's physical development is supported very well by the very good outdoor facilities.
- Children with special educational needs of a profound nature are enabled to take full part in activities.

Commentary

48. Children's physical skills are developing well and it is likely that most children will meet the expected standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. Their achievement is good. They use a variety of tools and equipment with dexterity. Many children managed to chop vegetables very well in preparation for a Chinese stir-fry. Most will attempt to put on their own coats and do them up independently. They enjoy using paint and a variety of tools and equipment such as pens, pencils, scissors and glue sticks sensibly and with confidence.
49. A very well equipped outdoor play area provides interesting and stimulating activities for children. Teachers and nursery nurses work well together to plan challenges that enable children to develop their skills of balance and co-ordination. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. For example, in a good lesson children tried very hard to control wheelbarrows and pushchairs as they took part in a race. They enjoyed learning the movements of a rhyming game as they practised their skills of moving backwards and forwards and developing their understanding of pushes and pulls.
50. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and nursery nurses plan activities with a good balance of adult intervention and independence. Children steer trucks and bikes, climb apparatus and swing and twirl around on the swings with confidence. Outdoor play is now an integral part of the curriculum with teachers and nursery nurses supporting all children in the development of physical skills. Children with special educational needs are fully included in this aspect of learning. Children with special educational needs of a profound nature are given very good opportunities to experience a range of challenging and exciting experiences, such as rolling inside large cones and negotiating steps and obstacles. Adults provide a very sensitive balance of support while enabling children to have a sense of adventure and fun.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good.
- Children are given good opportunities to express their creativity linked to the theme of the day.
- On occasion, there is over-direction by supporting adults which is not spotted by the adult responsible for leading the session.

Commentary

51. The teaching of the creative aspects of the curriculum is good. As a result, boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups, including those with English

as an additional language, achieve well and make good progress in their skills and understanding. Standards are in line with those expected for their ages by the time children leave the nursery. This is a good maintenance of the standards noted by the previous inspection. Leadership and management of this aspect of learning for young children are good.

52. Key workers all provide good opportunities for the children to take part in a rich and varied range of creative activities with a different theme each day. Children enter into the world of imaginative play whole-heartedly. They organise their games with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. They play alongside each other, engaging in the same activity, such as cooking lunch in the home corner or building a railway with the train track and blocks. They carefully build with large wooden bricks, selecting the blocks carefully and having a clear idea of what they want to achieve.
53. Children are given regular good opportunities to listen to and join in with music. They join in singing simple songs and rhymes, following hand actions and simple movements carefully. They use paint and a wide range of materials to make patterns and models and to represent the world about them. They apply paint with concentration and enjoyment, sometimes using brushes and at other times printing with rollers or hands and feet. They experiment with cornflour and water, writing patterns in the mix with their fingers and simple tools and learn to use brushes and black paint to represent Chinese writing.
54. The children are given good opportunities to respond to what they see, hear, touch and smell in a wide variety of ways. For example, children dress up as dogs and tigers and pretend to be these animals. They play with puppets and create simple scenarios such as *visiting the theatre* which other children and support staff join in enacting with them. Sometimes children make patterns linked to the topic or theme of the day. For example, they carefully roll marbles and paint in frying pans to make *pancake pictures* on round pieces of paper. However, on occasion the activity which is planned, is interpreted in a more didactic way by support staff. When this happens opportunity for experiment and investigation, as planned by the teacher, is missed.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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