

INSPECTION REPORT

Ronald Openshaw Nursery School

Stratford

LEA area: Newham

Unique Reference Number: 102703

Headteacher: George Potrykus-Lupton

Reporting inspector: Anne Currie
25429

Dates of inspection: 4-6 May 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 705152
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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Nursery |
| Type of control: | LEA Nursery School |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 years 5 months – 4 years 11 months |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Henniker Road Stratford London E15 1JP |
| Telephone number: | 0181-534 6196 |
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| Appropriate authority: | London Borough of Newham |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr Owen Beckles |
| Date of previous inspection: | 9-11 May 1995 |

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|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Anne Currie, Registered Inspector | Knowledge and understanding of the world; Mathematics; Personal and social development; English as an additional language. | Attainment and progress; Attitudes behaviour and personal development; Teaching; Leadership and management; Equal opportunities. |
| Caroline Marden, Lay Inspector | | Attendance; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community. |
| Wendy Thomas | Language and literacy; Creative development; Physical development. | Curriculum and assessment; Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources; Efficiency; Special educational needs. |

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Children's personal, social and moral development is very good.
- Information for parents and the promotion of parental involvement is very good.
- The provision for children with special educational needs is good.
- There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour.
- Teaching is good.
- Children make good progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative and physical development.
- The well qualified staff work together as a team and know the children well.
- The school provides a wide range of interesting activities.

§ Where the school has weaknesses

- The accommodation is in an unsatisfactory state of repair.
- The organisation means that teachers' time is not always used well and teachers do not interact with enough children during the free choice sessions to extend their learning appropriately.
- Procedures are not in place to ensure that all children, especially those who attend full-time, experience a good balance of the wide range of activities on offer.
- Insufficient use is made of the outside area to support attainment in curriculum areas, other than physical development.

The weaknesses are outweighed by the school's considerable strengths, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

• How the school has improved since the last inspection

There has been satisfactory progress.

There are now appropriate schemes of work to support curriculum planning. In particular, there is an improvement in planning for children's spiritual educational and staff are currently involved in additional staff training and discussions in this area. Human and social areas of learning are now well integrated into the planning to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

The planning for and management of group time has improved.

The school monitors children's activities throughout the session, but the information is not effectively used to ensure that all children have a broad range of relevant experiences.

The school is going through a period of change. There is a new headteacher and it will become a Nursery Education Centre in September 1999. The school has satisfactory capacity for improvement in the future.

Standards

The majority of children are likely to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all areas of learning, except language and literacy, by the age of five. This reflects the overall good standard of education provided and the good quality of teaching.

Quality of teaching

| Teaching in areas of learning | |
|--|--------------|
| Personal and social development | Very good |
| Language and literacy | Satisfactory |
| Mathematics | Satisfactory |
| Knowledge and understanding of the world | Good |
| Physical development | Satisfactory |
| Creative development | Good |

During the inspection the quality of teaching was judged to be very good in 9 per cent of the sessions, good in 55 per cent, satisfactory in 30 per cent and unsatisfactory in 6 per cent. This included sessions led by nursery nurses as well as teachers.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

Other aspects of the school

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Behaviour | Good. Children share and take turns well. The school has high expectations and a very consistent approach to behaviour. |
| Attendance | There are sound procedures in place to encourage better attendance, but the levels remain unsatisfactory. Children or family members are often ill and some families take extended holidays abroad. |
| Ethos* | Very good. Relationships are very good. There is a good supportive and learning focused environment in the school. |
| Leadership and management | Satisfactory. The school is going through a period of change. There is a new headteacher and the school will become a Nursery Education Centre in September 1999. |
| Curriculum | Good. There is a wide range of stimulating activities provided across all the areas of learning. |
| Children with special educational needs | Good. There is well-directed individual support for children with learning and behaviour difficulties. |
| Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good. Provision for moral and social development is very good. |
| Staffing, resources and accommodation Value for money | Very good level of staffing and provision of resources. The building is in an unsatisfactory state of repair. The school does not have a delegated budget but, on the basis of the quality of teaching and the attainment reached, the school gives at least satisfactory value for money. |

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

| What most parents like about the school | What some parents are not happy about |
|--|--|
| I. The staff are friendly and approachable. II. Their children enjoy school. III. The children are well behaved. IV. The records kept for each child which are available for parents to look at. V. The provision for children with special educational needs. | VI. A few parents feel that they are not kept well |

Thirty parents attended the parents' meetings and they were all very pleased with the education provided. Forty five per cent of the questionnaires were returned.

Inspectors' judgements support the positive views about the school expressed by the parents. In relation to concerns expressed about the information the school gives parents about what is being taught, the findings of the team are that the school makes a good range of information available, about both what is taught and what the children do.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to raise attainment further the school should:

VII. request that the Local Education Authority takes action to improve the accommodation;
(paragraphs **56, 57**)

VIII. improve the organisation of the sessions and planning for the outside area so that more effective use is made of teachers' time and teachers have more planned opportunities to interact with a larger number of children, as individuals or in groups to extend their learning across the whole curriculum;
(paragraphs **21, 24, 37, 63, 71, 78**)

IX. build on the good work already done to monitor children's activities and ensure that all children, especially those who attend full-time, have a good balance of experiences across all areas of learning.
(paragraphs **11, 28, 31, 32, 35, 36, 42, 71, 78, 92**)

· **INTRODUCTION**

· **Characteristics of the school**

- 1 Ronald Openshaw Nursery School is located in an inner city area in the north west of the London Borough of Newham. It was built over thirty five years ago. The school will become a Nursery Education Centre in September 1999. Currently over thirty different languages are spoken from a range of cultures and 55% of children have English as an additional language. The majority of families do not reflect the traditional family unit. Some of the children and families have complex social needs. The area has a mix of social housing including high and low rise flats and houses. Most of the homes are rented and there is little open play space. Many children live in short term housing and there is a high level of mobility. The school also serves a local travellers' site.
- 2 The school has 78 children who attend part-time. There are also 21 children who attend full-time. A very high proportion of these children, 71%, is entitled to free school meals. The school already operates an extended day for 12 children and this is currently funded and run by Social Services. There are seven children on the school's register for special educational needs.
- 3 The school admits children twice a year. It gives priority to children who are four years old, including those who live outside the catchment area. Children transfer to local primary schools in September or January of the academic year in which they are five. Children start at the school with a broad range of experiences, but overall their attainment is below that found nationally, especially in speaking and listening skills. Some children have speech difficulties and many come from homes where English is not the first language.

4 **Key indicators**

4 **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

| | % |
|------------------------|----|
| Very good or better | 9 |
| Satisfactory or better | 94 |
| Less than satisfactory | 6 |

4 **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

4 **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

4 **Attainment and progress**

4 The school admits children over three years old. Priority is currently given to children over four from the whole of the Borough. Other younger children are admitted on the grounds of social needs. For many it is the first time they have left their family. Children have a wide range of skills and experience when they enter the school, but as a group their attainment is below that which is normally expected. This is especially noticeable in language and literacy. Speaking and listening skills are not well developed and 55 children currently come from homes where English is not the first language.

5 Children settle happily and gain confidence. They become increasingly independent and readily make choices about what they are going to do. They learn to share, take turns and work as part of a group, especially in role play. They enjoy looking at books and handle them carefully. Children listen and respond to stories well. Children begin to understand that print carries meaning and some develop an understanding of the different purposes of writing. Many recognise their own name. Some form recognisable letters and symbols. In mathematics they make repeating patterns using beads and a computer program. They sort by colour and most count correctly to five. Some count to ten and have an understanding of larger numbers in their everyday lives such as their house numbers. Children begin to recognise simple two-dimensional shapes such as circles, squares, triangles and rectangles.

6 Children are curious about the world around them and they use the many and varied experiences, which they are given, to extend their knowledge well. They become confident in using computers and tape recorders. They explore materials and the natural world around them. For example, they use magnifying glasses to look at snails and caterpillars and explore the garden looking for other mini-beasts. Children extend their physical skills well. They develop skills in using scissors, paint, glue and malleable materials, such as play dough. Outside they use the extensive range of climbing apparatus and the pedal toys with confidence and extend their co-ordination skills. Children develop their creative skills well through the wide range of activities on offer, such as painting, role play and music.

7 By age five most children are likely to attain the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all areas of learning except language and literacy.

8 Children make good progress in the development of their personal and social skills. This is the result of the high quality teaching, the good relationships all staff develop with the children and the wide range of appropriate activities provided. Staff know children well and have a good understanding of their learning needs. Most children make good progress in gaining knowledge of the world around them. They also make good progress in their physical and creative development. In mathematics many children make good progress, but some opportunities to develop numeracy across all areas of learning are missed. Children make good progress in the development of their listening skills. In speaking and early reading and writing skills most make satisfactory progress. A few children underachieve in writing. Children with English as an additional language are well supported by all staff and they make satisfactory progress. Bilingual staff are used to good effect to reinforce and explain ideas. This helps children gain confidence and extends their learning.

9 There are currently seven children on the special educational needs register. A further thirteen have speech therapy, which, according to the Local Authority's guidelines, places them on the register, although the school regards this as a short term need for most children. There are no children with statements of special educational needs at present but arrangements are at an advanced stage to provide

statements for three. Children with special educational needs are well supported. They often receive individual attention and they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

- 10 Progress is limited on some occasions. Staff do not always take sufficient steps to ensure that children participate in an appropriate range of activities. For example, although there are well-devised activities to extend literacy skills, very few children undertake them in each session. Also, given the number of children who enjoy activities outside, staff do not always ensure that planning for the outside area adequately supports attainment across all the areas of learning.

11 **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

- 11 This is one of the school's strengths that has been well maintained since the last inspection. Parents value the contribution the school makes to their children's progress in this area of learning.

- 12 Children have good attitudes to many of the opportunities provided. Most are settled and content in their surroundings and they respond well to the activities on offer. A few children experience difficulties settling into school routines, but this is mainly because of problems in their home lives. These children are very well supported. Children work with a good level of independence and they concentrate well on activities they have been involved in choosing. They persevere with their tasks until they have completed them to their own satisfaction. When completing a directed activity their concentration is satisfactory. They use their initiatives well and often show great enthusiasm for what they are doing when they follow their own interests in the individual choice sessions. Children show a good level of interest in books. They handle them correctly and treat them with respect.

- 13 Behaviour is good. Children are aware of the right and wrong way to behave and they live up to the school's high expectations of behaviour. Most express their feeling in an acceptable way, although some have problems because of language difficulties. Children learn how to share with one another and how to take turns appropriately; for example, in group sessions. They are continually reminded about the expected behaviour and the need to let others have their say. They treat one another with consideration and handle resources with care.

- 14 Children establish good relationships with a range of adults. They confidently turn to adults when they need help and most readily do what adults ask them to do. They work happily alongside other children and most interact with one another well, especially in the garden area and in role play activities. The many different races represented in the school co-exist peacefully, and the school is a harmonious community.

- 15 Children's personal development is very good. Most look after themselves very effectively, showing a high degree of independence in; for example, going to the toilet, taking off their shoes and socks to play in the sand and putting on aprons for painting and water play. They choose resources confidently and willingly help to tidy up at the end of the session. Many children show a great deal of curiosity about the world around them and react very positively to new experiences.

16 **Attendance**

- 17 Attendance at the school is not statutory but the level of absence is unsatisfactory. There are various reasons for this. Many children are very prone to childhood illness; when they come to school it is often the first time they have come into contact with a large number of other children. Many families are isolated with very little family support; this means that when parents or others in the family are ill, they cannot get their children to school. There are also cases of extended holidays taken during term time. The amount of unauthorised absence has increased as the school has rigorously implemented the Local Education Authority's guidelines on authorising absence.
- 16 Punctuality has slightly improved since the last inspection, but there are still children arriving five to ten minutes late in all groups for both morning and afternoon sessions.
- 17 The registration procedures are appropriate and all staff give a warm welcome to the children.

19 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

19 **Teaching**

- 18 The overall quality of teaching is good. It is very good in nine per cent of lessons, good in 55 per cent, satisfactory in 30 per cent and unsatisfactory in six per cent. These figures include sessions taken by nursery nurses as well as teachers. All staff with a teaching role have a good understanding of the developmental needs of young children. They are also well aware of the learning needs of those who speak very little English and of children at the school who have special educational needs.
- 19 During the inspection the best teaching was seen in large group times at the end of the sessions when there was a good variety of activities to sustain children's interest and extend their learning, and staff worked well together to support those children who needed extra attention. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when it was reported that there was a significant level of inattention and a lack of involvement in these sessions. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was caused by the way individual choice sessions were organised. This meant that during these long sessions, although some good interactions were seen, teachers related with too few children, either individually or in groups.
- 20 Staff have a good working knowledge of the recommended areas of learning for children under five and have satisfactory expectations of what they want children to achieve. They know each child's individual needs well and often target those who require extra support. Staff join in activities, both inside and outside the classrooms, and most take opportunities to extend children's language skills satisfactorily. On occasions staff do not allow children time to reply to questions or they accept non-verbal communication instead of insisting on a reply.
- 21 Staff work well together as a team. They meet together regularly to discuss children's work and their individual needs, as well as to plan future work. The fact that they regularly work in different areas and plan activities together means that expertise is shared. Planning is good. There is a wide range of stimulating activities, which gives very appropriate first-hand experiences and is well matched to the need to extend children's learning. Many of the activities are changed daily, but others remain to allow children to re-visit and consolidate their learning. Some are linked together across the areas of learning and are designed to encourage children to use different parts of the nursery during the session. For example, when a stage is provided outside to give children the opportunity to sing along to a variety of music, they are also encouraged to make 'microphones' out of recycled materials.
- 22 There is insufficient targeting of children to ensure that they all experience a core of activities

appropriate for their needs, which focus on literacy and numeracy. In addition, too little attention is paid to ensuring that all full-time children have a suitable balance of activities over the whole day. This was highlighted by the spell of good weather during the inspection. The majority of children chose to spend most of their time outside. As a result, very few children took part in the mathematical and language activities inside or benefited from the direct teacher input available there.

- 23 Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and they extend their personal and social skills well. They continually remind children of the need to share, take turns and respect each other. Staff positively reinforce expected behaviour and set very good role models for children. Routine organisation is good and this gives children confidence and makes them feel secure. Children know what is expected, for example at tidy up time. They are encouraged to become increasingly independent. Children are given valuable opportunities to make choices, such as what they are going to do next or the materials they are going to use, for example when they make model cars out of recyclable materials.
- 24 Children with special needs are well supported, often on an individual basis. They have individual education plans, which are drawn up by the co-ordinator together with the class teacher and the class nursery nurse. They have clear targets set to help them make good progress and staff understand their needs well. The targets are reviewed regularly. The teaching of children with English as an additional language is very appropriate and there is a good emphasis on practical activities to support their understanding. Staff build good relationships with these children and help them gain confidence and feel secure. Staff who speak some of the home languages are used well to reinforce understanding and provide support when necessary. Other staff model clear speech patterns and help to extend children's vocabularies.
- 25 In all areas of learning, and in both indoor and outdoor activities, staff use resources well. The way in which staff aim to involve parents in their child's education is a strength of the school. Library books are taken home weekly and, in their last term, children are given homework designed to extend their mathematical understanding.
- 26 Staff make assessments of children and build up a picture of their strengths and of activities which they take part in. This information is used to target what individual children need to do next but the system lacks rigour. Staff do not ensure that all children regularly take part in teaching sessions that are well focused on individual or group needs.

28 **The curriculum and assessment**

- 27 The curriculum is broad and relevant to the next stage of education. Staff have used the desirable learning outcomes for children under five as the basis for planning their schemes of work. This planning has improved since the previous inspection when a key issue for action was to develop schemes of work. The curriculum provides rich experiences through play, talk, and physical and intellectual activity that prepares children well for transfer to infants' school. It is enriched through visits to local places of educational interest. The school places a high priority on personal and social education and relationships are well promoted.
- 28 The long-term curriculum plan covers a year and details all the areas of learning to be addressed. This is then broken down into three weekly blocks for medium term planning. Staff meet together at the end of each day to review their work and plan in detail the next day's activities and the children they intend to target.
- 29 There is a wide range of activities organised and planned for, which includes all areas of learning. The organisation of the day means that children are given a great deal of individual choice in the activities they follow. Whilst this encourages their independence and allows them to develop at their own pace, it

results in an imbalance of activities for many children. Teachers do target some children for activities, but the system of teacher rotation, and the large numbers of children, mean that the method, ensuring that all children experience the broad and rich curriculum on offer, is not sufficiently rigorous.

- 30 Each class base has a specific focus, mathematical and science activities, language and literacy and creative activities. Opportunities for reading and writing, exploring number and creative play are available in each room. Very effective use is made of the outdoor area, which is stimulating and exciting, to provide a wide range of physical activities as well as opportunities to explore the environment. Activities outside, which involve mathematical skills or writing, are less evident. During the inspection the majority of children chose to use the outside area for much of the time and the indoor activities were under-used. This meant that many children did not have sufficient experience in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Insufficient thought is given to the balance of activities throughout the day experienced by full-time children. Some repeat what they do in the morning session in the afternoon.
- 31 The school has good procedures for identifying individual's needs and an appropriate policy for children with special educational needs which meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. The individual education plans have specific targets and are used well. Parents are consulted as soon as any concerns are raised and they are fully involved in the process. The school is involved in trials of the Local Education Authority's scheme for assessing attainment on entry and is currently focusing on personal and social development.
- 32 The school encourages parents to be involved in reading with their children who take books home on a regular basis. In their last term at the nursery, children take home mathematical games and activities.
- 33 Since the previous inspection the school has worked very hard to develop appropriate procedures for assessment. Staff have not yet fully addressed the issue of monitoring individual children's experiences to ensure a balanced curriculum. The tracking sheets provide useful information about children's interests, but at present they are not used effectively to inform planning and ensure that each child, especially those who attend full-time, experiences a suitable balance of activities. This was an issue in the previous inspection. Each child has a record folder where notes are made on progress in each of the areas of learning. During the day all staff note the focus rooms that children visit with brief details of the type of activity engaged in. Use of the computer is noted. Staff make notes of the activities of the targeted children in their activity groups, which are then passed to the home base teacher and added to the child's cumulative record. There is as yet no systematic method of recording children's use of and progress in using the outdoor area. In addition, each child also has a profile book containing photographs and examples of work. These are well annotated and provide a helpful record of achievement which children take home at the end of their time in the school. Records and profiles are readily available to parents who are actively encouraged to read them and to make their own comments on children's progress.
- 34 A more rigorous use of the system of tracking children's activities would ensure that all children benefit from the good range and quality of the activities on offer in all curriculum areas.

36 **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

- 35 The school makes very good provision for children's moral and social development. Provision for children's cultural development is good and for spiritual development it is satisfactory. Staff cater for children's spiritual development through extending their interests and responding to their questions. The outdoor area provides a range of opportunities to explore the environment and wonder at the natural world. During the inspection some children enjoyed observing insects in the garden and blossom falling from the trees fascinated some of them. In the science focus room some children observed the behaviour of snails. However, the organisation of activities does not support staff in ensuring that all children have

access to this area of the curriculum. Staff have taken part in recent training on spiritual development and, as a result of this, they are in the process of developing helpful guidelines.

36 Personal and social development is a high priority in the school and provision is very good. Staff work hard to establish relationships, which are positive and based on mutual respect. The moral values of the school are successfully transmitted to the children who respond well to them. The school has several children who show challenging behaviour at times and all staff manage this very well. They support children whilst making their expectations of good behaviour very clear. Children are encouraged to think positively about themselves and to behave well. They are expected to co-operate, to respect each other and the adults working with them. They are also encouraged to develop good levels of independence.

37 The school takes every opportunity to extend children's awareness of their own and other cultures. Displays around the building show positive images of the different cultures represented in the school. One of the school's aims is to ensure that the curriculum reflects the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the children in their care. Photographic evidence shows that the school celebrates religious festivals of different faiths, for example, Diwali, Easter and Eid. In large group session children listen well to stories, and to a range of music. They have dance and movement sessions. A music display included instruments from different countries and children were encouraged to play with these. The school is a racially harmonious community.

39 **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

38 The school provides good support and guidance for the children in its care. The school sees children's personal and social development as its main responsibility and staff are successful in providing very good pastoral care and social guidance. They have very good strategies for promoting good behaviour and for diffusing possible conflicts before they begin. Staff are consistent in applying these strategies and this is evident in the good behaviour of the children and the fact that they all know what is expected. Strengths of the school are how well staff know the children and their families and the commitment they have to supporting children who are having difficulties. Staff constantly encourage children to share, take turns and consider others. Daily routines run smoothly and provide some children with much needed security and continuity.

39 The school acknowledges that the attendance of pupils is low. There are satisfactory procedures in place to actively encourage parents to bring their children to school regularly and on time. There is a steady improvement in the attendance figures.

40 There are procedures in place to monitor what pupils have covered and what they can do. However, teachers do not make sufficient use of this knowledge to ensure that all children receive a broad and balanced curriculum.

41 The school follows the child protection procedures laid down by the local authority. The headteacher is the designated teacher for child protection. All staff understand the arrangements which are effective. Children's worries are taken seriously and emphasis is placed on building their trust in staff as part of their personal and social development.

42 The school provides a safe and caring environment for children and has due regard for health and safety issues. There are good connections with outside agencies. The school receives regular visits from the local health visitor and from the educational psychologist. There are also close links with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator at the local primary school and with an outreach teacher from the LEA Behavioural Support Service.

43 Some children attend full-time. The local authority provides their lunches. The food is cooked offsite and transported to the school. It is kept in insulated containers and served from metal dishes. There are no facilities to keep the food hot and it is often barely warm by the time the last child is eating it, making it very unappetising. Insufficient thought has been given to planning the day for these children and ensuring that they have a suitable range of experiences. For example, giving them the opportunity to have a quiet time during the lunch break if they need one. Some children are tired towards the end of the day and this impacts on their concentration and behaviour especially in the large group session at the end of the day.

45 **Partnership with parents and the community**

44 There is a very good partnership with parents and the local community. The school is very committed to working with parents and provides very good information for them. Newsletters are clear and the annual reports to parents are very readable and give a large amount of information. The transfer records are good. They cover all the Desirable Learning Outcomes and clearly state what the child understands and can do. However, the records do not accurately show a child's attendance, as there are just general comments, such as very good. Most parents feel well informed about what is going on and what is being taught. They also like to see the children's records, which are readily accessible to parents. Parents are actively encouraged to make written comments on their child's work. There are good opportunities for parents to talk to teachers and nursery nurses. The new headteacher is very committed to working with parents and operates an open door policy giving parents the opportunity to discuss any concerns with him.

45 Parents of children with special educational needs are fully involved in the setting and reviewing of targets for their children. They feel well supported.

46 Parents are always welcome to help in school and they regularly help in the library, as well as going on school trips with the children. Parents are supportive of the work children are expected to do at home, with the oldest children taking home mathematics based activities as well as reading books. There is a parent and toddler group, which operates for three sessions a week. It is well attended. It provides a valuable amenity for the local community by giving parents a place to meet and the opportunity for their children to play with others of a similar age. It also allows the children to become familiar with the school and its staff, as they share the outside area with the school for part of the session.

47 The school effectively uses the local community as a learning resource with children visiting the local shopping centre. Many visitors come into school promoting children's social and academic progress. These include work experience pupils, initial teacher training students and the community police officer. The school is also involving The Prince's Trust in improving the school grounds.

49 **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

49 **Leadership and management**

48 Following the resignation of the previous head, the school was run efficiently for a year by the deputy head. During this time two teaching posts were filled with temporary teachers. A new headteacher took up the post in April 1999, a few weeks before the inspection. The school is also about to become a Nursery Education Centre, which will involve it taking over the extended day scheme currently run in the school by Social Services. For these reasons the school's leadership and management is currently undergoing considerable changes. The school is taking appropriate action to ensure that from September it is fully staffed with permanent teachers. There are plans to refine the management structure from that date, to ensure a smooth transition and to share responsibilities among all teaching

staff.

- 49 Despite the considerable uncertainty generated by the changes, staff have maintained good working relationships and their teamwork is a strength of the school. Discussions, both formal and informal, are used well to gather information about individual children and to share ideas. The management of the provision of special educational needs is good. There is a sound policy and good working relationships with outside agencies, for example the speech therapy centre and the Borough's home visiting team. The chair of the governors currently takes a close interest in the provision for children with special educational needs. He has received appropriate training.
- 50 The school does not have a delegated budget so governors have only limited involvement in the school's financial planning. They fulfil their responsibilities appropriately. The chair and vice chair are frequent visitors to the school. Meetings are held regularly and the governing body receives and discusses reports from the headteacher. The school has a satisfactory current school development plan, taking into account the recent change in leadership and the uncertainties, which have surrounded the school's conversion to a Nursery Education Centre. Parents' views of the school were sought prior to the plan being drawn up and governors were appropriately involved in discussing the plan. Monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is satisfactory. The headteacher sees and comments on the three weekly planning. He is beginning to work alongside staff and observe them at work. There is no formal appraisal system in the Borough, but last year all staff had the very valuable opportunity to discuss their work and to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. These interviews were also used well to identify training needs for the school and for individuals.
- 51 The schools' ethos is very good. Staff have a common sense of purpose and they share a joint vision of the type of education they plan to offer. The school's aims, to create a secure, happy environment, where each child is treated as an individual and develops self-confidence, are fully met. The variety of cultures represented within the school is valued and this enriches the curriculum provided. Parents are very supportive of the values the school promotes and this is reflected in the positive views expressed at the parents' meetings and in the questionnaires.

53 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 52 The school is well staffed with qualified teachers and nursery nurses. They work together as a very effective team. Individual staff strengths are recognised and valued by the school. The nursery nurses make a very good contribution and they are fully involved in all aspects of the school. Staff have access to a regular programme of training which is linked to the school's development plan. They all have professional development interviews with the headteacher which help to identify the needs of individual staff members and ways in which these needs can be met.
- 53 The classrooms are of good size and the garden area provides a wide range of facilities to extend children's physical skills. It is gradually being developed to support work in other areas, for example by providing areas for growing plants and habitats for various mini-beasts. Staff make full and imaginative use of the space available.
- 54 However, the accommodation is in an unsatisfactory condition. Some of the window frames have rotted to such an extent that they are in danger of falling out. In one classroom the frames have warped so that windows do not open or close properly. The roof leaks in several places. This has the effect of damaging work on display and resources. In one classroom the ceiling has been badly damaged by leaks. The accommodation for staff is very cramped and the room used by the full-time children for their lunch is inadequate.
- 55 The accommodation was a key issue in the previous report and, apart from some urgent repairs, the only

issue, which has been addressed, is the construction of a covered way between classes. There are plans to extend the accommodation when the school becomes a Nursery Education Centre in September. This will ease the pressure on administrative accommodation and provide better kitchen facilities, but will not address all the problems with the rest of the building. There is still no covered play area.

56 Resources for learning are very good in all the areas of learning. There is good book provision and the school also makes use of visits from the mobile library. Resources are well cared for and carefully selected to stimulate children's interest. For example, the literacy-based classroom has an attractive book corner with cushions and comfortable seating which encourages children to relax quietly and look at books. Computers and listening centres are readily available which benefit children's learning. Children are expected to use resources with care and to tidy them away responsibly at the end of sessions. Some of the displays in classrooms are too high for the children. There are, however, some good displays for children to relate to, for example the photographs of the backs of children's heads which, when lifted up, reveal a picture of the child's face.

58 **The efficiency of the school**

57 The good budget management procedures described in the previous report have been maintained. The Standards Fund money for staff training is allocated in line with priorities identified in the school development plan. Staff take every opportunity to raise funds for the school and have been successful in gaining money, from the local City Challenge programme and the Stratford Single Regeneration Budget, to support educational developments. There are regular donations from St Paul's Church and parents are involved in fund raising initiatives. There is a school fund to which parents are invited to make a small weekly donation. The school manages its finances well to the benefit of the children and remains within its budget.

58 The money allocated for children with special educational needs is appropriately spent on providing additional adult support.

59 The school should review its arrangements for keeping the school fund accounts. There has not been a recent audit to review the school's accounting procedures and the headteacher has asked for one to be carried out.

60 The school makes very good use of its accommodation despite its unsatisfactory physical condition. The number of adults in relation to children is good. The headteacher does not have class responsibility and is available to work alongside teachers and children in the classrooms. Nursery nurses and special needs assistants give very good support to children. The school also has very good links with a range of adults from other agencies who assist children with special educational needs.

61 In terms of teaching staff there are several times when their expertise is underused. Teachers are usually based in each of the classrooms on a rota basis and for safety reasons they have to stay in the room. They plan a good range of activities and initially work with target groups of children. However, because children choose their own activities, there are times when sufficient children do not use the inside activities, as the majority prefers the outside area. This is not an efficient use of teachers' time.

62 The school does not have a delegated budget, but on the basis of the quality of teaching and the standards attained, the school gives at least satisfactory value for money.

Personal and social development

- 63 The personal and social development of children is good. It is a strength of the school and it has a positive impact on all other areas of learning. The school has maintained the high standard achieved in the previous inspection. Most children are likely to meet the standards expected nationally by the time they are five. Children make good and often very good progress in this area of learning. Many children find it difficult to share and take turns when they start school and they have poor listening skills. Initially, they work alongside other children but, with guidance, they establish effective relationships and work and play as part of a group. This is noticeable in role play, for example in the home corner and outside. Children learn to behave well. They start to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong and know what is expected. Children begin to respect the views of others and they form good relationships with adults. The quieter children, and those with English as an additional language, gradually gain confidence and they begin to speak freely to other children and to adults.
- 64 Children concentrate on each activity for appropriate periods of time. They learn to make their own choices, for example when selecting items to make models and deciding what they want to do for a large part of each session. When they first come to school, many children find it difficult to settle to one activity and some quietly watch what is going on. Gradually they actively explore a range of the activities planned for them. For example, they use magnifying glasses provided to look at snails and a caterpillar. Children become increasingly independent and take care of their personal needs. Most take off their own shoes and socks to play in the sandpit and only need assistance with shoe fastenings.
- 65 Children learn to share and take turns. With adult guidance they play games and patiently wait to take part in action rhymes at group time. There are well-established routines that give children good guidance and help them to behave appropriately in a range of situations. For example, each group has a turn on the pedal toys outside and they have badges to show this. Children learn to care for living things when they find mini-beasts in the school grounds and they respect school property. They respond to music well by joining in and playing a range of instruments, singing or dancing. There is a generally good response to the wide range of activities provided, especially those set up outside.
- 66 The quality of teaching is very good and this has a significant effect on the standards achieved. Promoting self-esteem and developing confidence are both seen as very important and all adults play a valuable part in encouraging these on a daily basis. There are well-planned activities that provide good opportunities for children to extend their personal and social development. For example, there is a wide range of role play activities and adults join in these activities to extend children's learning. Staff are good role models of what is expected. They help children learn how to work and play with others and how to take part in group activities. In large group sessions adults continually reinforce the need to listen to others and respect what they have to say. There is a very consistent approach to behaviour by all adults, which gives children very good guidance and support. Records are kept of children's responses to activities and these build up a clear picture of the progress they are making.

Language and literacy

- 67 When they enter the school, children's development in language and literacy is below average. Several children have been referred for speech therapy and a significant number of children have English as an additional language. The school is fortunate in having some staff who speak other languages and this helps liaison with parents. They also support children well and help them make satisfactory progress.

By the time they are five the majority of children are likely to attain standards that are slightly below the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of that age. During their time in the school, children make satisfactory progress in language and literacy in relation to their prior attainment. They make good progress in the development of their listening skills. Children with special educational needs are well supported and they make satisfactory progress.

- 68 In large and small group situations children listen well to staff. They enjoy listening to stories and songs and know a good number of songs and rhymes by heart. In story sessions they join enthusiastically in the known parts of stories, for instance “The Three Billy Goats Gruff”. Children’s speaking skills are less well developed. They often speak in short phrases and their vocabularies are limited. Some children at an early stage of English language acquisition rely heavily on non-verbal communication.
- 69 Children enjoy books, and those whose class base is the language focus room, often choose to sit in the reading corner and look at books together. During the inspection in the individual choice times, which took up the greater part of each session, the majority of children chose outdoor, physical activities which limited the opportunities for many children to develop their literacy skills. However, the start of each session often includes the opportunity to listen to a favourite story. Some large group times at the end of the session also include good opportunities to introduce pre-reading skills. The organisation of these times has improved since the last inspection with a good variety of activities being used. For example, in one session the nursery nurse extended children’s understanding of phonics by focussing on the sounds some letters made. On another occasion, a different nursery nurse led a very effective bilingual story session, which developed children’s confidence and enhanced learning.
- 70 Teachers provide a good range of activities in the language focus room to develop children’s skills. However, in practice children do not regularly take up these activities and this limits their progress. During the inspection very few children were observed writing in a range of situations, especially outside. In addition, whilst opportunities for creative play are varied and stimulating, staff miss opportunities to develop children’s language and literacy skills when they do not interact with them sufficiently. For example, when the outside play area included a station there was insufficient focused adult input to develop opportunities for children to play at taking bookings and issuing tickets.
- 71 Staff model spoken language effectively for children but they do not always give the children enough time to respond. In many situations children rely on non-verbal communication and signal their replies by nods or gestures. Whilst this is acceptable from children who are learning English and are at an early stage of language acquisition, its general acceptance does not help other children extend their speaking skills satisfactorily.
- 72 Most children enjoy books and stories. In group sessions they take part enthusiastically and listen well. The weekly library sessions are mainly for children to change their books. They are not used to share books with children or to encourage children to talk about books, so a valuable opportunity is lost.
- 73 Staff build up good records of what children can do through the observations they make. These assessments are used to inform planning for targeted children. Notes about children’s responses to these set activities are added to the individual child’s record.
- 74 Resources are satisfactory. There are bi-lingual texts and tapes as well as multi-lingual signs around the school. There is basic provision of facilities to encourage and support the development of the early stages of writing, but this area of literacy is not well promoted.

Mathematics

- 75 The majority of children make at least satisfactory progress and some make good progress. Many are likely to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make appropriate progress. Children learn to make repeating patterns, for example with beads or play dough shapes. Some record these patterns by drawing or painting them. They sort by colour and recognise simple two-dimensional shapes such as circles, squares, triangles and rectangles. Most children count to five and match one to one. They consolidate these skills through counting rhymes and songs. Some older and higher attaining children count to ten and beyond. They gradually begin to identify numbers and write them correctly. Children extend their vocabulary and become familiar with terms such as taller and shorter and use them correctly. Some are familiar with the concept of more and less.
- 76 Children respond satisfactorily to mathematical activities and they gain confidence in practical work. Many do not choose this type of activity without adult intervention. Some children are less confident when recording numbers.
- 77 Children make good use of programs on the computer to extend their counting skills and number recognition. They also complete patterns and print out their work. They are proud of what they do. Some children begin to develop an understanding of larger numbers, for example their own and other peoples' house numbers. Children gain confidence in comparing things by size and weight. For example, they fill different size buckets with sand and some say which is heaviest and explain why. Children are introduced to simple data handling when they are given a table to complete, for example by finding out the ages of the staff.
- 78 Teaching is satisfactory. Staff plan a wide range of practical activities to extend children's mathematical skills. They have a secure understanding of the needs of children under five. Opportunities to promote mathematical understanding through other areas of learning and including the outside area, for example by counting or using a range of mathematical vocabulary, are less well developed. The majority of teaching is on an individual level or in a small group and this is appropriate. Teachers make relevant on-going assessments, as children participate in planned activities and as a result they know what individual children can do. Teachers plan for children to have individual choice from a range of activities and they also plan focused activities. The take-up of the latter, which were inside during the inspection, was often very limited. Children prefer to spend their time outside and, as a result, teachers do not interact with enough children during these long sessions to extend their mathematical experiences.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 79 Most children are likely to attain the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the term after their fifth birthday. This is the result of the very broad range of appropriate experiences that are provided. The activities stimulate interest well and extend children's knowledge and understanding of the environment. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when it was reported that there was insufficient coverage of the human and social area of learning. Children investigate everyday materials using their senses. They grow a range of plants from seeds and bulbs and they know that plants need water to grow. Children observe mini-beasts, such as caterpillars and snails, closely. They know that caterpillars change into butterflies. Children learn that books are a good source of information and staff use pictures in books well to extend children's learning.
- 80 Children develop information technology skills and gradually learn to operate the computer confidently. They use the mouse or tracker ball competently and also move the cursor using the arrow keys. Computers are used well to support learning in other areas of learning, for example for matching, counting, number recognition and pattern making in mathematics. There are programs to encourage children to recognise rhymes, initial letter sounds and to sequence activities such as dressing Teddy. Others help to develop listening skills and an understanding of positional language, for example by

asking children to select the bucket that has the spade on top from a series of pictures. Children begin to learn that some items are powered by electricity, which is provided by a wire and a plug, whilst others use batteries. For example, they see how the programmable floor turtle works with batteries and, with guidance, they input a series of instructions to make it move around the floor. Children also learn to operate the tape recorder independently.

- 81 Children go on visits, for example to the local shops, and they look at maps of the local area. Visitors to the school also extend their knowledge of the world around them. Children become aware of the past and present. They look at photographs of themselves and staff as babies and compare them with current pictures.
- 82 Most children make good progress in this area of learning and they are keen to take part in the wide range of activities provided. They are curious about what is going on around them and they develop a caring approach to living things. Children with special educational needs make appropriate progress. With adult support all children, including those with English as an additional language, extend their vocabularies appropriately.
- 83 Teaching is good. Staff interact well with children to extend their ideas and stimulate interest. Some use open-ended questions to good effect to encourage children to make choices and think for themselves. The planned curriculum is very broad and it offers good first-hand experiences, which are very appropriate. This is one reason for the good progress children make. Staff also take advantage of events that occur, for example when children's attention was drawn to men cleaning the street lights outside the school. Resources within the grounds are being extended well to promote learning. For example, the garden area is being developed to provide space for growing plants as well as a variety of habitats for mini-beasts. Records are kept of children's responses to the range of activities and there is some monitoring of their participation, for example on the computer.
- 84 There is a good range of books, posters and pictures to support the planned activities and they are used effectively.

Creative development

- 85 Children make good progress in this area of learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Entry records show that when many children come to school they have no understanding of how to use scissors or handle glue. By the time they are five years old most children attain the nationally expected outcomes for children of their age. They use a wide range of materials with confidence and display appropriate skills in cutting, gluing and using tools for writing and drawing. Some children spend the majority of their time in this area, for example making imaginative three-dimensional models using recyclable materials.
- 86 Children use their imaginations well to act out their ideas in a variety of situations. For example, they use the home corner and the outside playhouse and they 'perform' on the outside stage. Children enjoy role play and are friends with each other. They organise themselves effectively.
- 87 In music sessions children have access to a variety of unpitched percussion instruments and use these with confidence and developing skill. They enjoy exploring the variety of sounds that can be created from the range of multicultural instruments available to them. In dance sessions children show great enjoyment of movement. They respond well to their teachers and show developing confidence and skill when they move to music. Children enjoy painting and drawing and their efforts are recorded in their personal profiles, which are available to parents and taken home at the end of their time in the nursery.
- 88 Teaching is good with a wide range of activities provided, which are well resourced. Adults support

children well by extending their language appropriately and broadening their experiences. Children's work and photographs taken during various events are well displayed.

Physical development

- 89 Children make good progress in this area of learning especially in developing their gross motor skills. The majority of children will have developed their physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skill to the levels expected in the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five. The outdoor play area provides them with a range of opportunities to climb, balance and use scooters and tricycles, which they do safely. They use the climbing apparatus with confidence and agility. They have access to a good range of large wheeled toys which they use confidently, showing awareness of other children engaged in different activities.
- 90 Children have access to a stimulating and appropriate range of activities to promote their finer physical skills by handling equipment, tools and art materials.
- 91 The teaching in this area is satisfactory. On occasions there is insufficient monitoring and teacher intervention to ensure an appropriate balance between activities that help to develop gross motor skills and those which extend fine motor skills. There is good regard to children's safety. The outdoor environment is especially well organised and offers a stimulating range of activities. It varies from day to day. The layout of the equipment is well planned and readily accessible to all children. Children are given good opportunities to become independent when they help to tidy up at the end of the session.
- 92 Staff provide a wide range of activities to develop children's physical skills. Children have opportunities to explore a range of media, for example, wet and dry sand, salt, play dough, and other modelling materials. They have access to a large supply of building blocks and other construction toys. The previous report mentioned that it was possible for children to have considerable experience in some areas and only limited experience in others. This is still the case. Planning shows that there is some integration of outside physical activities to the rest of the curriculum; for example, to extend mathematical positional language and literacy related skills. In view of the time children spend on outside learning activities there is a need to further maximise the value of this work by improved planning to focus on its potential for supporting attainment in all areas of the curriculum.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

93 A team of three inspectors spent a total of seven days gathering first-hand evidence. During the inspection 33 teaching sessions were observed amounting to over 13 hours. Work in all areas of learning was inspected including samples of children's work, pictures of recent activities and records of individual children's development. Inspectors talked to and played with children to assess their responses to various activities. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the deputy and the other permanent teacher. The temporary teacher, the nursery nurses and other members of staff were also spoken to. Discussions covered their roles and responsibilities, including their input into management and planning.

94 A questionnaire was sent to all parents and the registered inspector held two meetings, (one morning and one afternoon) during the week before the inspection, so that parents could express their views on the education provided by the school and other aspects of school life. Documentation, including the school development plan, policies for the areas of learning, pupils' records and teachers' plans, was studied in detail.

95 In addition a discussion was held with the chair of the governors.

97 DATA AND INDICATORS**97 Pupil data**

| | Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent) | Number of pupils with statements of SEN | Number of pupils on school's register of SEN | Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals |
|---------|---|---|--|---|
| Nursery | 60 | 0 | 7 | 15 |

97 Teachers and classes**97 Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)**

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers): | 4 |
| Number of pupils (full-time equivalent) per qualified teacher: | 15 |

97

97 Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of education support staff: | 5 |
| Total aggregate hours worked each week: | 79.7 |

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Average class size: | 20 |
|---------------------|----|

97 Financial data

The school does not have a fully delegated budget. Full financial information was not available to the inspection team.

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out: | 97 |
| Number of questionnaires returned: | 44 |

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school | 43 | 55 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren) | 60 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school handles complaints from parents well | 33 | 64 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught | 51 | 35 | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress | 56 | 40 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work | 52 | 45 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons | 45 | 45 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home | 39 | 54 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren) | 48 | 52 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school achieves high standards of good behaviour | 52 | 43 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| My child(ren) like(s) school | 73 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

In relation to the concerns expressed about the information the school gives parents, the findings of the team are that the school makes a good range of information available, about both what is taught and what the children do.