

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Low Hall Nursery School**  
Walthamstow

LEA area: London Borough of Waltham Forest

Unique Reference Number: 103027

Inspection Number: 193368

Acting Headteacher: Sandie Moppett

Reporting inspector: Judith Charlesworth  
21501

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706654

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
Type of control:	Local Education Authority Maintained
Age range of pupils:	2 to 5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Low Hall Lane Walthamstow London E17 8BE
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Appropriate authority:	Waltham Forest Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Ms. Debbie Cowley
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Judith Charlesworth, Rgl	Language and literacy	Characteristics of the school
	Knowledge and understanding of the world	Attainment and progress
	Creative development	Teaching
	Equality of opportunity	Curriculum and assessment
		Leadership and management
		The efficiency of the school
Gill Hoggard, Lay Inspector		Attendance
		Partnership with parents and the community
		Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Diane Wilson	Personal and social development	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
	Mathematics	Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	Physical development	Support, guidance and children's welfare
	Special educational needs	

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Children's personal development and their attitudes to their work and play are very good, and their relationships are outstanding.
- All children make very good progress in their personal and social development, and good progress in their physical development.
- The provision for children with special educational needs is very good and they make good progress.
- The provision for children's spiritual and social development is very good, and provision for their cultural and moral development are outstanding.
- The staff's approach to managing children's behaviour is very good, and children's behaviour is good as a result.
- The school's ethos is outstanding.
- Parents feel welcomed, well supported and well informed.
- The acting headteacher has a very clear understanding of what needs to be improved, and is working very hard and successfully to achieve this, well supported by the staff and governing body.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The duties of the school's responsible Authority, the Local Education Authority, have not been properly discharged over the past few years which has left the school with problems, particularly in financial management and efficiency.
- II. The change in the school population to include more children with special educational needs, many of whom have considerable difficulties, has not been recognised in the resources allocated to the school, and there are now not enough teachers to meet the needs of all the children.
- III. The small minority of children with average and above average abilities make unsatisfactory progress in mathematics and language and literacy.
- IV. The curriculum is not written down. Consequently, curriculum planning is very limited and does not give staff guidance for planning activities to promote high attainment.
- V. Assessments of children's achievements do not link in with the curriculum and are not used to help with curriculum planning.
- VI. There is insufficient direct teaching in language and literacy and mathematics.

**Low Hall is a developing school whose strengths easily outweigh its weaknesses. However, the weaknesses will form the basis of the school's action plan which will be sent to all parents and guardians of children at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

Although all key issues arising from the previous inspection had been addressed, improvement has only been satisfactory. In response to previous inspection findings, children's access to all aspects of the language and literacy curriculum has been improved in several ways; an effective child protection policy has been put into place, and several measures to improve attendance, punctuality and registration have been implemented. More recently, a scheme of work for mathematics has been created and provides a good model for the others to follow, and policies for all the areas of learning have been completed. New curriculum planning systems are being trialled, and children's progress is recorded more frequently and in more detail. Documentation on staff's roles, responsibilities, liaison with parents and planning for and documenting children's progress has been put into place. These measures are very good but have not been in place long enough to be effective in raising standards. The commitment of the acting headteacher, governors and staff to further

developing the school indicates that the capacity for further development is good, given a similar commitment from a permanent headteacher and suitable support from the Appropriate Authority.

## **Standards**

On first starting nursery, the attainment of the great majority of children is well below that expected for their age. Half the children have English as an additional language. Over sixty per cent of the children have special educational needs, which include severe learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, autism, language delay, cerebral palsy and various medical conditions. This understandably affects their ability to learn at the rate expected for their age. Others have lacked the appropriate experiences to develop their language and social skills to an expected level. Many children enter the nursery with very limited understanding, communication and social skills, although a small minority have average and above average skills.

Children make satisfactory progress overall although progress in their physical development is good, and in personal and social development is very good. The progress of children with special educational needs is good and children with English as an additional language learn to speak and understand English at a rate in line with their overall capabilities. The progress of the more able children within the nursery, however, is only just satisfactory, and unsatisfactory in language and literacy and mathematics. By the time they leave the school, the majority of children are on line to achieve the desirable outcomes of the pre-school stage of their education in personal, social and physical development, but the skills of the majority in language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world are below expectations for their age.

## 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	Very good
Creative development	Good

The quality of teaching is good. Twenty nine per cent of lessons were judged to be very good, 45 per cent were good and 26 per cent were satisfactory. No differences in the overall quality of teachers' and nursery nurses' work was observed. Teaching is at its best when supporting children's physical, social and personal development and as a result, children make better progress in these than in other areas of the curriculum. Direct teaching of physical activities is included in all sessions and the promotion of children's social and personal development is at the root of all activities. The teaching of children with special educational needs is also particularly good, and these children make good progress. All staff are extremely successful in quietly and calmly setting and keeping to boundaries, and promoting independence and reflection. The multi-lingual staff make a very good contribution to ensuring children with English as an additional language have equal opportunities for understanding and making progress. Weaknesses in teaching centre around the lack of suitable planning and provision for the small minority of children who do not have special educational needs or other problems, and who, as a result, do not make maximum progress. Staff intervention and teaching does not generally take them to the levels of which they are capable, and some do not assess children's understanding on the spot in order to further stretch them.

*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 overall, and the behaviour of many is very good. Children who have behaviour problems learn to conform to the nursery's clear rules and expectations and settle in well.
Attendance	Despite the best efforts of the school, attendance is unsatisfactory and children are often brought to school late and collected early from their sessions.
Ethos*	The ethos of the school is excellent. Staff are committed to providing a secure and stimulating environment in which children can grow and progress; children's behaviour is good, their attitudes very good and their relationships outstanding.
Leadership and management	The leadership provided by the acting headteacher and the governing body is good, but the management provided by the Appropriate Authority (the Local Education Authority) is poor. This has left the school with some difficulties, particularly in relation to financial management and efficiency. The acting headteacher has a very clear and well-communicated vision of how to improve the school, and, well-supported by the governing body and staff, is working very hard to do this.
Curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory in practice due to staff skills and creativity, but documented planning is weak. A new planning system has been introduced this term which is an improvement, but is not yet based on long term curriculum plans outlining what children are expected to know, understand and do while they are attending the nursery. The lack of these is a weakness and has the effect of limiting the progress of the more able children.
Children with special educational needs	Provision for these children is very good. They are well supported to develop their skills in line with the targets set on their individual education plans. These are well written and regularly reviewed and parents are suitably informed and involved. Teaching is generally very good, and the children make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for children's spiritual and social development is very good, and provision for their moral and cultural development is outstanding and strengths of the school.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Although well qualified and experienced, there are insufficient teaching staff for the numbers of children, taking into account the high percentage with special educational needs and other problems. This has the effect of limiting the progress of the more able children. The number, qualifications, experience and quality of work of the education support staff is good. The accommodation and resources, and their use, are good.
Value for money	A firm judgement on the school's value for money can not be made in the light of the lack of suitable financial procedures and safeguards. However, weighing up all the positive and negative contributory factors, indications are that it is likely to be satisfactory.

\*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
VII. Their children like school. VIII. The school is very easy to approach when parents have problems or difficulties. IX. Standards of behaviour are good. X. Parents feel welcomed and well-informed about their children's progress.	XI. A small number of parents felt that they

Inspectors' judgements support the positive views of the parents, and also their concern. Liaison with parents over work for children to do at home is limited. This is largely because the curriculum is not yet documented and so this information is not routinely made available, unless parents specifically ask for it.

### KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve standards of education and rectify weaknesses identified in the inspection, the headteacher, school staff, governing body and Appropriate Authority must:

1. **Improve the management of the school by developing a suitable working relationship between all the above parties, whereby each party's duties and responsibilities are clearly defined and carried out;**  
(paragraphs: 87, 88, 93, 95, 106, 109)
2. **Together, define the nature and purpose of the nursery, and establish suitable levels of resourcing for its particular intake of children;**  
(paragraphs: 53, 95, 96, 100, 101, 107)
3. **Raise the attainment of children with average and above average abilities, particularly in language and literacy and mathematics by:**
  - a. Developing curriculum and shorter-term planning to:
    - provide clear guidelines and programmes of work in each of the areas of learning, in line with the government's revised guidelines for the curriculum for the foundation stage of education;  
(paragraphs: 53, 55, 123, 132, 134, 140, 150, 161, 170)
    - ensure that relevant material to prepare children for the National Literacy and Numeracy projects' reception year programmes of work is incorporated into the language and literacy, and mathematics curricula;  
(paragraphs: 61, 123, 132, 140)
    - ensure the programmes of work provide progressively challenging work in each area of learning for children of all ages and abilities;  
(paragraphs: 55, 119, 139, 140, 150, 170)
    - ensure that short-term planning indicates what children should learn from each activity, and enables an assessment of whether they have been successful to be made;  
(paragraphs: 53, 131, 149)

- a. Developing assessment procedures to:
  - ensure that criteria for judging children’s attainment and progress link directly with the learning outcomes specified in the new programmes of work in each area of learning; (paragraphs: 64, 132, 140, 150, 161, 170)
  - use the information gained to plan specific activities, and to develop the curriculum, to further children’s attainment and progress; (paragraphs: 64, 132, 150, 161, 170)
  
- a. Increasing the amount of direct teaching in language and literacy and mathematics. (paragraphs: 10, 53, 57, 63, 127, 128, 134, 138, 139)

In setting timescales for these developments, the very limited number of teaching staff to effect them should be taken into consideration.

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated in paragraphs:

- Children’s attendance and punctuality. (Paragraph: 45)
- Organisation of children’s learning. (Paragraph: 63)
- simplification of assessment documents. (Paragraph: 64)
- Staff training in the handling and medical needs of children with significant Special educational needs. (Paragraph: 80)
- Using every opportunity to stretch children. (Paragraphs: 53, 125, 130)
- Increasing the use of writing measuring estimating and the use of programmable toys throughout the curriculum. (Paragraphs: 130, 133, 137, 140)
- Making everyday labels in a range of community languages. (Paragraphs: 58, 120, 140, 162)
- 

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **• Characteristics of the school**

1.Low Hall Nursery school is situated in Walthamstow, a socially and culturally diverse area of London. The nursery was built 15 years ago to replace one of much older origins which served the local community. Children now travel in from a wider area as the nursery provides for children who have special educational needs within its mainstream setting. A few of these children are transported to the nursery by a Local Authority bus.

2.The school has 23 full-time and 47 part-time children which gives a full time equivalent of 46.5. Full-time places are given on application by parents or community professionals, and the number has more than doubled since the previous inspection. Part-time children attend sessions to suit their circumstances. Most part-time children attend either five morning or five afternoon sessions, but this is not always the case. As children mature, most part-time children stay on for lunch before going home, or arrive in time for lunch before their afternoon session begins. Some children attend for three sessions only. Most children begin attending the nursery once they become three years of age, but leave at different times according to the age of intake at the school they will be moving to. Consequently, children spend varying amounts of time at the nursery, although on average, they stay four terms.

3.The school is taking part in a DfEE project for the inclusion of younger children with particular identified needs into nurseries, and six children who are “rising three” are currently part of this project. Others previously part of the project have now transferred to the nursery’s main roll.

4. Fifty seven per cent of the children are boys, and 43 per cent are girls. More boys than girls have special educational needs. Eighty seven per cent of the children are from ethnic minority groups which is far greater than average, and 50 per cent have English as an additional language, the majority of these speaking Urdu, Punjabi and Gujarati. Thirteen per cent of the children are white. Sixty three per cent of the children have identified special educational needs, which is a very high number and more than double the number at the time of the previous inspection. Four children (6 per cent) currently have a statement of their special educational needs, which is double the number at the previous inspection, and nine further children (14 per cent) are currently undergoing the statementing process.

5. The James Street Ward of Waltham Forest has been identified as one of the 250 most deprived areas in England. The rate of unemployment and single-parent families is high and many more children than average come from disadvantaged homes. Fifty seven per cent of full time children are entitled to free school meals which is far above average. The attainment of children on entry is overall well below that expected for their age.

6. The staff and governors of the school have created a set of aims which are very well met in the nursery's work, and are as follows:

7. Low Hall Nursery School offers a welcoming, secure and stimulating learning environment where all children are encouraged by trained staff to achieve their individual potential by active exploration and discovery through play.

- To provide exciting, developmentally appropriate challenges so that each child is motivated, enjoys learning and has fun.
- To offer every child a broad and balanced curriculum which will help them to fulfil their potential in all aspects of development.
- To provide a warm, rich, safe environment where all members of the nursery community are able to make full use of the available resources.
- To nurture confidence, independence and self-esteem.
- To develop an understanding of society by encouraging respect, empathy and co-operation.
- To celebrate the achievements of all.
- To create a partnership where staff, parents, governors and other members of the nursery community see themselves as part of a team, working for the benefit of children.
- That children's learning is supported by highly motivated staff, including trained teachers and nursery officers.
- To encourage parents and carers to become actively involved in their child's education, both at home and at school.
- To have a commitment to provide equal opportunities for all members of the nursery community.
- To be aware that everyone is unique and celebrate difference.

## 1.Key Indicators

### Attendance

Percentage attendance is generally in the low eighties and is unsatisfactory.

### Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

### Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	29
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

## 8. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### 8. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

#### 8. Attainment and progress

2. On first starting nursery, the attainment of the great majority of children is well below that expected for their age although some have average, and a few have above average skills. Half the children have English as an additional language although they learn to speak and understand English at a rate in line with their overall capabilities. Over sixty per cent of the children have special educational needs, which include severe learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, autism, language delay, cerebral palsy and various medical conditions. This understandably affects their ability to learn at the rate expected for their age. Another 20 per cent have lacked the appropriate experiences to develop their language and social skills to an expected level. Consequently, many children enter the nursery with very limited understanding, communication and social skills, and the nursery's priority is to help these children become ready to learn to learn.

3. Children make satisfactory progress overall although progress in their physical development is good, and in personal and social development is very good due to the strong emphasis on these areas. The progress of children with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good as they are systematically helped to achieve the targets set on their individual education plans. This maintains the position noted in the previous inspection. The progress of the more able children within the nursery, however, is unsatisfactory in language and literacy and mathematics. Many of these children need to "catch up" when they first start at the nursery, and their progress tends to be satisfactory initially, and then to slow down as they do not have a sufficiently challenging curriculum or an adequate amount of direct teaching. By the time they leave the school, the majority of children are on line to achieve the desirable outcomes of the pre-school stage of their education in personal, social and physical development, but the skills of the majority in language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world are below expectations for their age. This apparent deterioration in standards since the previous inspection stems from the increased numbers, and the severity of difficulties, of the children with special educational needs.

4. Most children start nursery with low levels of **personal and social development**, either because they have special educational needs or because of limited experiences. As a result, many initially have difficulties in learning to conform, work, play, or to consider others. Children make very good progress and the majority, including many of those with special educational needs are on line to achieve the desirable outcomes of this area of learning by the time they are five. Children with significant learning difficulties do not achieve these levels. Nevertheless these children also make very good progress due to high quality support and the strong emphasis on promoting these areas of children's development throughout all the nursery's activities. This makes a significant contribution to children's learning and progress across the curriculum.

5. Children work very well together, in pairs, small groups or large groups, and frequently choose to work together, for example to use the computer. They listen patiently to each other and when outside, share the bikes and toys equitably. All children enjoy social activities in the classroom. For example, all, including those with the most significant difficulties, sit and eat a snack sensibly at the table provided, generally without supervision.

6. Children's personal development is very good and they make very good progress. Relationships with each other are outstanding. They enjoy each others' company and share

equipment well, for example offering a favourite toy to a new child in order to include them. Children are developing their understanding of the differences between themselves and others and are friendly and helpful to those with difficulties and from different cultural backgrounds

7.All children, including those with special educational needs, learn to be independent. Those that are physically able dress themselves and help to set up and tidy away activities. Some find dressing skills very difficult but try hard and turn to each other for help, not necessarily relying on an adult.

8.Many children arrive at the nursery lacking confidence and some with emotional and behavioural difficulties are boisterous and loud. However, they quickly respond to the practical, positive and firm approach of staff and become enthusiastic learners. All persevere well, given encouragement, and those with significant special educational needs try very hard when things are difficult

9.A minority of children enter the nursery with skills in **language and literacy** at average or above average levels for their age. However, the great majority enter with well below average skills due to their special educational needs or a lack of appropriate previous experiences. Many have English as an additional language, and speak and understand very little English. Some of these have below average skills in their own language

10.On arrival, most of the children have difficulty in expressing themselves clearly and in being understood. Some communicate mainly in sounds and gesture rather than words. The majority are interested in books and stories but pay more attention to pictures than print. They find sitting to listen to a story difficult and have to learn this skill. They enjoy scribbling, but do not yet try and “write.” Higher attaining children have a wide vocabulary and use sentences of several words. They listen carefully to stories, ask simple questions and remember what happens in stories they have heard before. They are starting to make precise marks on the paper, sometimes incorporating the letters of their names, but very few children can write their own name.

11.Overall, children make satisfactory progress in language and literacy. Children with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress, in line with their abilities, and those with English as an additional language also make good progress. The minority of children who do not have any special needs, however, do not make satisfactory progress. As they learn to conform, attend, apply themselves and take account of others, so their language and literacy skills develop. However, this is limited by insufficient planning and direct teaching to extend them, and the lack of a sufficiently rigorous curriculum. A few children are on line to attain at expected levels by the time they are five, but the skills of the great majority remain below average and they are not likely to achieve the desirable outcomes of this area of learning.

12.The listening skills of the majority of children are in line with expectations by the time they leave the nursery. Most listen attentively, although some find it difficult to do so for long periods of time. They answer questions and follow instructions. Higher attaining children listen very carefully, and follow complex instructions. They deduce what will happen in a story, or guess what might happen next. They are quick to stop an activity when asked and are able to hear important messages even when engrossed in their own activity

13.The speaking skills of the majority of children are below expectations for their age, although they try hard to communicate. Children with identified language and communication difficulties concentrate and persevere well and develop the confidence to use their new skills in other settings. Higher attaining children speak well and enjoy using language, for example organising one another in imaginary play. The majority of children, however, speak in simpler

sentences and often do not follow grammatical conventions. They enjoy chatting to one another, but generally talk about immediate matters such as the activities they are taking part in. Some children have well-below average skills. Their language is very simple, and often expressed in single words, or gestures. They find taking turns in conversation and discussion during group and story time difficult.

14. The reading and writing skills of the majority of children are below expectations for their age by the time they leave the nursery. A few higher attaining children have many of the skills expected, for example being able to explore and work with rhymes, hear and identify initial and final sounds in words and name the letters and sounds in their own names. One or two children can read a few words. The majority of children, however, do not have such advanced skills, although almost all enjoy books and are careful with them. These children use pictures as cues to the pages' contents, and some recognise one or two isolated words. Very few can recognise and name all the letters of the alphabet. Most children understand that writing is a form of communication and try writing for different purposes such as birthday cards. The majority have not yet attained the dexterity to use a pencil skilfully but show the beginnings of writing at different stages. However, by the time they leave the nursery, few can write more than one or two very simple words, write a simple sentence or attempt to write unknown words.

15. Children enter the nursery with **mathematical** skills below expectations for their age. The majority are not able to show their understanding of shape, position, size or quantity through play and cannot always recite numbers in the right order. Over 60 per cent of children have special educational needs and some know no numbers and do not recognise any numerals or shapes. Overall children make satisfactory progress, but by the time they leave the nursery they are not on line to achieve the desirable outcomes of this area of learning. The majority, who have special educational needs, make good progress towards the targets identified in their individual education plans, but those who do not have such difficulties do not make satisfactory progress and are limited by the lack of a suitably challenging curriculum and sufficient focused teaching of mathematical skills and understanding.

16. Children's use of mathematical language develops alongside their overall language skills. Most older, more able children name a circle, rectangle, triangle and square and almost all can identify a round shape. All except a few children with severe learning difficulties sort and match by colour and the majority of older children can sort by size and shape. Many children understand the concept of grading by size, and show an awareness of the passage of time through understanding the routine of the school day. Many children can count to five by rote although they are not yet able to recognise three frogs in a picture, and a few can count properly to twenty and more. Very few understand that *more* means to add to and that *less* means to take away from. Children's measuring skills are under-developed as there is little use of standard and non-standard measures, and they need considerable help to weigh and measure accurately. Children's estimation and recording skills are under-developed due to the lack of opportunity to use them. Their use of the computer in support of their mathematics work is satisfactory, although use of programmable toys is very limited. In practical situations, children use and apply their mathematical skills well. They can find the correct number of chairs for a small group, and set a table with the correct numbers of knives and forks.

17. The majority of children are not likely to achieve the desirable outcomes of **knowledge and understanding of the world** by the time they are five due to their special educational needs and under-developed concepts and communication skills. However, the skills, knowledge and understanding of the minority without special educational needs are appropriate for their age, and these children are on line to reach the desirable outcomes of knowledge and understanding of the world.

18. The great majority of children start the nursery with limited experience of the world. On

arrival, almost all children happily explore items and make very simple observations, but do not yet look at similarities or differences between them. Most children talk about matters of immediate interest, but the language skills of many are very under-developed which hinders their ability to do this. Most children do not yet have a clear idea of the past or features of their environment. Children enjoy construction activities but are not yet skilled at combining the components and do not select materials to join together with any clear purpose. The majority of children know broadly what a computer is for and how to use one.

19.All children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. The more able children talk about where and in what sort of accommodation they live, their families and important events in their lives such as birthdays and festivals. They have a good understanding of the multi-cultural nature of their community. Some are beginning to understand the concept of generations going back in time. The majority of children, however, are less advanced. They understand their immediate environment and are confident in moving round the nursery, knowing in which rooms different activities take place. However, they find it difficult to talk about their experiences, families and where they live, or to describe events that have happened to them in the past due to their under-developed language skills.

20.The majority of children's early scientific knowledge is limited. More able children recognise and talk about the features of living things, for example that plants need soil and water to grow, and that caterpillars hatch from eggs and turn into butterflies. They understand that some materials change when mixed and heated, for example the ingredients to make cakes, and that batteries can be used in simple circuits to power light bulbs. The majority, who have special educational needs, have less advanced skills. They know that plants need water, and that animals, such as fish, need food to live. These children, however, can not categorise materials by their properties, for example those that will sink or float, and can not see beyond the fun of switching torches on and off to consider how they are powered.

21.Children's construction and design skills are better developed. Many children use construction kits creatively and make models of their own design. More advanced children cut materials well, and understand that there are a variety of options for combining them such as sellotape and glue. Almost all children use tools such as rolling pins, spoons, cutters and other implements to cut out and shape items from play dough. Children's information technology skills are satisfactory although their use of programmable toys is limited. Most understand the use of some technological aids such as the tape recorder.

22.Children enter the school with varying **physical** skills. A few have physical disabilities and a significant minority have poor physical skills associated with learning difficulties and immaturity. Whilst many can run, jump and hop, the skills which involve manipulation, control and awareness of space are under-developed and below expected levels. Most have little understanding of positional language such as *on*, *off*, *under* and *over* and poor co-ordination when running, climbing, using crayons and, in particular, dressing.

23.All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall and very good progress in their control and awareness of space due to the extensive provision of appropriate and imaginative activities and the good quality direct teaching of these skills. The majority of children are likely to reach the desirable outcomes of physical development by the time they are five. This includes some with special educational needs, however others may not reach this level although they make good progress in line with their abilities.

24.Children climb, balance and haul themselves up a rope on fixed climbing equipment. All, including those with physical difficulties are able to negotiate uneven surfaces successfully. Almost all children steer prams and bikes with care, and can stop to order quickly. Many can ride a two-wheeled bike or steer a bike with passengers around a track, and most of the oldest and more able children ride bikes very quickly down a slope, stopping carefully at the end.

Many children are imaginative in their physical skills. For example, when jumping down onto a safety surface, one child jumped differently each time, using his own initiative to invent various shapes whilst he was in the air.

25. More able children use scissors well, cutting and snipping around a shape, and all children try hard, some using special scissors to help them. Many demonstrate good control when using the computer *mouse* or keyboard, and when building large and complex constructions using bricks, rods and connectors. Some have developed a good pencil grip by the time they leave the nursery although many children with special educational needs still use an immature grasp. Children's dressing skills are less well developed. They try hard and struggle to succeed, but some, particularly those with special educational needs, continue to need considerable help.

26. The **creative** skills of the majority of children are below expectations for their age when they first start the nursery. They make satisfactory progress, but the majority are unlikely to reach the desirable outcomes of this area of learning by the time they are five. However, the minority who do not have special educational needs have skills at expected levels by the time they leave the nursery.

27. Children's musical development is satisfactory. They appreciate music and join in with songs and rhymes, some being able to sing from memory and maintain the beat. Many move spontaneously to the beat and can supplement their singing with clapping, using the right rhythm. Children use a small range of percussion instruments and enjoy experimenting with sounds. The more able children have an understanding of the diversity of music and its cultural relevance. Children with special educational needs enjoy music and making sounds with instruments but overall, their skills are below expectations for their age.

28. Children's creative play skills are good. The older, more able children engage in spontaneous imaginative role-play, for example turning the loft area of their play house into a *swimming pool changing room*, and pretending a well-placed rug was a swimming pool. Children enjoy small world play, for example with animals and people, and use the outside resources, play house and tree-seat creatively. Most children are responsive in story time, and the more able enter into the spirit of the story, using their imagination. Children with special educational needs have limited imagination, but are beginning to use resources creatively, for example pretending to speak on the "telephone" in a play car

29. Children's art skills are satisfactory and in line with their overall abilities. They enjoy art activities and some name and choose carefully from a range of colours. They know that mixing paints results in a one of a different colour. Many children's paintings are "abstract", but others are representational, for example depicting characters in stories. Children use brushes, spreaders and fingers to make their paintings. They print using a range of shapes, and use play dough to make a variety of items.

30. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements on the development of children's creative physical skills, such as movement and dance, but indications are that they are likely to be in line with their other abilities.

### **37. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

31. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of children in the nursery are very good overall and are strengths of the school. Children's attitudes to work and play are very good. Their behaviour is good and the behaviour of many is very good. The relationships between children and with staff are excellent and have a strong and successful impact on the school's ethos and the quality of children's learning. The high standards reported in the previous inspection have been successfully maintained.

32. Parents are pleased that their children enjoy coming to school. On arrival, all except the very youngest separate easily from their parents or carers, and time is taken to allow them to achieve this. For example, parents often stay a while to introduce children to activities, and

siblings are also welcomed which makes the process as natural as possible. Staff play their part well by offering a warm welcome and a very wide and imaginative range of activities which soon capture children's interest. Children with special educational needs respond particularly well to this patient approach and children who travel without their parents are settled quickly by their linkworker.

33. During the school day, all children show interest in activities and most concentrate well, demonstrating perseverance until they complete their task. However, a few children who have emotional or behavioural difficulties do find this difficult and may quickly work through a succession of activities until supported by an adult. Children work very well together throughout the day. They often choose to paint or play a game with a friend and staff-led activities such as cooking or woodwork promote collaborative work well. Children very often include those with special educational needs when working or playing together. This provides a positive model for the children with special needs and gives excellent, natural opportunities to share, and to develop skills, concentration and confidence. Children learn from their mistakes, and try hard to improve. For example they will often have two or three attempts at close observational work in art, continuing until they are satisfied and proud of the result.

34. Behaviour is good overall and for many children it is very good. Children with behavioural difficulties take some time to accept and benefit from the positive atmosphere within the nursery but eventually develop a good understanding of the simple, direct rules in place. For example, although outdoor activities are adventurous and varied, very few collisions occur as children are taught to be aware of where they are in relation to others and to respect the right of all to share the equipment. This has a very positive impact on standards of behaviour and encourages all children, including the frail and very young, to join in activities that are physically challenging.

35. Children care about each other and take their share of responsibility. Many examples were seen of very active children moderating their actions in order to protect others. For example, they queued with care for the slide and waited with great patience until a child with physical difficulties struggled across a bridge with an uneven surface - and were delighted with his success. No incidences of harassment or bullying were seen during the inspection, and there have been no exclusions.

36. Relationships throughout the nursery, both between children and those with staff, are excellent. In addition to extensive and very well-developed collaborative work, children make friends and really enjoy each other's company. They move over to make room for another child to share in a game and all are included in imaginative role-play at the level at which they are capable. For example, a small group of older, more able children happily played imaginatively together, discussing rules and sharing equipment, and drew younger, less able children in as they showed interest. Friendships occur between children of different ages and abilities. For example one child was seen wheeling his friend in a wheelchair across the nursery, and stopping periodically to make sure he was sitting well back on the seat and was safe.

37. The inclusive ethos of the school, where everyone is unique yet no one is different, has a very positive impact upon children's personal development. As children become increasingly secure they develop the confidence to be adventurous and become fully involved in daily routines. They tidy up after activities and the early arrivals help set the nursery out. However, opportunities are missed to develop this further by giving specific jobs and responsibilities to the older children. Many children show initiative, particularly outside, and are keen to try out their ideas. For example they plan routes around the adventurous climbing equipment or discuss the best way to ride a bike with two seats on the back up the playground slope, electing one passenger to jump off and push at the appropriate time. Children are encouraged to reflect upon their actions when they may have upset a friend, and to make amends. Most

are able to describe what makes them happy or sad and a few are beginning to question and understand the beliefs of others, for example to ask why some celebrate Diwali and others do not.

#### **44. Attendance**

38. Attendance at the nursery has improved somewhat from the time of the last inspection, but is still unsatisfactory at around 81 per cent. Punctuality is also unsatisfactory. A period of 15 minutes is allowed morning and afternoon for children to arrive at the school, but during the inspection several children arrived as late as half an hour after the cut-off point. Some parents also arrive earlier than at the end of sessions and enter the nursery to wait for their children, or take them away early, which can have a disruptive effect on children's concentration and learning.

39. The school takes attendance very seriously and is doing everything it can to remedy this situation. Registers are completed according to statutory guidelines and an attendance policy and guidelines for registration have been produced, in response to a key issue for action in the previous report.

#### **46. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

##### **46. Teaching**

40. The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection. Although there was no unsatisfactory teaching in either inspection, 29 per cent of lessons were judged to be very good on this occasion in contrast with nine per cent last time. Teaching is carried out equally by teachers and nursery nurses and observations are based on all these staff. Twenty six per cent of lessons observed were satisfactory, and 45 per cent good. No differences in the overall quality of teachers' and nursery nurses' work was observed. The percentages of lessons in each category is similar, and both groups of staff show the same strengths and weaknesses.

41. Teaching is at its best when directed at supporting children's physical, social and personal development. Despite having no written curriculum, these areas of learning are well developed because the nursery has traditionally emphasised them as necessary to children's well-being and readiness to learn in other areas. As a result, children make better progress in these than in other areas of the curriculum. Teaching of physical activities is included in all sessions, both inside and outside. For example, outside, staff enthusiastically play specific games such as rolling giant discs down a slope, climbing onto the adventure equipment to show children how to use it and taking their turn in various races. They provide very good role models for the children and consequently, their physical development is well promoted as well as the social skills associated with collaborative activities. Inside, a different physical activity is set out each day, such as a deep physical education mattress with a box to jump from, or a low-level track to walk along whilst keeping balance. The careful teaching and supervision of the use of such equipment promotes children's control and physical development very well.

42. The promotion of children's social and personal development is at the root of all activities, and all staff are extremely successful in quietly and calmly setting and keeping to boundaries, and promoting independence and reflection. They have high expectations of children's personal and social skills. Whilst the consequences of unacceptable actions are made clear, and children are asked to reflect on their actions, they are not left "high and dry" but are always guided towards another activity. In this way, children know that they can not "push" the boundaries, and accept the school's few rules very well. This results in a calm atmosphere which supports children's good behaviour, positive attitudes and outstanding relationships. Many examples of this area of staff expertise were observed. For example, during a floor

game, one child got up and went out of the room, and then expected to return to her place in the game a few minutes later. She was told calmly that as she had left, she must wait until the game started again. This she did without any fuss at all, watching her friends quietly and enjoying their success. On another occasion, a child became over-boisterous at the water tray and was told quietly that he could not stay there but that the member of staff would help him find something else to do instead. He accepted this and went off happily, well-behaved, without the upset of reprimand.

43. Other elements of successful teaching include a very good knowledge of child development which works particularly well with the children with special educational needs. Each child is addressed as an individual, and is helped to progress towards well-chosen targets outlined on their individual education plans. These children make good progress. This very good level of knowledge also allows staff to plan and prepare interesting activities which promote children's development. Staff use time and available resources very well. No time is wasted, and the nursery is always set out with a large variety of interesting and well-resourced activities. This helps engage children's interest which contributes well to their positive attitudes and progress.

44. Staff have a good understanding of what language and activities are appropriate and appealing to young children without under-estimating or patronising them. The multi-lingual staff make a very good contribution to ensuring children with English as an additional language have equal opportunities for understanding and making progress, and the special support worker makes a valuable contribution to children's progress by targetting children for additional help within the general activities. She also works with any other children who want to join her which promotes their sociable acceptance of all their friends, regardless of language, gender or ability. Staff have high expectations of children's ability to make decisions and work and play independently, to behave and conform, and to look after the school community by tidying up at the end of a session or carrying out simple jobs. They show the children a great deal of consideration and respect, listen carefully to them and take their contribution seriously. All this contributes very well to children's personal development and progress.

45. The organisation of the nursery allows all staff to share roles and tasks, taking it in turns to organise activities and teach in different areas. This enables children to have equal contact with all staff over a period of time. The teamwork between the staff is very good. When one member of staff takes over an activity from another, there is always a quick "handover" conversation which contributes well to the smooth running of the nursery and children's security and progress.

46. Weaknesses in teaching centre around the lack of suitable planning and provision for the minority of children who do not have special educational needs, and who, as a result, do not make maximum progress. This stems in part from the lack of a written curriculum to guide staff in their planning; from the emphasis on providing for children with special educational needs and from the fact that there is a very limited number of teachers for this nursery's particular group of children.

47. Whilst activities are planned in each area of learning, they are not based on a documented curriculum with clearly defined learning outcomes which limits their effectiveness in promoting the more able children's progress. Staff intervention and teaching does not generally take the more able children to the levels of which they are capable and at times, staff show insufficient curricular subject knowledge. Some staff do not assess children's understanding on the spot in order to further stretch them, and continue to place priority on their social and personal development, and co-operative involvement. This limits their expectations of the more able children's capabilities, and in turn hinders their attainment and progress. For example, during a session in which children were experimenting with simple battery powered circuits, the adult

did not question the children sufficiently to establish and further their knowledge, and used several incorrect terms herself, for example saying “shiny” instead of “bright” and telling children that a bulb was dim because it was wearing out.

#### **54. The curriculum and assessment**

48. Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory. It promotes children's intellectual development, provides well for their physical development, and makes very good provision for their personal development through the strongly supportive ethos, establishment of appropriate routines and the emphasis on independence. The use of information technology across the curriculum is satisfactory. Staff skills and their good understanding of child development allow them to provide children with a broad range of appropriate, challenging experiences which promote progress in each of the recommended areas of learning. This maintains the findings of the previous inspection. However, these activities are not founded upon a well-structured and documented curriculum which includes incremental targets to challenge children of varying ages and abilities. Consequently, whilst children with special educational needs are well catered for, and all children work and play productively and with enjoyment, the minority with average and above average abilities are not sufficiently stretched and do not reach the levels of which they are capable, particularly in language and literacy and mathematics.

49. The nursery is in the process of moving from experience-based education to a curricular-based model, but this is at an early stage of development. The school is fully aware of the weaknesses in the written curriculum and has very recently begun to address them successfully. The acting headteacher has introduced a new planning system this term. However, although this now includes a good medium term planning sheet specifying learning outcomes in each of the areas of learning for the duration of a topic, these are not yet taken from clearly outlined schemes of work designed to promote high attainment. More able children, therefore, are not set suitable goals to aim for which limits the standards they attain. Nevertheless, the format helps staff keep the underlying purpose of activities in mind which is an improvement. A good, clear, mathematics curriculum document has been produced although it has not yet been introduced to nursery staff. This provides specific guidance on what should be taught, what children should learn and what activities are appropriate, and is a good model on which other curricular documents can be based.

50. The curriculum offered is broad and encompasses all the recommended areas of learning for children of this age. It is balanced although there is insufficient emphasis on the direct teaching of mathematics, language and literacy which restricts children's progress in these areas. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of personal, social and physical skills which is reflected in children's better progress in these areas. Whilst there is no requirement to teach religious education, nevertheless this is part of the children's multi-cultural education and is a very good feature which promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and knowledge and understanding of the world, very well.

51. Children with English as an additional language are very well supported by the ethos of the school which accepts and celebrates multi-culture as a matter of course, and works hard and successfully to give all children equality of opportunity for learning. This is reflected very well in the resources and display, although there is insufficient labelling in languages other than English. The multi-cultural staff are a very positive factor and offer direct support in various languages, and incidental support through their positive attitudes and role-modelling. This enables these children to make good progress and many attain levels comparable to their peers, in line with their abilities, by the time they leave the nursery.

52. Children with special educational needs are very well provided for by suitably planned and challenging activities and good levels of help. The work of the nursery is largely geared round meeting their needs, and is very successful at doing so. These children are very well

supported to take part in all activities and make good progress towards well- defined targets in their individual education plans. The youngest children, too, are offered high levels of support and appropriately challenging activities which enables them to settle, feel secure and make progress.

53. Good provision is made for purposeful play, discovery and investigation in all areas of learning although this does not always sufficiently challenge the more able children. Careful planning for the use of the outside area as an extra classroom contributes very well to this, and the area is always a hive of productive, enriching activity. Good use is also made of the community to enrich the curriculum and support children's learning. For example, children are taken to the local shops and park, and to visit local amenities. The curriculum provision for art, music, drama and role-play makes a satisfactory contribution to children's early attainment and understanding in the arts.

54. The school does not yet take sufficient account of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in its work which limits children's progress in mathematics and language and literacy - particularly that of the more able. Some children will have little experience of the reception year programmes of study due to their age and are therefore not sufficiently well prepared for this work, or the National Curriculum, when they move to their next school.

55. The linkworker system is good and works well. Children each have a linkworker which gives them a feeling of belonging and security. The classroom is well-organised into resourced areas which correspond to the curricular areas of learning. Staff rotate weekly to plan activities and teach within the areas, and over a period of six weeks see all their link children in each curricular area. This enables the linkworkers to keep track of their link children's skills and progress.

56. However, the organisation of children's learning is unsatisfactory. Most activities usually have a member of staff attached to support children's learning. However, children's choice of activities is largely self-determined and there is no tracking system to ensure that they choose or are directed to a balance of curricular activities over a given period. There is therefore no guarantee that they will receive a balanced curriculum, or that they will choose activities with suitable staff input. Whilst children with special educational needs receive frequent targeted help from the special support staff and the special needs co-ordinator, children without difficulties do not have the same benefits which limits the amount of direct teaching they receive. For example, over the course of an hour, one older, more able child only received twelve minutes of staff input. A "focus" activity is identified each day for particular staff input, for example woodwork or dance, but such activities are not always the most productive use of staff. There are too few times that children without special educational needs are directed to a taught session to further their skills, for example in reading or number work, and the *big group* times do not always meet the needs of the full ability range within the nursery. More able children would benefit from having small group work during some of these sessions, a system in operation for some with special educational needs.

57. The assessment of children's skills is satisfactory and improved since the previous inspection but still has weaknesses. Assessments are made at various times to contribute to children's record of achievement, beginning with a parental contribution and point-of-entry assessment and ending with a summary in each of the recommended areas of learning for transfer to the primary school. This successfully addresses a weakness noted in the previous inspection. Currently, more than one system is in use, which prevents a clear picture being established. However, very clear guidelines have recently been written on recording children's work and planning for their progress, and the linkworker's role in this. These instructions and associated pro-formas will shortly replace all previous versions which will clarify the system considerably, although some problems with the format remain. The various forms are for different purposes. Some, such as a "*book awareness profile*" provide supplementary

information; some are for “open” anecdotal records and some provide a check of progress over time in skills associated with the recommended areas of learning. These recording sheets do not link directly which makes the transfer of anecdotal information to the skills checklists difficult. Furthermore, the summative skills checklist is not extensive, nor derived from a documented curriculum and consequently it gives only a brief picture of children’s attainment and progress, does not indicate whether children have achieved what staff intended. Nor does it inform curriculum planning. These aspects of assessment are unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, records are now much more detailed and regularly updated, and cover children’s personal development well which is an improvement on previous practice.

58.Children with special educational needs have well-defined and appropriate targets set on their individual education plans which form the basis of most of their work within the nursery. The assessment of children’s progress towards these targets is very well noted and used well to inform subsequent planning for them.

59.Staff records are supplemented by very nice *workbooks* in which samples of children’s work, annotated with details about what they were asked to do, what they said and how much help they had are kept over their time in the nursery. This addresses a previously identified weakness very successfully. The workbooks are well-kept and well-presented and provide a good record of the development of certain skills, for example in drawing, writing, art and mathematics. The work books are given to parents, along with a summary “transfer” report, when children leave the nursery which keeps them well informed and involved in their children’s education. As yet, the nursery does not analyse children’s records to determine how successful it is in promoting progress or to set targets for its own improvement.

#### **66. Children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

60.The provision for children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and the provision for both moral and cultural development are outstanding and strengths of the school. The school has a very strong moral code based on simple, straightforward rules, well respected by everyone, and is a very successful multi-cultural community. Provision has improved from the good standards found in the previous inspection and is highly valued by parents.

61.Provision for spiritual development is very good. Planning includes the celebration of a very wide range of festivals, for example Eid, Diwali, Christmas and many more. Stories, small world toys and work in *designing and making* support this aspect well, and the school promotes the value and worth of all extremely well. The philosophy is shared by all staff and is clearly explained within the school aims “*to be aware that everyone is unique and celebrate difference.*” Children are asked to reflect on matters as a natural part of each school day and this is a very good foundation for deeper reflection as they get older. For example, children are asked to reflect upon their feelings and those of others, particularly when there has been a “problem,” and activities often stimulate clear wonder. In one activity observed, a child was seen gazing up at the light reflected by a rotating prism, and was clearly awe-struck. In a *big group* session, a very large group of children was asked to spot the changes as one child changed an item of clothing whilst hidden behind a curtain and then re-appeared wearing something different. The member of staff leading the session fully exploited the humour of the situation as she substituted rubber gloves for the previous woollen ones; the whole group were delighted and some were amazed at this “magic.”

62.Provision for moral development is outstanding. Children enjoy the sense of belonging to the school community and fully understand that co-operation is required for the smooth running of activities. They work together naturally, and children with special educational needs benefit greatly from the close and supportive atmosphere and the very caring staff. The school has a very strong moral code of support and co-operation. Children know that they must not

hurt others and that they must take care of toys. One boy playing at the water tray warned his younger sister who was visiting not to splash! Another child chided his friend with "you must share." Rules are simple and direct. Children who abuse toys have them removed and those who do not co-operate in an activity are moved away, but at all times, children are given alternatives so they do not become disenchanting. This is done quietly and with no fuss and is an extremely effective behaviour-management technique with children who have significant behavioural difficulties.

63. Provision for social development is very good. Lunchtime is a happy, social occasion which is developed into a time for learning very well by the senior midday supervisor. She serves each child with their meal, taking time to explain what is on offer to each one and encouraging them to make their own choices. She reminds children why they can not have certain items, for example because they are not allowed by their particular religion. Tables are set with knives and forks which all children, except for those whose physical disabilities prevent them, are able to use. Staff sit and eat with the children and the whole occasion is enjoyable. Snacks are available for most of the day and children often help to prepare them. They are put on a table and children choose what they want and when they want it, and eat and drink at that table sensibly, without wandering around and with minimal supervision. Children are happy to take responsibility for putting things away or to hang a painting to dry. However older children do not have particular roles or jobs which would help them to understand the added responsibilities of maturity.

64. The provision for cultural development is outstanding. The staff themselves represent diverse cultures and work very well together, and this sets the scene for a most tolerant and successful multi-cultural community. This is further enhanced by toys, books, pictures, puzzles and many other educational resources that positively promote diversity. For example, puzzles alone include positive images of children of both sexes from different cultures and with various disabilities. Daily activities enrich children's understanding of their own culture and develop their knowledge of others. For example, music from a wide range of cultures is played throughout the day and staff appropriately draw children's attention to the diversity and variety offered. Dressing up clothes and play-cooking utensils come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and incidental resources such as the cloth on which musical instruments are placed each day are clearly not of English origin.

65. An impressive programme of visits is offered for such young children. Each term children may visit the local forest and a museum, and older children have the opportunity to visit a theatre to watch a play. Dance troupes, theatre workshops and artists visit the nursery on a regular basis which significantly enhances the quality of children's experiences. On some days, good quality classical music is played as children enter the nursery, whilst at other times, completely different sounds such as a waterfall, greet the children. This helps develop their discriminatory listening skills, and supports their cultural development very well.

## **72. Support, guidance and children's welfare**

66. The provision for the support, guidance and welfare of the children is good overall and much, including the procedures for child protection is very good. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Provision is well supported by the linkworker system of a named person with day to day responsibility for each child. However secure systems for some aspects of health and safety that are the responsibility of the Appropriate Authority are less evident.

67. Procedures for monitoring children's progress are satisfactory, and those for recording personal development are good. Records are the responsibility of each linkworker. They are updated on a very regular basis and clear anecdotal examples of success are recorded. Children's achievements are well exemplified in their *workbooks* where samples of work, supplemented by helpful staff annotations, are kept for the duration of each child's stay at the

nursery. These workbooks are sent to the next school before being given to parents and give a good picture of each child's progress in some areas. However, the system for recording children's progress over time against targets in each area of learning is not yet sufficiently informative as it is not linked to the school's own curriculum, which is largely unwritten. This

limits its effectiveness in promoting certain skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly of the more able children.

68.Children with special educational needs have clear and relevant targets set on their individual education plans which contribute well to their progress, particularly in personal and social development and communication. However, close liaison with a range of professionals such as speech and language therapists and educational psychologists ensure that each child's total needs are addressed. This results in very good quality support and staff teamwork which promotes children's development, and is much valued by parents.

69.Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good and the consistent implementation of the new behaviour policy by staff is outstanding. The school successfully creates a very positive climate for good behaviour. Staff work hard to present good role models for children to follow. They have high expectations that all children shall be sociable, independent and conform to the nursery's standards without having their individuality squashed. This contributes well to the children's high standards of social and moral development. All staff deal with incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour with care. They are confident and firm, refusing to allow anyone to hurt or undermine others. Serious incidents are rare, but are dealt with very well and are well recorded. Parents are involved in discussions when necessary and are given support and help if needed.

70.The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance which were found lacking in the last inspection are now much improved and are good. Staff try very hard to support parents in regular and punctual attendance for children. Parents are asked to complete a slip whenever their child has been absent and good records of who is on and off the site are now kept. However, these improvements have not yet had the desired effect of improving rates of attendance to an acceptable level, and in spite of a 15 minute period for arrival, which allows for families to take children to more than one school, lateness is still an issue. Plans are in place to make procedures even more stringent which should encourage all parents to take full advantage of their child's place at the nursery.

71.Procedures in place for child protection are now very good. Staff are very well informed of what constitutes abuse and what signs to look for. The acting headteacher is the person responsible for this area and liaises well with other agencies when necessary. Staff are well aware of procedures and through their teaching, children are beginning to understand the importance of taking care of themselves and others.

72.The health, safety and well being of all children in their care is taken very seriously by school staff. The nursery is covered by staff suitably trained in first-aid, and all are well aware of safety issues during play, for example providing safety helmets for children to wear when riding bikes outside. Mats are provided for physical activities and these sessions are carefully supervised. Hygiene at lunch and snack times is good and the school is kept very clean and well maintained by the caretaker. There is a clear health and safety policy in place and good records within the school are kept, including the log for fire practices, electrical checks and regular visits from the surveyor responsible for day to day maintenance. However, no records of some other requirements were found in school, such as the Local Authority's survey of the safety of glazing or checks on the safety of the building. This has made it difficult for the acting headteacher to be fully confident about the safety of the children, or what further measures should be taken.

73.The school now has over 60 per cent of children with special educational needs. Some of these children have physical disabilities and require careful physical handling, and others have complex medical needs and may, on occasions, require specific medication. Although three staff are trained in first aid, the school has no safe cold storage for medication which restricts what they are able to administer. Staff training in the handling and specific medical needs of

children with significant special educational needs has not been sufficiently addressed which is a deficiency in this otherwise very supportive establishment.

#### **80. Partnership with parents and the community**

74. Partnership with parents is good and has remained so since the previous inspection. The school provides a good variety of information for parents including a prospectus, regular informative newsletters, and information on a range of courses, such as parenting, provided by community professionals. The governing body has sensibly decided to offer termly rather than annual reports to parents, given that children leave at different times through the year and some barely have a year in total at the nursery. The linkworker system whereby each child is "attached" to a member of staff for their time at the nursery works very effectively. Information on children is shared from the introductory meeting with parents before children start nursery, at regular linkworker meetings and at termly parents' meetings where the child's record of achievement is discussed. The nursery staff also collect samples of children's work which is passed on to the primary school and then back to parents.

75. Some children with special educational needs come to school on Local Authority transport, and there are helpful systems of home-visiting and home/school diaries which keep parents well informed of their children's various achievements. The majority of children have personal targets which are set in consultation with parents and are regularly reviewed, and the parents of children with special educational needs are fully involved in their children's reviews and are consulted every term.

76. Information on the curriculum is not available to parents largely because the school's written curriculum is at an early stage of development. Nonetheless, the vast majority feel the school keeps them well informed. Inspection findings support their view that the school is open and approachable. For those parents who speak English as an additional language, some material is translated orally and some in writing, and parents themselves help with translation, for example by sign-writing. Some parents have both little English and little community support, such as those who are refugees; in these cases staff enthusiastically use gesture or sign language to convey messages which typifies the nursery's positive and inclusive approach.

77. Parents' involvement in the school and their children's education is satisfactory. They use the community room freely, help on school visits and offer help at events such as the Christmas fair. A small number help out in class - for example with computer work. Although few actually come in to help during day to day activities, the overwhelming majority of parents feel they are made very welcome. The governing body has been frustrated in its wish to involve parents more because of their lack of shared vision with the Appropriate Authority, however, parents are consulted about new developments which is very good practice.

78. Links with the community are good. Onward liaison with local primary and special schools is satisfactory, helped by the detailed portfolio of work compiled for each child and the transition reports, although these are not sufficiently detailed. A variety of professional visitors, such as the educational psychologist, speech and language therapist and health visitors come in regularly to support the school's work with children with special educational needs. The Greenwich Mural Workshop has made an attractive mosaic for the school grounds and is returning to build a tactile wall to enhance children's sensory experiences. The children visit Epping Forest every term and have also been to Harlow Park and the Science Museum. Older children are taken to the theatre, and a theatre company is scheduled to come to the nursery in the near future. The school has recently become involved in the Family Numeracy Project which will further reinforce its links with both parents and the community and support children's mathematical development very well.

79. The nursery is particularly successful in receiving a variety of people on work experience. These include post-graduate students, and pupils from special and mainstream schools. Their success has been publicly recognised in an award, and has done much to raise the nursery's profile in the community.

## **86. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **86. Leadership and management**

80. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, but the situation is complicated and aspects are poor. The leadership of the acting head teacher and governing body is good, and is having a positive effect on the development of the school. The management provided by the Local Education Authority, which, as the Appropriate Authority of this school retains full responsibility for it, is poor. Many of the school's current weaknesses and deficiencies have come to light since the previous inspection, and these are largely as a result of insufficient support and guidance for the school over the years.

81. The acting headteacher has been in post for under one term and was previously the only other teacher in the school. The previous headteacher did not have a teaching role. The acting head has had very limited management experience, and took on the role without a suitable hand-over from the previous headteacher, and without a contract or sufficient support from the Local Education Authority. Furthermore, the Deputy Chief Education Officer with direct responsibility for nurseries retired without replacement before the acting head took up the post, so lines of support for the school were unclear. Some support has been given by members of the Educational Advisory Service, but this has been limited, and the Appropriate Authority's responsibilities have not been properly discharged which has left the school with problems.

82. The acting head teacher has retained her full-time teaching and special educational needs co-ordinator's roles because the only other teacher in the nursery is temporary and leaving at the end of the term. Nevertheless, she has worked extremely hard and successfully to identify weaknesses within the school and to begin to address them. Some of these had been apparent for some time, for example deficiencies in the school's curriculum and assessment procedures, whilst others, such as a lack of suitable financial and management systems and procedures were not, and only came to light once she took on the management role.

83. The acting head teacher has a very clear and well-communicated vision of the direction the nursery should take to maintain its strengths and improve its weaknesses. The key issues arising from the previous inspection had been addressed before she took up her acting post, but many weaknesses remained. The acting head correctly judged curriculum development and classroom planning and procedures to promote children's attainment to be a priority. New measures have been put into place to begin to achieve this end and are underpinned by new, clearly stated, helpful documents on staff roles, responsibilities and procedures for standardising the recording of progress, liaising with parents and providing support and guidance to the children. A revised approach to managing children's difficult behaviour has been introduced with overwhelming success. The acting headteacher is central to all school activities and is well aware of individuals' strengths and weaknesses. Professional development is suitably promoted by in-service training, and good role-models, and plans are laid for professional interviews with all staff in the near future.

84. Whilst various policies and procedures have been implemented in the three years since the previous inspection, the majority have been put into place in the past year, and many of them just this term. Consequently, some have not been in place long enough to have had an effect on raising standards within the school. As a result, improvement since the previous inspection

has been only satisfactory. The recent rapid rate of improvement and the staff's commitment to developing the school whilst maintaining the strengths appreciated by parents indicates that the school's capacity for further development is good. However, this is dependent upon a similar commitment from a permanent headteacher, and suitable support from the Appropriate Authority.

85.The responsibility for curriculum development lies with the acting headteacher, but most members of staff have responsibility for the organisation and maintenance of an area of the nursery and are effective in their role. The collaboration and co-operation between staff is very good and enables joint planning, quick information-exchange and a safe, stimulating environment to be maintained, all of which promote children's learning.

86.The governing body has no statutory responsibilities and whilst knowledgeable, well-informed and supportive to the school, its status is limited and decisions taken are sometimes not acted upon, or are reversed by the Appropriate Authority. For example, the governors are very well aware of the financial difficulties facing the school as a result, in particular, of arrears payments for children with special educational needs and staffing pay reviews. A planned contingency was put aside to carry forward to meet these costs, but this money was withdrawn by the Appropriate Authority in the light of its own over-spend, leaving the school in a poor position to meet the costs incurred. Whilst such uncertainties exist, development planning can only be on a very small scale, and can not fulfil a proper function in the management and development of the school.

87.In its current form, the development plan does not reflect the strategic view of either the acting head or the governors, and instead concentrates on small-scale developments without consideration of their impact on raising standards. Many of the time-scales had slipped due to pressures within the school, although developments have now largely caught up with the schedule. Nevertheless, the governing body is fully involved in all developments and in the creation of the development plan. Parents, staff and children are consulted about developments and their views contribute towards decisions made which is very good practice. The governing body regularly evaluates the progress made towards the developments which keeps them well-informed and involved in school matters. However, the nursery does not analyse children's records to determine how successful it is in promoting progress or to set targets for its own improvement.

88.The duties of the Local Education Authority, as the Authority responsible for the school, have not been properly undertaken over the past few years which has left the school with difficulties. These centre particularly around: insufficient monitoring and support of school practices and procedures to ensure standards are improved; insufficient monitoring, and input to ensure the school's financial procedures are sound and efficient; insufficient recognition of the change in the school population which has resulted in it now functioning as a fully integrated special needs nursery; and insufficient support and involvement when the school was handed over to an acting headteacher with limited management experience. The Appropriate Authority is now aware of its shortfalls and is beginning to address them.

89.The provision for children with special educational needs is very good and staff work hard and successfully to help them progress. However, the population of the school has changed over the past few years and is now heavily weighted with these children, with many whose needs are very significant and take up a lot of staff time. The teacher:pupil ratio is too low, and this results in insufficient attention being paid to those **without** special educational needs. Furthermore, the acting headteacher's current full-time teaching role leaves her no time to carry out development and administrative tasks during the day which can not be sustained. If this situation persists, it will present potential difficulties in the near future for both the rate of school improvement and children's progress.

90. Provision for children with English as an additional language is good due to the multi-cultural nature of the school staff and the work of the special support assistant. They offer good support and role-models for the children, and the total acceptance, inclusion and celebration of the multi-cultural population of the school ensures that all children are seen as unique and special.

91. Appropriate systems and documentation are being put into place to ensure the school is a progressive and professional establishment. The school brochure is currently being updated, and a staff handbook is being developed to give all staff, but particularly new-comers and students, a full picture of what to expect, policies and practice.

92. The school's aims, values and policies are very well reflected in its work, and the ethos of the school is excellent. Staff are committed to providing a secure and stimulating environment in which children can grow and progress; children's behaviour is good, their attitudes very good and their relationships outstanding.

#### 99. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

93. There is an insufficient number of teachers for the number of children at the nursery, taking into account the high percentage with special educational needs and other problems. The previous headteacher was non-teaching, which effectively meant a ratio of one teacher to 35 children, over three quarters of whom have special educational needs and other problems. Despite the good work of the nursery assistants, this ratio was not sufficient to meet the needs of all the children. However, the current situation with a full-time teaching head and one other teacher is still not sufficient to deal effectively with the nursery's current intake, and although improved, children of average and above average ability have too little direct staff input to help them attain the standards of which they are capable.

94. Due to her full-time teaching role, the acting head teacher does not have enough time for administration, particularly in view of the inadequate financial management and support. Consequently, this is all done out of school hours which has a negative impact on her own time. She is also co-ordinator for special educational needs which is itself a considerable added responsibility. Overall, the lack of sufficient teaching staff has implications for the rate of school improvement and the progress of the higher attaining children, despite the clear commitment of the acting head and the staff.

95. Nursery officers are all trained and experienced, as are the staff who work as learning support. They are particularly effective in promoting children's general development and work very well as a team. The staff come from a range of ethnic backgrounds and their ability to speak various community languages contributes positively to the supportive ethos, parents' involvement and understanding, and children's progress.

96. Arrangements for the professional induction and training of staff are satisfactory. Students coming in on work experience have a very good introduction to the nursery, and well planned support; three students on placement during inspection week were offered unobtrusive help and guidance by staff working together as a team. Induction for new support staff involves some days of observation, followed by talking through procedures for handling various elements such as speech and language, or behaviour with established staff. This is followed up with half a day of more formal training. Regular professional development for staff is not yet fully implemented but new arrangements are promising. Staff are encouraged to attend courses that benefit both the individual and the school, for example an induction for acting heads, a workshop on play and autism, and a course on eczema. Other training, such as that for information technology, is linked to objectives in the school development plan. Appraisal is not yet appropriate, as the only other teacher is on a temporary contract. The acting head intends to start a more formal system of monitoring teaching with regular times allocated, both

weekly and monthly, to discuss individuals' training and development needs. This will contribute well to improving teaching and learning in the nursery.

97.The accommodation is flexible and attractive, although the main room is rather small. It is generally used well, as it was at the time of the last inspection. There is a variety of discrete areas such as story rooms, a dedicated kitchen and cooking area, loft and playhouse, craft rooms and a toilet for the disabled, which is sensitively used for those children who are on toilet training programs. This layout helps children understand that there is a place for everything, and contributes to the good order within the nursery. The outside area is always very well set out with varied and interesting activities that do much to stimulate children's enjoyment and sociability and contributes well to their learning. There is a playhouse, an attractive tree seat with a mosaic base where children can talk and look at books, and adventurous climbing equipment set on a safety surface. There are also long, safe corridors for riding bikes and tricycles, although the railings and brick wall need protection to prevent children from hurting themselves. The buildings are clean and well maintained, with a particularly good range of inventive storage areas which enable children to choose resources themselves and promotes their independence and initiative well.

98.Resources are good overall, and the range and quantity of books has improved since the last inspection. There are plenty of wheeled toys and construction kits, a range of home-play equipment and two computers. Multicultural resources are very good; dolls reflect various ethnic groups and dressing up clothes and textiles used for curtains and drapes clearly come from a range of cultures. Puzzles, books and games positively reflect both the multi-cultural population of the school and children and adults with disabilities. Displays are also good and celebrate children's work and achievements, such as drawings, paintings and computer work. However, resources for literacy and numeracy, whilst adequate, are limited in range and there are few artefacts to help develop aspects of children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

#### 105. **The efficiency of the school**

99.The financial management of the school is poor which has a negative impact on its efficiency. There are significant weaknesses in financial control and school administration, and the governors' strategic planning can not always be put into action due to the lack of a shared understanding with the Appropriate Authority. The Authority itself does not have a stated view of the school's development. The responsibility for setting the nursery's budget, monitoring expenditure and ensuring that appropriate financial controls are in place lies with the Local Education Authority. Some of these duties have not been effected in recent years, and since the appointment of the acting headteacher, it has come to light that the school's financial systems are precarious.

100.The school manages and monitors a budget of approximately £230,000 which includes staff salaries, services and the provision of equipment. The school relies upon the Local Education Authority to provide regular, accurate information, advice and monitoring to support this role. However, a clear picture of its financial situation has been difficult for the school to gain as the budget reports produced by the authority do not fully identify sources of income and expenditure, particularly in relation to the children with special educational needs. At times, expenditure is authorised by the Authority without the full knowledge of the school. Money allocated to children with special educational needs is not always separately identified; for example, a sum has been allocated in recognition of its special provision, but this money is embedded in the staff salaries budget head, and is not separately identified. The school has therefore not been able to evaluate the effectiveness of this expenditure, and the Appropriate Authority has not done so either.

101.Most money in respect of children with special educational needs is allocated a term in

arrears, but some is allocated a year in arrears, by which time those children are likely to have left the nursery, or to be close to leaving. Two special support workers are employed on temporary termly contracts to meet the needs of this group of children, but money for their salaries may not be allocated until one year later. This situation has necessitated an annual contingency to be set aside to meet the costs since 1995, but the money was taken back from the school at the end of the last financial year to help the financial difficulties incurred by the Local Education Authority. This has left the school in a difficult position and unable to fund its planned developments, particularly in the identified area of information technology.

102. The financial systems of the school itself are very insecure, and anomalies came to light during the inspection. The school has not had a financial audit for at least eleven years, and no record of the exact date of the last audit could be found by the Authority. Systems to run and safeguard the school's finances are not in place and the acting headteacher is working hard to sort out the difficulties and establish suitable systems and practices, with the involvement of the Local Authority. However, at the time of the inspection, there was no copy of the Authority's financial regulations in the school; purchasing arrangements do not ensure the best value for money; and stock, stores and other assets are not suitably recorded or adequately safeguarded against loss or theft. Petty cash payments are made without following suitable procedures, and re-payments are made by the Local Authority through the private School Fund account as the £50 imprest "float" has long since disappeared. This account has not been audited.

103. These problems have been exacerbated by a prolonged period during which the previous office manager was intermittently absent through sickness and "career breaks," and her place filled by temporary staff. A new office manager was appointed nearly one year ago but has not yet managed to effect significant improvements. Day to day administration is less than efficient, and too much intervention from the acting head teacher is required to keep the systems running. This situation has resulted in a lack of suitable day to day budgetary information being provided over the past year which has contributed to the school's uncertain financial position.

104. The non-teaching role of the previous headteacher was not an effective use of her skills and time in relation to maximising children's progress; however, the full-time teaching role of the acting head is also not the most effective use of her time and skills. Although this currently provides a more favourable teacher:pupil ratio than previously, it leaves no time during the school day for management and administrative duties – a situation which can not continue in this busy and complex nursery. Nursery nurses and the special support staff are very well deployed and successfully promote children's learning. Resources are very well and flexibly used to remain motivating to the children. Very good use is made of the outside area as a stimulating teaching space incorporating activities in all areas of the curriculum. The classroom is also used to the maximum to provide an interesting and stimulating environment for learning.

105. A firm judgement on the school's value for money can not be made in the light of the lack of suitable financial procedures and safeguards to ensure it. However, taking into account the special educational needs of the majority of children, their good progress, the good quality of teaching and the limited number of teachers; despite the poor financial and day to day administration, the lack of suitable management by the Appropriate Authority, and the just satisfactory provision and progress for the more able children, indications are that value for money is likely to be satisfactory.

## 112. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### 112. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

#### 112. *Personal and social development*

106. The personal and social development of the children is given a very high priority. Most start nursery with fewer skills than expected for their age, either because they have special educational needs or because they have had no previous experience of play settings. As a result, many initially have difficulties in learning to conform, work, play, or to consider others. Children make very good progress and the majority, including most of those with special educational needs are on line to achieve the desirable outcomes of this area of learning by the time they are five. Some children with significant learning difficulties do not achieve at these levels. Nevertheless these children also make very good progress due to high quality support. Standards attained are similar in both social and personal development due to the strong emphasis on promoting both these areas of children's development throughout all the nursery's activities. This makes a significant contribution to their learning and progress across the curriculum.

107. Children work very well together, either in small groups such as when playing a game or sharing an imaginative play session, or in large groups such as at *big group* time. At these times, they listen patiently while a friend gives the answer to a question and try very hard not to interrupt. Outside, due to excellent staff supervision and organisation, they share the bikes and trikes equitably, and look after the dolls together, sometimes chatting quietly. Children know that staff will ensure that they get a turn and so have no need to grab or snatch. All children enjoy the many social activities in the classroom. For example, all, including those with the most significant difficulties, sit and eat a snack sensibly at the table provided and choose their fruit or biscuit carefully with minimum supervision.

108. All children, including those with special educational needs, learn to be independent. Those that are physically able put on aprons, help to set up and tidy away activities and some help to prepare snacks for later sessions. They hang up their coats and most can find them again, automatically putting on them on to play outside. Some find these dressing skills very difficult but try hard and turn to each other for help, not necessarily relying on an adult. This indicates their good levels of personal development. Children enjoy the attention of staff and approach them easily when necessary. The majority prefer to take part in activities which are staff-led and are more likely to persevere and complete these tasks, although the higher attaining children manage very well on their own.

109. Children's personal development is very good and they make very good progress. Relationships with each other are outstanding. They enjoy each others' company and share equipment well, for example moving over to allow a friend to join in a game or offering a favourite toy to a child with difficulties in order to include them. Children frequently choose to work together, for example to build complex construction models, paint pictures, look at books and use the computer.

110. Many children arrive at the nursery lacking confidence and some with emotional and behavioural difficulties are boisterous and loud. However, they quickly respond to the practical, positive and firm approach of staff and are keen to be part of a co-operative group and to try new activities. They become enthusiastic learners at whatever level they are at, and are generally able to choose and maintain an activity, particularly if it is staff-led or an adventurous game outside. All persevere well and those with significant special educational needs try very hard when things are difficult. One child with emotional difficulties consistently tried to ride a two-wheeled bike throughout the inspection, balancing for longer periods as time progressed. He was eventually successful and carefully steered his way around the

prescribed track with only occasional stumbles. Children are developing their understanding of the range and differences in our society. They understand the differences between themselves and others and are friendly and helpful to those with difficulties. They naturally accept the wide variety of beliefs and cultures found in school and in the wider community, and this enhances their personal and cultural development very well.

111. Teaching is very good, particularly in staff-led activities. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers' planning for this area is very limited, but staff expertise ensures that children's personal and social development is at the root of the nursery's work. Their expectations of behaviour and co-operation are very high which contributes very well to the positive ethos of the school. Staff are skilled at managing children effectively and have a quiet but direct approach which is successful and consequently, behaviour is good. Children are encouraged to make sensible choices on their own which also encourages their independence and maturity. For example, children can choose when to have a snack during the day, and as a result treat a table laden with tempting food and drink sensibly rather than "falling on it." Staff assess children informally in order to guide and prompt them, and this successful approach promotes this area of children's development very well.

112. Whilst the informal curriculum for children's personal and social development is very effective, largely due to the staff's expertise in understanding the needs and development of young children and the very positive ethos of the school, there is no documented curriculum linked to the desirable outcomes of this area of learning. Consequently, although the formal assessment of children's skills is detailed, it is largely anecdotal and does not relate directly to what staff intend children to learn during their time at the nursery. This makes it difficult to use the information to help with further planning and occasionally limits the attainment of the older and more able children who are not offered opportunities for additional responsibilities.

113. Resources to support personal and social development are good and very well used. They include books of varying shapes and sizes, and in different languages. Domestic items reflect the cultural diversity within the nursery, for example various styles of cooking pots, clothing and materials. However, labelling is rarely in languages other than English which does not sufficiently support children's literacy skills.

#### 120. ***Language and literacy***

114. Some children enter the nursery with skills at average or above average levels for their age. However, the great majority enter with skills well below average due to their special educational needs and other difficulties which have prevented them developing to expected levels, for example refugee children. Many of the children have English as an additional language, and speak and understand very little English. Some of these have below average skills in their own language

115. On arrival in the nursery, most of the children have difficulty in expressing themselves clearly and in being understood. Some communicate mainly in sounds and gesture rather than words. These difficulties are compounded by a short concentration span, immature behaviour and learning difficulties of varying degrees. On arrival, the majority of children are interested in books and stories but tend to pay most attention to pictures and do not identify print with meaning. They find sitting to listen to a story or taking part in *big group* time difficult, and have to learn this skill. They do not ascribe meaning to their mark-making which is random and more likely to be early drawing than the beginnings of writing. Very few children can write their own name. Higher attaining children have a wide vocabulary and use sentences of several words. They listen carefully to stories, ask simple questions and remember what happens in stories they have heard before. The higher attaining children scribble using a range of movements and are beginning to make precise marks on the paper, sometimes incorporating the letters of their names.

116. Overall, children make satisfactory progress in language and literacy skills, as was noted in the previous inspection. Children with special educational needs make good progress, in line with their abilities, due to the well defined targets that are set on their individual education plans. Those with English as an additional language also make good progress, in line with their other abilities, due to the good support they receive from the multi-lingual staff. The minority of children who do not have any special needs, however, make unsatisfactory progress. As they learn to conform, attend, apply themselves and take account of others, so their language and literacy skills develop. However, this is limited by insufficient planning and direct teaching to extend them, and the lack of a sufficiently rigorous curriculum which gives suitable consideration to the early stages of National Literacy work. A few children are on line to attain at expected levels by the time they are five, but the skills of the great majority remain below average and they are not likely to achieve the desirable outcomes of this area of learning.

117. The listening skills of the majority of children are in line with expectations by the time they leave the nursery, and all children make good progress in this area. Most listen attentively, although some find it difficult to do so for long periods of time. They answer questions and follow instructions. Higher attaining children listen very carefully, and follow complex instructions such as how to make a battery-powered circuit from available resources. They deduce what will happen in a story, or follow the clues to guess what might happen next, and identify the emotions that might be felt by characters in the story such as "scared" or "sad." They are quick to stop an activity when asked and are able to hear important messages even when engrossed in their own activity. Many children, however, find it difficult to attend to more than one thing at once and often need telling or calling several times before paying attention.

118. The speaking skills of the majority of children are below expectations for their age and they are not on line to achieve the desirable outcomes of this area of learning. Nevertheless, children try hard to communicate with each other and with adults, even when they find it difficult to make themselves understood. However, staff do not always take opportunities to stretch children's language abilities which limits the progress of some, particularly the more able, which was a weakness noted in the previous inspection and still remains. Children with identified language and communication difficulties who receive extra support from the acting head teacher and special support staff concentrate and persevere well in their special sessions. For example, during one such session, three children with very considerable difficulties began to really understand the concepts of *same* and *different* through playing a particular game. One child then had the confidence and ability to play the same game in a mixed group and was delighted at being able to play on the same level as her peers.

119. Higher attaining children speak well and enjoy using language in role play, for example organising one another imaginatively with comments in well-formed sentences such as: "*Come on! Let's go to the changing room and get changed into our swimming things so that we can get in the water!*" The majority of children, however, speak in simpler sentences and although some are beginning to try to be more complex, this often does not follow grammatical conventions. They enjoy chatting to one another, but generally talk about matters that are very familiar to them, such as their family, or the activities they are taking part in. These comments are often at a very simple level, for example "*Looka my done.*" Many children are not able to use language fluently and can not describe thoughts or emotions, or make up even the simplest story. Some children have well-below average skills. Their language is very simple, and often expressed in single words, or gestures. They find taking turns in conversation and discussion during group and story time difficult.

120. The reading skills of the majority of children are below expectations for their age. This is largely due to numbers of children with special educational needs, but also to the lack of a suitably challenging curriculum and insufficient direct teaching. A few higher attaining children have many of the skills expected, for example being able to explore and work with rhymes and

hear and identify initial and final sounds in words. Some are able to name the letters and sounds in their own names. They understand that English print is read from left to right, and top to bottom on the page, but that print in other languages is not read in the same way. These children knew when it was time to turn the page in a story they were listening to, as they were familiar with it, and could associate a spoken word with a written word. They understand that words fit together to make a sentence, and that letters join to make a word. One or two children can read a few words. The majority of children, however, do not have such advanced skills, although almost all enjoy books and most are careful with them. These children use pictures as cues to the pages' contents, and some recognise one or two isolated words. Very few can recognise and name all the letters of the alphabet.

121.Children's writing skills are below expectations for their age. This, again, is due to the numbers with special educational needs, and also to the lack of a suitably challenging curriculum and insufficient direct teaching. Most children understand that writing is a form of communication and try writing for different purposes, such as birthday cards or menus. Children show a range of pencil grips, and the majority have not yet attained the dexterity to use a pencil skilfully by the time they leave the nursery. Children enjoy dictating their comments to members of staff and seeing their sentences displayed with their paintings and drawings. The majority show the beginnings of writing at different stages, the more advanced moving from left to right, showing clear "words" containing letters of the alphabet. However, by the time they leave the nursery, few can write more than one or two very simple words, write a simple sentence or attempt to write unknown words.

122.Children enjoy all aspects of language and literacy and delight in learning to communicate more effectively. They are relaxed with one another and listen and respond to one another and to staff. They enjoy stories and most group activities where they try hard. Children are careful with books and equipment, and use them appropriately.

123.The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Work with the children with special educational needs is good as staff concentrate well on developing their more basic communication skills. However, often, insufficient attention is given to promoting the skills of the more able children at every available opportunity which limits their progress and was a weakness noted in the previous inspection. For example, during one session a mixed group of children were playing a memory game involving pairs of objects or pictures. Within this group was one child with very significant special educational needs, one new to the nursery with little spoken English, and one older more able child. All three children were questioned in the same way, which met the needs of the children with special needs and with little English well, but did not extend the third child at all. As a result, although she was compliant and enjoyed finding the pairs, she stopped thinking productively and lost the "thread" of the game as she was busy occupying her mind by thinking about other things entirely. She developed her memory skills, but made no progress in language and literacy. In contrast, during another session involving two children of different abilities, each child was challenged at their own level. The younger and less able child was asked to identify and describe shapes and what he was doing, whilst the more able child was continually asked to give reasons for her actions and choices, to work out simple mathematical problems, and to use a more complex vocabulary. As a result, both children concentrated very well for over half an hour and made good progress.

124.Overall, however, staff understand the needs and development of young children well. They understand that many have difficulties in expressing themselves and give them support to be able to do so. Children with language difficulties are very well supported to communicate effectively. Staff expect high standards of behaviour, and have the management strategies and charisma to make lessons interesting and to help the children conform. Day to day planning is weak and does not identify what children at different levels are expected to learn which limits their progress. Time is used well and sessions are used to the full to ensure that children remain involved. The most effective staff continually assess children informally in

order to help them

further their skills, and more formal assessments are made to contribute to the overall tracking of children's progress at specific times.

125. The curriculum for language and literacy is successful in practice with children with special educational needs as staff expertise enables them to promote these children's more basic communication skills very well. However, although work set takes good account of the desirable outcomes of the area of language and literacy and supports children's progress, the curriculum is unsatisfactory. It is not yet documented, and there are no clear guidelines to help staff plan systematically for the highest possible attainment of all the children. Furthermore, work does not take sufficient account of the first stages of the National Literacy work. Consequently, higher attaining children and older ones who may experience a limited amount of time in reception classes are insufficiently challenged and well prepared for working on the National Curriculum and National Literacy project in Year 1, and their attainment is limited. Assessment is improved since the previous inspection, but is not linked to a written curriculum specifying what children should know, understand and be able to do during their time in the nursery. Consequently, it can not be used to track children's progress sufficiently closely, or to help with further planning.

126. Resources are satisfactory and developing, and children's access to them is much improved since the previous inspection. There is a satisfactory range of books of all shapes and sizes which includes fiction and non-fiction and reflects the multi-cultural nature of the children. These are easily accessible to the children and many are stored in attractive, low level units which promotes their independence and ability to make choices. Books are used well to enhance displays, for example books on the bed-time routine were included in a display on *night time* which tied in with the week's topic of light and dark. The writing and office area create a suitable environment to promote children's writing skills, but writing and recording, overall, is insufficiently threaded throughout the curriculum. The school encourages parents to choose books with their child to take home and share, and reinforces this good practice by a particular focus on this activity on Fridays. This promotes children's language and literacy skills, and involves their parents well in their learning.

### 133. **Mathematics**

127. Children enter the nursery with mathematical skills below expectations for their age. The majority are not able to show their understanding of shape, position, size or quantity through play and cannot always recite numbers in the right order. Over 60 per cent of children have special educational needs and some with more severe learning difficulties know no numbers and do not recognise any numerals or shapes. Overall children make satisfactory progress but by the time they leave the nursery they are not on line to achieve the desirable outcomes in this area of learning by the time they are five. This is largely due to the lack of a curriculum framework to guide staff in planning to ensure that all children's attainment is as high as possible. The majority of children, who have special educational needs or other difficulties, make good progress towards the targets identified in their individual education plans although these targets are not necessarily the next incremental step in each child's development. However, children without special educational needs do not make satisfactory progress and are limited by the lack of a suitably challenging curriculum and sufficient focused teaching of mathematical skills and understanding.

128. Children's use of mathematical language develops alongside their overall language skills. Older children know the names of circles and rectangles although they may not know a triangle or square. All children are learning to complete inset puzzles and all except those with the most severe learning difficulties are able to identify a round shape. As they mature, children begin to use words such as *big*, *small* and *up* and *down* appropriately. Most understand and use the words *next to*, when choosing where to sit. Very few understand that *more* means to add to, and only very occasionally do children understand that *less* means to take away from.

129. All except a few children with severe learning difficulties sort and match by colour, and all children try hard to do this. They then progress to sorting by size and shape and the majority of older children can achieve this. A few of the oldest can sort and match by two or three attributes. Many children understand the concept of grading by size and show this through the use of equipment such as graded beakers or rings, however some find it difficult. They are aware of the passage of time and most know that *story* comes after *big group* time and look forward to this which is a good start towards understanding the concept of time. Counting is well emphasised throughout the day. Many children can count to five by rote although they are not yet able to recognise three frogs in a picture, or four buns. A few children can count properly to twenty and more; for example, one girl was showing off her number skills by “psyching” herself up to jump off climbing apparatus. She punched the air with each number she recited, showing that she fully understood the meaning of counting. An older, more able child was observed rapidly calculating how many spaces were used up in a baking tin so that she could tell her friend how many more shapes to make. Children’s measuring skills are under-developed as there is little use of standard or non-standard measures. Weighing skills were used during cooking, however, the children needed considerable help to achieve this. Children’s estimation skills are also under-developed due to the lack of opportunity to use them, and the use of programmable toys is very limited, although children’s use of the computer in support of their mathematics work is satisfactory.

130. Children’s recording skills are developing, although not sufficiently part of a taught programme. They are encouraged to record their scores when playing games and some can join matching numbers with a line, but recording work is not a structured or daily routine which limits progress in this area. In practical situations, children use and apply their mathematical skills well. They can find the correct number of chairs for a small group, and set a table with the correct numbers of knives and forks.

131. Children enjoy using mathematics during practical activities such as cooking or counting the number of children around a table. They like playing with shapes and work creatively to make patterns, and join in with number songs and rhymes with enthusiasm. They behave well whilst playing with resources and equipment, and when supported by an adult, persevere well. However, the lack of sufficient adult input often means that they do not extend their skills to solving problems, and sometimes, they leave activities before they are completed.

132. The quality of teaching is satisfactory as it was at the time of the previous inspection. When mathematics is a planned element of a practical activity such as preparation for group work, or playing a game with others until a winner is declared, teaching is often good. However, the balance of direct teaching and informal experiences is unsatisfactory and restricts children’s overall progress, although targets for children with special educational needs are clear and staff work well in helping children progress towards them. Activities are generally interesting, well-resourced and well-prepared although they are not always designed to promote high attainment which has a negative impact on the attainment and progress of the more able children. Staff encourage children positively, and the consistent approach to their management results in good behaviour. Sessions begin and end on time and are always used to the full.

133. Current planning is not based upon a scheme of work with clearly defined learning outcomes, and little account is taken of the earliest stage of the National Numeracy work. This accounts for the patchy emphasis on different aspects of mathematics, and the unsatisfactory progress of the more able children. Furthermore, assessment is weak, as it is insufficiently linked to both the incremental development of children’s skills, and to what staff intend children to learn during their time at the nursery. However, staff are fully aware of the need to improve the curriculum and a very good scheme of work has been written by the acting headteacher although it has not yet been introduced into the nursery. This scheme clearly describes the skills which need to be taught and outlines suitable plans with identified

opportunities for assessment with which to support this. It also provides the structure to match activities and teaching to the needs of all the children, including those with the most severe difficulties. Once introduced, this will provide a much more suitable curriculum for the full range of children in the nursery and should improve the attainment and progress of the more able. Mathematics resources are satisfactory although limited in some areas such as measuring, and there are insufficient programmable toys. Resources are well-stored in clearly labelled containers – although only in the English language - but are easily accessible to the children which promotes their independence and personal development well.

140. ***Knowledge and understanding of the world***

134. The majority of children are not likely to achieve the desirable outcomes of this area of learning by the time they are five due to their special educational needs and under-developed concepts and communication skills. However, the skills, knowledge and understanding of the minority without special educational needs are appropriate for their age, and these children are on line to reach the desirable outcomes of knowledge and understanding of the world.

135. The great majority of children start the nursery with limited experience of the world other than their own family. Some others have had a wide, but unhappy experience of life, such as refugee children. On arrival, almost all children happily explore items, learn how to use them and make very simple observations, but do not yet look at similarities or differences between them. Most children talk about matters of immediate interest, commenting on familiar people, items and places in English or their own language, but the communication skills of many are very under-developed which hinders their ability to do this. Most children do not yet have a clear idea of the past or features of their environment. Children enjoy construction activities but are not yet skilled at combining the components and do not select materials to join together with any clear purpose. The majority of children know broadly what a computer is for and how to use one.

136. All children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall and by the time they leave have gained considerable knowledge and understanding of the world. The more able children talk about where and in what sort of accommodation they live, their families and important events in their lives such as birthdays and festivals. They understand the purpose of some different sorts of buildings and their importance to people, such as places of worship and local amenities. They can incorporate this knowledge into their imaginative play, for example, “going on an aeroplane to another country.” Children have a good understanding of the multi-cultural nature of their community and some of the customs and festivals that are associated with their own and other local cultures. This aspect is well-emphasised by the nursery and makes a good contribution to children’s cultural development.

137. Some children have a well-developed sense of family and are beginning to understand the concept of generations going back in time. The majority of children, however, are less advanced. They understand their immediate environment and are confident in moving round the nursery, knowing in which rooms different activities take place, and most can competently find resources and equipment. They know about local shops and facilities, and enjoy the festivals associated with different religions and cultures. However, they find it difficult to talk about their experiences, families and where they live, or to describe events that have happened to them in the past due to their under-developed language skills.

138. The majority of children’s early scientific knowledge is limited, but all children enjoy investigative activities and make the most of them in line with their abilities. More able children recognise and talk about the features of living things, for example that plants need soil and water to grow, and that caterpillars hatch from eggs and turn into butterflies. Through practical activities such as cookery, they understand that some materials change when mixed and heated, for example the ingredients to make cakes, but that others change state and can be changed back, such as water to ice. Children know that they can see their reflection in shiny

surfaces and that batteries can be used in simple circuits to power light bulbs. The majority who have special educational needs, however, have less advanced skills. They know that plants need water, and that animals, such as fish, need food to live, but can not categorise materials by their properties, for example those that will sink or float, and can not see beyond the fun of switching torches on and off to consider how they are powered.

139.Children's construction and design skills are better developed which corresponds with the emphasis placed by the nursery on the development of physical skills. Many children use construction kits creatively, for example fitting together and laying out train tracks, as well as making models of their own design from interlocking components. Children enjoy combining ingredients to make foods and use waste material creatively to make interesting models. More advanced children cut materials such as paper and straws well, with good dexterity, and understood that there are a variety of options for combining them such as sellotape and glue. They can extend these skills, with support, to make specific items to illustrate a concept, such as a scale to show the passage of time from day to night. Almost all children use tools such as rolling pins, spoons, cutters and other implements to cut out and shape items from play dough, and can use hand-held spades and containers to fill items with sand and water.

140.Children's information technology skills are satisfactory although their use of programmable toys is limited. Most understand the use of some technological aids such as the tape recorder. Many children are confident in using the computer hardware, for example finding letters on the keyboard, dragging icons by using the *mouse* and completing simple programs to get the animated reward, although a number of those with special educational needs can not do this. Children enjoy seeing their work printed out and displayed.

141.Children are generally enthusiastic about all aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world. They enjoy the practical activities, particularly in construction, and are very proud of their completed work, for example showing adults how their *night and day* construction works. Children persevere well at activities, particularly when supported by an adult. Their behaviour is good, and their use of resources sensible and careful. Some children are inquisitive and ask questions about their work, but the majority do not, largely due to their under-developed language skills and special educational needs.

142.Teaching in this area of learning is good, particularly during focused activities where direct intervention and teaching help children learn and progress well. For example, during a construction activity where children made a scale to show the passage of time from day to night, children were very well taught and as a result, they enjoyed themselves, their behaviour was good and they made progress in both their designing and making skills, and their mathematical understanding. All staff expect high standards of behaviour, and have very good management strategies to keep children interested and help them conform whilst teaching them what is and is not acceptable. Day to day planning is satisfactory but does not identify what children at different levels are expected to learn which limits the progress of the more able. Assessment is satisfactory and staff assess children informally in order to help them further their skills. Occasionally, staff show insufficient technical subject knowledge which has an adverse effect on children's progress. For example, on one occasion observed, a child was told that the light bulb in his circuit was dim because it was "wearing out."

143.The curriculum is satisfactory in practice although it is not documented. Nevertheless, work set in this area of learning is well-considered as it is often the subject of the "focus activities", for example cookery and woodwork are weekly, focused activities. As a result, resources are particularly well-prepared and children well-supported to make progress. However, the lack of a documented curriculum with clearly defined learning outcomes prevents suitable planning for the systematic development of children's skills, and work and targets for children at different stages are not identified. These factors limit the progress of some children, particularly the more able. Assessment of children's skills does not relate to

what is taught. Consequently, staff do not know

whether they have been successful, not can they use the information to inform further planning which is a weakness.

144.Resources are satisfactory overall, although there are more resources for *designing and making* than other aspects of this area of learning, and there are insufficient programmable toys and artefacts for early history activities. However, staff ingenuity supplements the resources which adds positively to what is available.

#### 151. **Physical development**

145.Children enter the school with varying physical skills. A few have physical disabilities and a significant minority have poor physical skills associated with learning difficulties and immaturity. Whilst many can run, jump and hop, the skills which involve manipulation, control and awareness of space are under-developed and below expected levels. Most have little understanding of positional language such as *on, off, under* and *over* and poor co-ordination when running, climbing, mark-making and, in particular, dressing.

146.All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall and very good progress in their control and awareness of space due to the extensive provision of appropriate and imaginative activities, and the good quality direct teaching of these skills. Children's progress in manipulative skills is good although many, including those with significant special educational needs, find dressing skills particularly difficult. The majority of children, including those with special educational needs, are likely to reach the desirable outcomes of physical development by the time they are five. Some will attain levels higher than expected in skills of control and in their use and awareness of space. This maintains the good standards noted in the previous inspection.

147.When outdoors, children use a wide range of equipment. They climb, balance and haul themselves up a rope on fixed climbing equipment, and children with special educational needs - including those with physical difficulties - negotiate uneven surfaces successfully. All enjoy the challenge of climbing ladders and crossing bridges. They develop very good self-control and learn to queue in safety without pushing. Almost all children steer prams and bikes with care, and can stop to order quickly without running into either equipment or each other. Many can ride a two-wheeled bike or steer a bike with passengers around a track, quickly jumping off to push the bike up a slope. The oldest and most able children ride the bikes very quickly down the slope, relishing the excitement, but stop within a safe distance of other children.

148.Outside, children have very good opportunities to further the control of their physical skills. For example, a group of children played at jumping from a high box onto a safety surface for a considerable time. One child jumped differently each time – for example in a star shape, then stretched up tall, then up and into a crouch finishing with a forward roll. He did this completely using his own initiative, although a member of staff was present to supervise and encourage others. During this same session, another child who was physically much less advanced, showed her good mathematical skills by counting her friends into their jumps. A few invent their own names for these jumps, for example one child called them a *blue* or *red* jump depending on their complexity. During inside physical activities, children show remarkable degrees of self-control and care. They queue sensibly whilst waiting for their turn whilst watching each other carefully, ready to applaud success. This demonstrates their good levels of social and personal development and contributes very well to the high standards achieved. In action songs and *big group* times children share space very well, sitting comfortably without interfering with one another. They also move around with care, avoiding obstacles very well and walking around the edge of a group rather than across it.

149.Many activities to promote manipulation and fine motor skills are set out for children, and most activities have a member of staff attached to support their learning. More able children

use scissors well, cutting and snipping around a shape, and all children try hard at this activity, some using special scissors to help them. Many demonstrate good control when using the computer *mouse* or keyboard, and when building large and complex constructions using bricks, rods and connectors. Some have developed a good pencil grip by the time they leave the nursery although many children with special educational needs still use an immature grasp.

150.Children's dressing skills are less well developed. Many children find it difficult to put on their coat easily. They try hard and struggle to succeed, but some, particularly those with special educational needs, may have their coat upside down or inside out and they generally remain unfastened unless help is given by a member of staff or another child.

151.Children are very keen to be involved in all activities and many demonstrate their independence by choosing their favourite with care. They are competent and confident outside and all, including the youngest and those with special educational needs, co-operate very well with each other and with staff and are able to play in small and large groups. Their behaviour, particularly outside, is very good due to the good structure to activities and full involvement of staff.

152.The quality of teaching is very good and staff are imaginative and creative. In a session using climbing equipment, one member of staff introduced an adventure that really challenged the skills of a group of children with a wide range of abilities. She led them up, down and around a "castle" and although some children were a little wary, they were confident enough to try, and negotiated the equipment with skill. The group included children with physical difficulties who were flushed with the effort and delighted with their success. All sessions to promote children's physical development, whether inside or outside, are very well supervised and involve direct teaching, particularly focussed on control and development of skills. This promotes children's progress in this area of learning very well.

153.In other activities, such as art or collage work, teaching may not be so direct. However, children are still well supported as they are encouraged to complete their activity. Whilst planning is not yet based upon expected outcomes or matched to varying ages and abilities, staff know the children very well and by the use of this knowledge and on-the-spot assessment, are able to adapt materials and their interactions to meet their needs effectively. Staff are firm and consistent in their expectations of behaviour which enhances the children's confidence and security. They use time well and activities flow throughout the day with no gaps which, as a result, does not allow children to get bored or restless. Staff also work very well together, particularly outside, when they have a brief "hand-over" from a colleague when taking over supervision of an activity.

154.The curriculum is appropriate in practice and activities are always relevant and interesting and usually stretch and extend the children well. However, as it is not documented, there are no guidelines to help staff plan to do this, and they rely heavily on their own knowledge of these particular children, and child development in general, to help them to progress. This is currently effective, but is a very insecure methodology, should staffing change. Assessment also largely depends on personal knowledge and is not associated with any curriculum documentation, and consequently can not be used to inform further planning. Planning for the development of the skills of children with special educational needs is often included on their individual education plans. This is effective and staff work well in helping the children meet their set targets.

155.Resources for this area of learning are very good. The outside area is full of exciting and imaginative equipment and is very well used to promote children's skills. Inside, resources are good and well stored in clearly labelled containers, although these do not include labels in community languages. There is a variety of specialist resources to help children with special

educational needs. Children are able to select what they want which promotes their independence well.

## 162. **Creative development**

156. The creative skills of the majority of children are below expectations for their age when they first start the nursery. They make satisfactory progress, but the majority are unlikely to reach the desirable outcomes of this area of learning by the time they are five. However, the minority who do not have special educational needs have skills at expected levels by the time they leave the nursery, and are on line to reach the desirable outcomes of creative development.

157. Children's musical development is satisfactory. They appreciate music and join in with songs and rhymes, some being able to sing from memory and maintain the beat. Many move spontaneously to the beat and can supplement their singing with body sounds such as clapping, using the right rhythm. Children are familiar with a small range of percussion instruments and enjoy experimenting with sounds made by a variety of objects and instruments. The more able children have an understanding of the diversity of music and its cultural relevance, for example recognising music from their own family's culture. Children with special educational needs enjoy music and making sounds with instruments. They clap enthusiastically when asked, but overall, their skills are below expectations for their age.

158. Children's creative play skills are good. The older, more able children engage in spontaneous imaginative role-play, for example turning the loft area of their play house into a *swimming pool changing room*, and pretending a well-placed rug was a swimming pool. This game evolved from a previous one where two girls dressed up to go on a tropical holiday, and used the large rocking horse as their means of transport across the sea. They got the money for this adventure by visiting the "tooth fairy", having "pulled out all their teeth!" Children enjoy small world play, for example with animals and people, and use the outside resources, play house and tree-seat creatively. Most children are responsive in story time, and the more able enter into the spirit of the story, using their imagination. Children with special educational needs have limited imagination, but are beginning to use resources creatively, for example pretending to speak on the "telephone" in a play car. They enjoy being included in other children's play, even if they don't quite understand what is going on. For example, although told several times, one little boy could not grasp that he was riding his tricycle through the middle of another group's *swimming pool*.

159. Children's art skills are satisfactory. They enjoy art activities and some name and choose carefully from a range of colours. They know that mixing paints results in a one of a different colour, and a few children experiment with colour mixing with great care, for example adding small amounts of white until the desired colour is obtained. Many children's paintings are "abstract", but others are representational, for example depicting characters in the story of Rama and Sita at Diwali. Children use brushes, spreaders and fingers to make their paintings. They print using a range of shapes, and learn about symmetry through butterfly printing. Children use play dough to make a variety of items, and roll, cut and mark the dough to get the effect they want.

160. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements on the development of children's creative physical skills, such as movement and dance. However, indications from the quality of other planned physical activities, and children's use of their physical skills in other situations, are that they are likely to be in line with their other abilities.

161. Children enjoy creative activities and generally respond well to opportunities given in all areas. They work well alone, for example when painting; in collaboration with one another such as when in role-play, and as a large group when enjoying *big group* towards the end of the session. Children's behaviour is generally good, and on some occasions, their behaviour, collaboration and the care given to their work are very good. This was exemplified by two children, one with special educational needs and one without working in collaboration to make star shapes out of dough. Although support was given by an adult, they both concentrated

well for over half an hour, working steadily and supporting one another with a helping hand and sensible suggestions.

162. The quality of teaching is good. Activities to support creative development are set up on a daily basis, and staff understand well how to promote children's creativity. On the *swimming pool* occasion, a member of staff entered into the children's play for a long time. She extended their imagination by making subtle suggestions, and presented as a very good role model by going carefully upstairs to the *changing room* and then, whilst wearing an item of clothing that was clearly **not** a swimming costume, announced firmly that she had got hers on. As a result the children followed suit and put on various items which they declared were **their** costumes. She encouraged children with special educational needs to join them which taught them about imaginative play, even though few could join in properly. Staff expect good levels of behaviour and have the skills to keep children interested and motivated, and enable them to conform and learn. Creative activities are well prepared for children to start using without delay and the use of resources is good. Everyday assessment is satisfactory as staff assess children informally in order to help them further their skills.

163. The curriculum is satisfactory in practice and activities promote children's progress. However, it is not documented which prevents suitable planning for the systematic development of children's skills. Work and targets for children at different stages are not identified which limits the progress of some, particularly the more able whose knowledge and understanding could be stretched further, for example to include more challenging work in art and music. Assessment in this area of learning is brief, and not linked to the activities offered or to children's systematic development. Consequently, it gives a scant picture of their attainment and progress and can not be effectively used to inform further planning.

164. Resources are good and those for creative play are very good which promotes this area of their creative development well.

## **171. PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **171. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

165. The inspection was undertaken by a team of three inspectors, including a lay inspector. During the week, 21 lessons or parts of lessons were observed and evaluated. A further 24 hours were spent on other inspection activities. Discussions were held with children, teachers, nursery nurses, support staff, administration staff, members of the governing body and parents. Documentation was analysed prior to and during the inspection including samples of records and individual education plans; school policies, curriculum documents and staff planning documents; minutes of the governing body and financial records. Children's work was scrutinised. The views of a meeting attended by five parents and 32 responses to a questionnaire for parents were also taken into consideration.

## 166.DATA AND INDICATORS

### 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	70 (46.5 FTE)	4	44	13

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	35

#### Education support staff

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked each week	200

Average class size:	35
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### Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	4 820
Total Expenditure	4 388
Expenditure per pupil	91
Balance brought forward from previous year	1 829
Balance carried forward to next year	432

These figures do not relate to staffing salaries, services and utilities; they only refer to the available expenditure on teaching equipment, resources and materials, furniture and stationery.

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	70
Number of questionnaires returned:	32

### 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	56	44	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	72	28	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	41	44	9	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	41	44	3	3	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	44	53	0	3	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	41	41	3	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	53	41	0	3	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	25	47	16	6	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	59	31	3	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	63	31	3	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	88	13	0	0	0