

INSPECTION REPORT

HIGHTERS HEATH NURSERY SCHOOL

Warstock, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103134

Headteacher: Mrs S Andrew

Reporting inspector: Barrie Mahoney
18175

Dates of inspection: 8 – 10 May 2000

Inspection number: 195369

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	LEA maintained
Age range of pupils:	3 – 4 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	11 School Road Warstock Birmingham
Postcode:	B14 4BH
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Appropriate authority:	The Local Education Authority
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Barrie Mahoney	Registered inspector	Personal and social development Language and literacy Knowledge and understanding of the world	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Rosalie Watkins	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the does the school work in partnership with parents?
Heather Moorhead	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical development Creative development Equal opportunities Pupils with special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities? How well does the school care for its pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Highters Heath Nursery School is situated in the urban area of Warstock, on the southern edge of the city of Birmingham, where there is a higher than average incidence of unemployment. The building is a former war-time day nursery, of a prefabricated style, and is situated on a small site. The local education authority is seeking to carry out remedial work on the building during the current year.

As well as the headteacher, there is one other full time teacher, one full time and two part-time nursery nurses. Children are organised into three groups in the care of the teachers and nursery nurses. Fifty-two children attend the school of whom 18 are part-time. There are 14 per cent more girls than boys in the school. Most children live within the vicinity of the school, and come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. The school represents a predominantly white population, and eight per cent of children come from minority ethnic groups. There are few children for whom English is an additional language. Many parents are on income support or low incomes, and 44 per cent of children with a full time place receive free school meals.

Children are admitted to the school on a part-time basis in the September following their third birthday, and then transfer to one of fourteen primary schools in the September following their fourth birthday. The majority of children enter the school with levels of attainment that are below those expected overall for children of this age, with a significant number of children experiencing some difficulties in their speech and language, mathematics and personal and social development. There are 16 children (31 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs.

The school has no governing body, and the local education authority adviser supports the headteacher. The school has a partially delegated budget.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. The teaching is good overall and children make good progress. They achieve standards that are broadly in line with that expected for their age in their personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics and physical development, and above expectations in their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. The very good leadership and management by the headteacher make a significant contribution to the work and development of the school. Parents hold the school in high regard and greatly value its positive and welcoming ethos. Taking into account the low standards of attainment of children upon entry to the school, the good progress overall and the overall effectiveness, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by all staff.
- There is good quality teaching overall in the school, and this results in children making good progress.
- Children achieve good standards in their creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world, because of good teaching in this area of learning.
- The provision for children's social development is very good because of well-planned opportunities for children to work and play together.
- Children's attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good, and reflect the aims of the school.

What could be improved

- The involvement of children in planning their activities and reviewing what they have learned.
- The use of assessment to help teachers plan activities which are well matched to the children's needs.
- More use of the outside area to support children's physical development.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the school's action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since its previous inspection in June 1997. There has been very good improvement in the quality of leadership and management in the school, and these responsibilities are now shared appropriately with other staff. The work of the school and the effectiveness of children's learning are now monitored well. The local education authority provides good support for the school.

The school has made good progress in improving children's attainment in mathematics. Standards in children's knowledge and understanding of the world have also improved since the previous inspection. The curriculum is now well linked to the areas of learning for children of this age, and effective assessment procedures are now in place. However, more use could still be made of these assessments to plan children's future learning. The activities are well monitored to ensure that all children receive a balanced curriculum. All children now have regular access to qualified teaching staff. Support staff are now well deployed and well supported in their work. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.

A good start has been made in the development of the outside environment, which is now an attractive area. The school recognises the need to develop the use of the outside area further in order to enhance opportunities for children's learning. Children who attend part-time now receive equal curriculum provision in the morning and afternoon sessions. Punctuality has also improved since the previous inspection.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about the achievements of pupils in relation to the desirable learning outcomes by the time they leave the school.

Performance in:	
language and literacy	C
mathematics	C
personal and social development	C
other areas of the curriculum	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The majority of children start nursery school with levels of attainment that are mostly below those expected for children of this age, with a significant number of children experiencing some difficulties in their speech and language, mathematics and personal and social development. The children make very good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress in their personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, and creative development, and satisfactory progress in their physical development because of the good quality teaching and curriculum provision. By the time children leave the school, they are likely to achieve levels of attainment that are at least in line with expectations at the age of five in their personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics and physical development. However, children are likely to achieve above expectations in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative development. The school has set sufficiently challenging targets for children, and is making good progress towards meeting these. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
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Attitudes to the school	Good. Children are eager to come to school and their attitudes are good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most children behave well during sessions and are respectful of property in and around the school. Children work and play well together.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Children form constructive relationships with each other and with all adults in the school. Children show care to others.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Most parents bring children to school regularly.

The children are enthusiastic about coming to school and are eager to learn. Their level of interest and involvement in activities is good. Staff manage children's behaviour well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

During the inspection, 26 lessons or part-lessons were observed. All lessons seen were satisfactory or better. In 42 per cent of lessons teaching was satisfactory, in 54 per cent of lessons teaching was good and in four per cent of lessons it was very good. Teaching was never less than satisfactory. The quality of teaching was good in all areas of learning. Particular strengths of the teaching are the good knowledge and understanding of this age group, appropriate expectations, good planning and use of support staff. Teachers, nursery nurses and support staff teach the basic skills of language, literacy and numeracy very competently, and use an appropriate variety of teaching methods. Time is used well and the introductory sessions are brisk in pace and clearly focused. This has a positive impact upon learning, and the standards achieved by all children. However, there are missed opportunities in the planning and review of children's free choice activities. Day-to-day assessment is good and is used appropriately to monitor children's progress. Insufficient use is made of assessment to plan for children's future learning. The use of library books to promote learning at home is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school promotes a broad and balanced curriculum, which supports the desirable learning outcomes for children of this age.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The provision enables children to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for children's social development is very good. Provision for children's personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Staff know their children well, and make good provision for children's individual needs.

The parents value the work of the school very highly. Overall, the school's partnership with parents is good and this has a good impact on the work of the school. The quality of information for parents is also good, and parents' contribution to their children's learning both at home and school is

satisfactory.

There has been a significant improvement in the quality and range of learning opportunities provided for children since the previous inspection. There has also been a good improvement in the school's provision for children's social and spiritual development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school, and is well supported by the staff. All staff share common goals and work well together to achieve them.
The school's evaluation of its performance	All nursery staff are committed to improvement. Appropriate targets are thoroughly identified and progress regularly reviewed.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. In consultation with the local education authority, the school effectively applies the principles of best value.

The overall quality of leadership and management of the school by the headteacher is very good and this is a very significant improvement since the previous inspection.

The good quality staff are adequate in number and are well deployed, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The resources are of good quality and used well. Accommodation is satisfactory and all staff have worked hard to make the best use of the facilities available. The local education authority has identified concerns about asbestos in the structure, and is seeking to carry out remedial work on the building during the current year.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality of teaching is good.• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.• The school is well led and managed.• Children make good progress in the school.• The school helps children to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are no areas of concern.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. A wide range of ability is represented as children enter the school, but the majority of children have skills that are underdeveloped for their age. This is particularly noticeable in their language, literacy and personal and social development. Their speaking skills are not well developed when they enter the school. Progress is good in their personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development.
2. The majority of children are on course to at least meet the recommended targets on entry to primary education in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics and physical development, and above expectations in their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. This is a reflection of the good standards of education in the school. There is an overall improvement in standards achieved since the previous inspection, and particularly in children's mathematical development, which was identified as a weakness.
3. The school rightly gives a high priority to the development of personal, social and language skills, and these develop well from a low starting point to at least an average level during children's time in the school. Standards in personal and social development are in line with expectations by the time that children are five. They make good progress in all aspects of personal development, and confidently apply the new skills that they have learned. This is because staff are consistently sensitive to the needs of this age group, and help the children to develop confidence and good self-esteem.
4. Language and literacy skills are likely to be at least in line with expectations at the age of five. The majority of children start nursery school with speaking skills that are immature for their age. By the time they are four, most are speaking with suitable fluency and confidence, because the development of language skills is a priority of the school, and teachers' good skills are well supplemented by the work of the nursery nurses. Children are happy to talk about their work, and to ask and answer questions. Information technology skills are used effectively to support the development of early literacy skills.
5. Mathematics skills are likely to be at least in line with expectations at the age of five. The majority of children start nursery school with mathematics skills that are underdeveloped for their age. There is a good range of different activities that focus on mathematical development, and practical activities are supported well by good intervention of teachers and support staff. As a result, children develop confidence in the subject and make good progress.
6. Children sort and match colours, shapes with understanding. Counting activities are reinforced regularly with all children. Most children count to 10 and know the number of people in their family. They recognise numbers to 10, but not all can confidently match numbers to objects. They use the number line well to recognise and order numbers, and also a variety of number computer programs effectively enhance their learning.
7. Children's physical development on entry to the school is broadly in line with

expectations. They make satisfactory progress overall, and are in line to meet standards expected by the age of five. Children use a good variety of wheeled toys, which help them to gain satisfactory control and co-ordination in pushing, pulling and pedalling. They are developing a good awareness of space, themselves and others. They are confident well when balancing on the wooden and plastic bars. They use the climbing frame carefully. The children throw, catch and kick balls of different sizes satisfactorily.

8. Children's creative development on entry to the school is broadly in line with expectations. They make good progress and are likely to exceed expectations by the age of five in this area of learning, because children are given good opportunities to explore and create using a wide range of materials and resources. The good standards have been maintained in this area of learning since the previous inspection.
9. Children enjoy expressing their feelings and ideas through a range of experiences in artistic, musical and imaginative play. The children explore colour and texture well using a variety of media, and use different paints and sizes of brush very well to create a particular shade or effect. They learn about different artists from the past, and paint in their style very successfully.
10. Children's attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is below expectations upon entry to the school. Children make good progress, and are likely to exceed expectations by the age of five due to good quality teaching in this area of learning. They have a good understanding of living things, and they know that plants and animals need water to survive. Children know about the different properties of wet and dry sand, and know how clay behaves when moulded. They have some knowledge of forces used to push and pull carts and pushchairs. Children learn about their families, and know how things change over time. They know a lot about the immediate area around the school, and talk with enthusiasm about the herb garden, and recognise chives, angelica and other plants. Children have good computer skills, and most children can use a mouse and keyboard competently. In their play, they know how to use the telephone and competently pretend to use kitchen equipment.
11. Children make good progress overall in relation to their previous learning, usually from a low starting point. This is because of the staff's good understanding of the children's needs, and the high priority given to these skills as the foundation for learning, and the appropriate activity-based learning planned. No differences in the progress of boys or girls, or from differing ethnic backgrounds, were noted during the inspection.
12. There is good provision for children identified as having special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, and they make good progress. The high focus on speaking skills within the school is a significant factor in these good standards.
13. Since the previous inspection, standards overall have improved significantly, particularly in mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. This has been due to improved provision and improvement in teaching for these areas of learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Children's attitudes are good, and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. They enjoy being in school because of the wide variety of learning experiences that are available, and settle quickly when they arrive. Children concentrate well; for example, when listening to a story about Rosie the hen. They are keen to join in the activities organised for them because of the sensitive and supportive intervention

from staff.

15. Behaviour and other aspects of personal development are also good. Children work and play happily together, and they understand and follow the nursery routines. With prompting and encouragement, they willingly help to pick up scattered toys and games and tidy them into their proper places. They show respect and care for the herbs and other plants growing in the playground. They proudly wear the stickers they gain for being helpful. Their good understanding of how they should behave is also seen in the simple sensible rules they have helped to set for themselves. For the most part, they behave properly, even when they are out of sight of staff, as happens occasionally in the playground.
16. Children are respectful and friendly to staff, and to each other. They show noticeable care and consideration for each other; for instance in their sharing of large play equipment in the playground. They co-operate well together; as when a group constructed an ambitious track for a wooden train. They are responsible and independent in the way they readily carry out the tasks they are given; for example, when they tidy away their plates and cutlery after lunch.
17. The need for exclusion does not arise. Occasionally individuals become mischievous or uncooperative, but the good strategies used by staff prevent serious deterioration of behaviour. Parents are happy with standards of behaviour, and quote instances of children with real behavioural difficulties showing good improvements.
18. The attendance of most children is satisfactory. They come willingly to school. Most absence is caused by childhood illnesses, although a few children are erratic in their attendance. Punctuality has improved since the previous inspection. Most children are brought in time for the start of each session. However, the arrival of one or two late comers causes occasional interruption to activities.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is judged to be good overall. During the inspection, 26 sessions or part sessions were observed and four per cent of these were very good. 54 per cent of lessons observed were of good standard and 42 per cent were of satisfactory quality. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This is an improvement upon the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. This has a positive impact on children's learning, which is now good.
20. Teachers and qualified nursery nurses are all responsible for teaching, and judgements are based upon the observations of all these staff. In the good and very good teaching observed, staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the educational needs of children under five and have clear and realistic expectations of their abilities. Their planning is of a good standard and activities planned are well balanced between those that are structured and those that allow for free choice. Children's learning needs are clearly identified for the range of activities provided. Instructions are effectively communicated to other adults working in the areas of learning. Focused activities are clear, with learning points clearly identified. However, there is a lack of clear planning for the range of activities with children before the free choice activities begin. Children are sometimes unsure of the range of activities available during these sessions. Similarly, there are insufficient opportunities for children to review the activities that they have carried out with the teachers at the end of the sessions, and opportunities are sometimes missed to extend their learning.

21. All staff have a good understanding of the development of early literacy and numeracy skills, and these are well identified in planning and evident throughout the school. Information and communication technology skills are also well provided for and there are many opportunities for children to use these across other areas of the curriculum; for example, in language and literacy and mathematics.
22. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour, which is handled in a caring and sensitive manner. As a result, children want to take an active part in the work and are helped to become independent learners. In the majority of lessons, staff have a relaxed and pleasant manner and use praise and encouragement to develop children's confidence. This has a considerable impact upon children's learning, because they are always encouraged to do their best. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported and they make good progress.
23. The level of adult intervention is mostly good and meets the needs of all children. When it is good, staff take every opportunity to reinforce main teaching points, and to consolidate and extend learning thoroughly; for example, this occurred in a free choice session indoors when an adult successfully interacted with children at appropriate moments to challenge their thinking and increase their understanding. Staff always listen carefully to the children's comments and patiently prompt them to help them to explain their thoughts and ideas. A good example of effective teaching and learning was during a session involving melting plastic bottles. Children were successfully encouraged to think about what had happened to the plastic bottles and why the shape had changed. Safety issues were also well dealt with. Where teaching and learning is less successful, adults are slow to intervene and extend children's own questioning about what has happened. However, overall strategies are good, and this has a positive impact upon children's learning; children are developing an ability to think for themselves and consider how they may improve.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

24. The curriculum provides broad and balanced coverage of all the required areas of learning for children of this age, and supports achievement of the desirable learning outcomes for children by the time they are five. There is a good range of practical activities, which provide good first hand experiences relevant to the children's needs and understanding. Staff ensure that all children have good access to all activities through sensitive guidance and well planned targets, which is an improvement since the previous inspection when targets were found to be too general. Since the previous inspection, the timing of both sessions has been made more equal, and each session provides similar curriculum coverage. There is a structured group time during each session, which enables the areas of learning to be introduced to the children, reinforced and extended. There is a good, wide range of stimulating experiences for purposeful play that support and develop all the areas of learning. There are good strategies for teaching basic literacy skills, and the strategies for teaching basic numeracy skills are satisfactory.
25. Planning overall is good, and contains detailed links across the areas of learning to reinforce and provide variety to support the children's understanding and learning. The development of language and communication is central to all activities. Through the

well-planned activities, children have good opportunities for personal development. They learn to concentrate, and become more confident and independent in attempting new experiences. They develop a good awareness of others, and work and play co-operatively. Children learn to look after their bodies, and gain a good understanding of what it means to be healthy. They use tools and equipment safely. There is a clear focus for all activities, which is an improvement since the previous inspection when many sessions lacked learning objectives. However, there is still some lack of structure and direction to activities, which make choices difficult, as a result children do not always explore and develop skills sufficiently. There are also limited opportunities for children to be involved in the planning of activities or for them to review and discuss what they have learned, which would ensure that all the activities provided more purpose for all children.

26. The school makes good provision for children with special educational needs. Procedures for identifying children with special educational needs are undertaken promptly. All staff are clearly aware of the individual needs of children. Action plans and individual education plans are produced, which are used to inform the day-to-day planning and enable those children to make good progress. Reviews of the action and individual education plans are consistently and regularly carried out. All children have full access to the curriculum.
27. The school has good links with the local community and children visit shops, the post office, and the recycling centre. Children take part in the under fives fun day at the community centre. They invite elderly people to attend their concert, which is held in the nursery, and children also have lunch with their guests. At Christmas, the Countryside Centre brought animals and a real manger to school, and again at Easter they brought baby animals. The health caravan has visited the school to promote looking after the body and healthy eating. An artist worked with children to create paintings for the story telling garden. These opportunities have a positive impact upon children's learning. There is good liaison with other local nurseries and playgroups, and also with a number of the schools to which the children will transfer. The headteacher, through her role as mentor to playgroups, uses this experience and the opportunity it provides for her to constantly evaluate and improve the school's provision for the children. There are established links with agencies, such as social services, speech therapist, and educational psychologist.
28. Provision for spiritual, moral and cultural development is good, whilst that for social development is very good. Children have good opportunities to use sign language when singing songs, and appreciate the support this can give to people who cannot hear. They show amazement when they see plastic bottles melting, and hear the different sounds that come from the bottle. They are fascinated to see their own writing and picture pass through the laminator and the effect that is created. They enjoy the herb garden and like to feel the different leaf textures and smell the variety of scents. Children are encouraged to learn right from wrong through careful teaching, and an emphasis on high standards of behaviour. Positive behaviour is promoted, and children are involved in developing appropriate rules for their behaviour within the school.
29. Children are given very good opportunities to take turns, to share, to help each other and through a variety of games and experiences to work together co-operatively. They work and play together very well, and are polite and kind to one another and adults. Lunchtime provides an occasion for conversation around the table, and promotes social development very well. Children also show independence and responsibility in setting their cutlery in the correct place, and scraping their own plates when they have finished

eating. The range of activities provided during each session encourages social interaction very well. There is considerable improvement in the planning for opportunities to encourage social development since the previous inspection. A good range of opportunities to support cultural traditions and festivals are provided, as well as to explore and appreciate the variety and richness of other cultures. Children have learned about Divali, Chinese New Year and Eid. They have a variety of multi-cultural costumes, a good range of books and artefacts to deepen children's understanding of traditions and celebrations. The school has good links with institutions for initial teacher training and the training of nursery nurses.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The school cares for the children well. All staff work hard to create an atmosphere in which children and their families feel valued. Teachers and nursery nurses know each child and their families very well and are, therefore, able to respond to their individual needs positively and sensitively, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Admission arrangements are well established and help children to make a confident transition from home to school. Staff spend time with each child and their carer to introduce them to the environment and the routines of the school. Reception teachers are invited to visit the nursery. Children take booklets to their new schools on their initial visits to fill in information, such as their teacher's name and the colour of uniforms.
31. Parents feel their children are well looked after, and that the staff care about the children. There are suitable arrangements in place for first aid and medical support. All staff have the required first aid qualification. The headteacher is the named responsible person for child protection issues and, together with staff, has been trained for this role. There is a responsible attitude to matters of child protection and health and safety, ensuring that children are cared for in a safe and supportive environment. Risk assessments are carried out to identify and deal with any potential hazards. The school is aware of an area of the playground that is not always visible to adults supervising. There is a damaged gas meter box accessible to children. The local education authority is aware of the need to carry out remedial action to the building in the current year. Fire extinguishers and electrical equipment are checked regularly. Fire practice takes place with due attention to care and reassurance of the children. Staff also ensure children learn about the importance of safe working practice when using tools and equipment. The staff have worked hard to make the outdoor play area interesting for the children by growing plants and herbs.
32. The registration and monitoring routines promote regular attendance, and the majority of parents bring their child to school on time. Good behaviour is promoted well. There are effective procedures for encouraging good behaviour. No bullying was seen during the inspection and the behaviour policy makes it clear that bullying will not be tolerated, and should it occur will be dealt with appropriately and sensitively.
33. The way the school assesses children's progress is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school is developing procedures to use assessment more consistently to plan future learning. Children's profiles, which are statements incorporated from the Birmingham Baseline Assessments, are used to support assessment procedures. They are also used in planning to provide targets for individual children. These targets are not, however, shared with children to support their understanding and involvement in their own learning; for example, at the beginning and end of the free choice sessions. The tracking of individual children's progress through focused observation is planned for, as part of the Effective Early Learning Project, and when additional staffing allows.

Staff informally assess and record the experiences children have each day, and are beginning to use these experiences and achievements in planning future learning. The profile statements are used to inform parents about achievement and progress. These are discussed in full with parents before being sent home as an end of year report. Children with special educational needs are assessed regularly and effectively in relation to their individual learning targets, and this determines what further help is needed.

34. Information from the "All about me" booklet completed on the children's initial visit to school is included in the children's profile. The school provides very effective educational and personal development support to children to help raise standards, which is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Children are frequently given good encouragement and direction to improve and progress, and praised for their efforts. Their work is valued and attractively displayed along with photographs of their involvement in activities. Staff take obvious delight in celebrating their accomplishments with the children.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. Good attention continues to be given to fostering partnership with parents and carers. Those who expressed a view are very supportive of the school. They are very happy about how the children are looked after and are also pleased with the good progress they make.
36. Parents' interest is encouraged through the good induction programme when their children first join the school, and there is a good flow of information to them. Throughout the year they are sent helpful letters; for example, about the topics their children are going to explore. There are also notices to tell parents in advance about the activities planned, and attractive displays with photographs of children at work include linked explanations about what they are doing and learning.
37. There is a clearly written prospectus but its contents, while useful, are too limited; for example, it misses the opportunity to tell parents about such matters as the aims of the school, the curriculum provided for the children and the arrangements for admissions. There is no mention of the good steps taken to identify and cater for children with special educational needs.
38. Parents know they are welcome to talk to staff about what their children are doing in the school. They also find staff helpful if they have worries about managing their children at home. Staff use opportunities at the start and end of sessions to chat informally with parents about any concerns. While a number of parents are keen to help their child learn, others tend to lack the confidence or enthusiasm to support the work of the school at home; for example, by sharing their child's reading book. The headteacher recognises this situation, and together with other staff makes good and successful efforts to encourage parents' interest and involvement. Reading books are always sent home regularly. Other shared activities are organised; for example, parents were asked to help their child to decorate an egg at home, to enter in the school's Easter Egg competition. At present, ways of encouraging families to help build children's interest in numbers are being explored.
39. Parents join in sponsored fund raising events to help the school to buy extra resources. They are welcomed if they are able to join in sessions as helpers, although at present many have other family commitments and there are few volunteers.

40. There are good arrangements at the end of the year to inform parents about their children's work and progress. Encouraged by staff, nearly all parents meet formally with staff to discuss the detailed written report they are given about what their child has learned.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The headteacher provides very good educational direction for the school. She shares a common sense of purpose with her staff, and puts the development of children first. This approach fully reflects the aims of the school, which focuses upon the needs of children. The school recognises the differing needs of every child and, through the provision of an exciting, interesting and caring environment, it aims to fulfil the children's full potential. This aim is successfully met.
42. Teamwork is well established and the headteacher, supported well by the staff, work together effectively. There is now good delegation to staff, and active steps are taken to improve the knowledge and expertise of all staff.
43. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and curriculum provision throughout the school successfully, and continually evaluates its effectiveness. This leads to planning activities that are closely linked to children's learning needs. The curriculum is monitored constantly at weekly staff meetings, and all members of staff contribute ideas for its improvement. The school has good procedures for the development of all staff. Overall, the school has identified appropriate targets for improvement.
44. The management of the school's finances is good, and the recommendations raised in the last auditors' report are being dealt with appropriately. Although the budget for the school is not fully delegated, the day-to-day administration of the school finances is undertaken efficiently. The school secretary supports the school well by working to aid its smooth running. The school is aware of best value principles and applies them wherever possible. Effective use is made of new technology, and specific grants are used well.
45. The teaching staff are appropriately qualified and experienced to teach nursery age children. They are supported by an appropriate number of support staff who are highly valued, and work in an effective partnership to provide education of good quality for all children. The school's strategies for appraisal and performance management are appropriate. However, there is no written induction policy for new staff.
46. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, and is clean and well maintained by the caretaker. The building is a former war time day nursery, of a prefabricated style, and is situated on a small site. All staff have worked very hard to improve and maintain the quality of the internal and external environment for children. At present, the staff are working to develop the outside area to enable it to be used more effectively for children's learning.
47. The school is well resourced in all areas of the curriculum, and this provides good support for teaching and learning; for example, the new library and book areas are well resourced and attractive, and this greatly supports children's learning, especially in literacy. Resources for children with special educational needs are appropriate and meet their needs well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve standards further, the headteacher and staff should: -

(1) involve children more in planning and discussing the range of available activities and reviewing what they have learned at the end of the session; (paragraphs 20,25, 33, 54, 58)

(2) make greater use of assessment to help teachers in their planning for the next stage of learning; (paragraphs 23, 33)

(3) plan for greater use of the outside area to support children's physical development. * (paragraphs 46,68)

* This has already been identified by the school as an area for improvement.

In addition to the key issues, the following minor weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan: -

Ensure that concerns relating to health and safety issues are addressed. (paragraph 31)

Ensure that the prospectus is a fully informative guide for parents. (paragraph 37)

Consider the need for a written induction policy for newly appointed staff. (paragraph 45)

Extend opportunities for children to use programmable toys. (paragraph 78)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4%	54%	42%	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	43
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	N/a

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	N/a

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5:1

Total number of education support staff	2.2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	73

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.2:1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
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	£
Total income	140038
Total expenditure	*
Expenditure per pupil	*
Balance brought forward from previous year	*
Balance carried forward to next year	*

* The school has a partially delegated budget, and this information is not yet available from the local education authority.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	47
Number of questionnaires returned	15

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	27	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	80	20	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	33	0	7	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	27	0	7	13
The teaching is good.	87	13	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	20	7	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	13	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	33	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	60	33	0	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	87	13	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	80	20	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	40	0	0	7

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

48. The school rightly gives a high priority to the development of personal, social and language skills, and these develop well from a low starting point. Standards in personal and social development are likely to be in line with expectations by the time that children are five. They make good progress in all aspects of personal development, and confidently apply the new skills that they have learned; for example, they quickly learn to share and to take turns with activities. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.
49. Children relate well to each other, and have good relationships with adults. They become independent in looking after their own needs, such as visiting the toilet, putting on coats, and helping to clear away equipment after use. They respond well to a variety of cultural and religious events such as Eid, Divali, Year 2000 celebrations and Christmas.
50. Children's behaviour in class, in the school building and outside is good, and they are happy to follow the school's routines. Children settle quickly as soon as they arrive in the morning. They listen and respond well to the introductory activity, and choose from the range of activities on offer. They share equipment, take turns and listen politely and with interest to the staff and each other. Children are very good at putting away the equipment that they have used, and all take responsibility for tidying the rooms at the end of a session. The children are polite to staff, visitors and each other. Lunchtimes are very orderly affairs. They listen quietly as others contribute their thoughts and ideas in discussion times.
51. The quality of teaching is very good overall, and reflects the high priority that the school gives to children's personal and social development. This is particularly evident in group story times, as well as within all activities. Staff take time to discuss and give reasons for particular rules, and these are applied consistently and fairly. There is a good balance between allowing children to help themselves and providing support. Staff set a good example by working well as a team, and valuing the contribution of all adults and children within the school community. Staff are consistently sensitive to the needs of this age group, and this helps the children to develop confidence and good self-esteem.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

52. Language and literacy skills are likely to be at least in line with expectations at the age of five. The majority of children start nursery school with speaking skills that are immature for their age. By the time they are four, many are speaking with suitable fluency and confidence. They are happy to talk about their work, and to ask and answer questions. The provision for the development of language skills is a strength of the school, and the teachers' good skills are well supplemented by the work of the nursery nurses. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.
53. A suitably high focus is given to literacy skills and the children develop an interest in stories, and enjoy using and taking books home. They find their own name cards, and a small number write their names with some help. Most children attempt to write using

letters and shapes, and some can "read" to others. Information technology skills are used effectively to support the development of early literacy skills.

54. Children have good listening skills and they listen carefully to adults and other children when working together in small groups, and when taking part in large group activities such as story time, or when sitting at tables together at lunchtimes. They show a satisfactory understanding of language in these situations. They listen attentively and with enjoyment to stories at group time. Most children join in enthusiastically with repetition to stories and nursery rhymes at the group times. They talk about their preparations for meals, and entertain "guests" in the role play areas. Their speaking skills however are not as fully developed. In their speaking, some children are able to recall their work in sequence, but few opportunities are given for this at the end of sessions. Most children use a very limited range of responses to questions, often using single words, head nods and shakes, rather than short phrases to answer. Children with speech difficulties are sensitively and patiently supported by staff to help improve their articulation, so that they can make themselves fully understood.
55. The development of early reading skills is satisfactory. Children look at books for information; for example, during their examination of mini-beasts. Displays around the school are well supported by relevant books. Most children can recognise their own names. Children have a good understanding of how books are organised, they turn pages in order and some follow the print or the pictures. A number of children recognise initial sounds and point these out in books, and on labels for displays and equipment. Some children know that books have authors. Children retell stories from the pictures and from memory. They are developing a love and interest of books and treat them with respect.
56. Children's writing skills are satisfactory. Children show an awareness that symbols carry meaning, and experiment with some form of mark making. Some children can write the initial letter of their name, and they are beginning to communicate their ideas through their writing. Some children recognise words that they know or what the captions around the school say. Many children recognise their names and those of their friends. Children know many of the names and sounds of letters, and use these when writing their names. They know the purpose of writing, and write price labels for the shoes in their shoe shop.
57. Children make good progress in their understanding and knowledge of all aspects of language and literacy. Regular opportunities are provided for children to work individually and in small groups with adults, and these make a significant contribution towards children's rate of progress. As a result of the good opportunities provided, children make good progress in the development of their language and literacy skills. Children with special educational needs are carefully identified and supported, so that they make good progress and learn confidently.
58. Teaching of language and literacy is good, and has a significant impact on children's progress. All staff give it appropriately high emphasis across all areas of learning. They work as a committed team to develop language skills for all children. Children's own work is praised and valued. Teachers and support staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the learning outcomes required when children reach the age of five, and their plans reflect this. The staff take appropriate opportunities to extend children's vocabulary in planned as well as spontaneous activities. However, opportunities are sometimes missed in the planning and review of free choice activities with children.

59. Staff have frequent discussions with colleagues, and good use is made of their day-to-day observations and assessments to provide information on children's achievements in this area of learning.

MATHEMATICS

60. The majority of children start nursery school with mathematical skills that are underdeveloped for their age. They make good progress overall, and are in line to meet standards expected by the age of five. There is a good range of activities that support mathematical development, and the practical activities are supported well by good intervention by teachers and support staff. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

61. Children sort and match colours, shapes and coins appropriately. Counting activities are reinforced regularly with all children. Most can count to 10 and know the number of people in their family. They recognise numbers to 10, but not all can confidently match numbers to objects. They enjoy using the number line to recognise and order numbers. A variety of number computer programs also support their work well. Many recognise numbers in the environment, and with the help of parents and carers make rubbings of their house number. Good opportunities are taken regularly to reinforce numbers through counting and rhymes. When looking at books, they count the characters and animals, or when word processing rhymes, sing them to each other. They count the mini beasts they are observing with the magnifying glasses.

62. They use mathematical language well to describe the shape of musical instruments. Children cut sandwiches into squares and triangles and talk about the shapes that they have made. They match pairs, size and measure shoes within the shoe shop role play area or match the three bears with the right sized bowl, spoon, chair and bed well. Through playing with sand and water, the children successfully explore capacity and mass. They develop their understanding of number and colour effectively when recording eye colours when using the computer to make patterns. They make books to support their developing knowledge and understanding; for example, natural objects such as leaves for a counting book, and shapes inside and outside of school.

63. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, and is now satisfactory. There is better planning for daily numeracy activities across the curriculum. Staff plan their work within the carefully designed curriculum with clear learning objectives. However, opportunities are often missed for focused questioning to reinforce children's understanding, and to enable them to use mathematical language well. The work undertaken by children is evaluated daily, but is not yet fully and appropriately used to support planning for individual progress. Children are developing positive relationships and work co-operatively. They use a wide range of attractive resources well and with care.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

64. Children's physical development on entry to the school is broadly in line with expectations. They make satisfactory progress overall, and are in line to meet standards expected by the age of five. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

65. Children use a good variety of wheeled toys, which help them to develop satisfactory control and co-ordination in pushing, pulling and pedalling. They are developing a good

awareness of space, themselves and others. They are developing confidence well when balancing on the wooden and plastic bars. They use the climbing frame carefully. The children throw, catch and kick balls of different sizes satisfactorily, but need support to develop accuracy with these skills. When using the parachute, children listen to instructions and co-operate well.

66. Children enjoy the feel of clay as they push, pull, roll and cut it. They manipulate small world toys carefully and with increasing control, as well as larger construction equipment. Since the previous inspection, the school has increased the range of equipment available for children.
67. The availability of a wide range of imaginatively organised equipment and apparatus enables children to make appropriate progress in their physical development, and to develop and refine their skills as they move and balance. They make good progress in developing a range of skills using their hands. When using pencils and brushes, they hold them correctly. They use scissors and other tools with accuracy and skill.
68. The quality of teaching is good for this area of learning. Staff encourage children to gain confidence in using the space and equipment imaginatively. Safety procedures are good although there are difficulties in supervising all the outside area during play activity sessions. However, outdoor physical development has not yet been fully incorporated into the daily routine to ensure that skills are consistently and fully developed. The school is well aware of this and has identified this as an area for development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

69. Children's creative development on entry to the school is broadly in line with expectations. They make good progress and are likely to exceed expectations by the age of five in this area of learning. The good standards have been maintained in this area of learning since the previous inspection.
70. Children enjoy expressing their feelings and ideas through a range of experiences in artistic, musical and imaginative play. They explore colour and texture well using a variety of media, and use different paints and sizes of brush very well to create a particular shade or effect. They learn about different artists from the past and paint in their styles very successfully; for example, Monet, Rembrandt, Surat and Lowry. Some children can talk about their work with confidence and understanding. They use pencils well to develop sketching skills. Children enjoy singing; for example, a particular favourite being their own versions of 'Twinkle, Twinkle' which were developed at home by their parents.
71. Children investigate the properties of clay and talk about its texture, extending their vocabulary well. They make patterns and marks, and notice changes in texture. Children explore how sounds can be changed and match movement to music well. They beat rhythms and make their own notation for the pattern of sounds heard with confidence. They listen with interest to ballet stories and stories from music, such as 'Peter and the Wolf' and develop confidence in re-enacting them well as role-play or dance. They use their imagination and move and dance to a variety of music, wearing costumes. They enjoy dressing up and role-play; for example, in the shoe shop or the Three Bears House.
72. Children have positive attitudes to their learning, behave well, enjoy creative activities, and handle art resources and musical instruments with care. Most concentrate well, are

enthusiastic and take pride in their work; for example, in their pencil sketches. Children work well together, share equipment fairly and willingly help to clear away at the end of a session. Good relationships impact significantly upon children's learning and progress.

73. The quality of teaching is good and provides a rich environment in which creativity and expression are encouraged and valued. A wide range of activities is offered, including resources from different cultures. Very effective displays of children's work enhance the learning environment, the curriculum and children's self-esteem because their work is highly valued. Teachers and staff keep notes of their observations and photographs of children's work to assist their assessments and to share with parents. Thoughtful and well structured planning ensures all activities offer good provision for creative development.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

74. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world on entry to the school is below expectations overall. They make very good progress and are likely to exceed expectations by the age of five in this area of learning. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

75. Children know about the different properties of wet and dry sand, and know how clay behaves when moulded. They have some knowledge of forces used to push and pull carts and pushchairs. Children learn about their families, and know how things change over time. They know a lot about the immediate area around the school, and talk with enthusiasm about the herb garden. They name a number of plants, including angelica and chives, and talk about the different scents and textures of leaves. They have a good understanding of living things, and they know that plants and animals need water to survive, and help to look after the plants in the hanging baskets.

76. Children know about a variety of methods for fixing materials, such as sticky tape and glue. They build a variety of constructions from bricks and construction equipment. Children show great interest in examining mini-beasts and looking at the effect of heat and melting upon plastic bottles. A real sense of awe and wonder is observed when children examine the beauty of the melted plastic bottle filled with coloured water and shapes of their choice. They show fascination when the bottle is turned upside down and the contents make "rain" noises against the sides of the bottles. This helps the children to recognise the effect of change upon materials as well as developing their knowledge of tools such as hot air blowers and hair dryers. The teacher is careful to ensure children are well aware of the safety issues involved. Children enjoy using clay, and they develop a good understanding of the concept of change when using this malleable material.

77. Children enjoy role-play in the "Shoe Shop" and this simulates a great deal of interest, and successfully extends the children's knowledge of the wider world. Children are aware of other cultures from their understanding of festivals such as Eid, Divali and the Chinese New Year. Children become aware of past and present. They develop an awareness of time passing, through looking at photographs of themselves and their teachers when they were younger, and observing changes in the school grounds over time. Visits to the school by a number of visitors including farm animals, a dentist and a fireman enrich opportunities for learning.

78. Children have good computer skills, and most children use a mouse confidently to

match and count objects on a screen. They know how to use a cassette and karaoke machine, and can talk about what a laminator does. They competently pretend to use a variety of kitchen equipment in their role-play. However, as yet there are limited opportunities for children to use programmable toys.

79. Children have good attitudes to learning. Good and constructive relationships with staff greatly contribute to the children's good efforts, motivation, co-operation and developing confidence. They enjoy finding out about the world around them, are curious, interested and they are developing a caring approach to living things. The children concentrate and behave well, and this has a very positive impact on the quality of their learning and progress.
80. The quality of teaching is mainly good, and sometimes very good in this area of learning. Clear instructions and explanations involve all the children, but sometimes there are missed opportunities to plan the activities with the children and to discuss what they have found out at the end of the sessions. Resources, such as magnifying glasses are used effectively to extend learning. Good planning, with clear learning objectives ensures that previous learning is effectively built upon. Children are managed well. The good interaction of teaching and support staff with children constantly checks their understanding, so that many are developing the ability to think and learn for themselves. Teachers and nursery nurses keep records of children's work that are used well to check their attainment and progress.