

INSPECTION REPORT

SURBITON HILL NURSERY CENTRE

Surbiton, Surrey

LEA area: Royal Borough of Kingston

Unique reference number: 102560

Headteacher: Mrs. Olivia Peak

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Jane Wotherspoon
22199

Dates of inspection: 12 –13 February 2001

Inspection number: 196730

Short 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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 5 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Alpha Rd Surbiton Surrey
Postcode:	KT5 8RS
Telephone number:	020 8390 2555
Fax number:	N/A
Appropriate authority:	The local authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Arwen Sowden
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

A total of 110 boys and girls, aged between three and five, attend Surbiton Hill Nursery School; 81 attend part-time morning or afternoon sessions, and 29 attend full-time. Seven children attend the designated unit for children with severe language and communication difficulties. Children start school usually in the September after their third birthday and generally stay for a year before moving to other local primary schools. At present, four children who will soon be of statutory school age are awaiting suitable placements at schools which can meet their special needs. When children start school their attainment is broadly similar to that of other children of their age. However, 28 children are registered by the school as having special educational needs. Eighteen of these children, including the six who have Statements of Special Educational Need, have been referred through other agencies. Seventeen children speak English as an additional language; nine are at an early stage of development. In all, there are 13 different languages spoken by the children. There are five children from asylum-seeking families. The number of children joining and leaving the nursery during the year is high. There have been significant changes to the organisation of the school since the last inspection. In response to a falling roll and to parental requests for full-time provision, the school now provides some places over an extended day and year, which are funded partly by the local authority and partly by the parents. A parent and toddler group (one morning a week) and a playgroup (four mornings) also use the school site. The local authority is currently investigating bidding for the school to have status as an Early Excellence Centre.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective. It has many very good features and some that are excellent. There are no major weaknesses. The excellent lead from the headteacher and the very good staff teamwork help to create an ethos in which young children flourish. The children achieve very well in an environment that balances high quality care with a good level of academic challenge. Teaching is very good and staff have high expectations of the children. The school gives good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The school provides an outstanding ethos for learning, which promotes very good behaviour and fosters excellent personal development and relationships between children.
- Children achieve very well because teaching is very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs in the designated unit is very good.
- The school provides a rich curriculum; it is planned imaginatively so that it captures children's enthusiasm and helps them to develop a love of learning.
- Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, the school constantly seeks ways to improve what it provides for the children, their parents, and the wider community.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The consistency of approach among key workers when encouraging children to get involved in the activities, and when communicating with parents.
- Procedures for assessing and tracking children's progress over time.
- The punctual arrival of children at the start of sessions.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997, when it was judged to be 'a very good school with few weaknesses'. Since then it has made a good level of improvement. In particular, the weaknesses in provision in the designated unit for children with special educational needs have been addressed with rigour and determination. This is now a strength of the school. Issues concerning assessment were addressed more slowly, but the school now has a comprehensive system in place. These procedures now require further development and rationalisation. In addition, the school has maintained and built upon aspects that were deemed to be strong at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The children are making consistently good progress in all areas of learning and are well on their way to achieving the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Standards in personal, social and emotional development, and in mathematical development, are higher than expected. Most children achieve what is expected for their age and many exceed those expectations. In communication, language and literacy, many children achieve or exceed what is expected for their age. However, despite making very good progress, children with speech and communication difficulties are not yet achieving in line with expectations for their age.

The children listen well to familiar stories, and begin to recall what happened next. They talk with each other when role-playing in the shoe shop or the 'Surbiton Hill Police Station', and dramatise the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. All children are learning 'makaton' hand signals for the most common words, and this helps pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language to communicate. Nearly all the children recognise their own names and know the initial letter and its sound. Many write their name on their work without being prompted. Most children count up to five objects and many count up to ten or beyond. They use mathematical language such as 'smaller than', 'bigger than', 'more than', and 'less than' competently. The children are developing an understanding of living things as they watch with interest as their peas and beans grow; they know that they must water them regularly. Children's skills in information and communication technology are improving because of the school's enhanced provision and adults' increased confidence in using new equipment. Challenging and energetic physical activities improve the children's co-ordination and control of their bodies.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have excellent attitudes to learning. They take part enthusiastically in the wide range of activities provided.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Children rarely have to be reminded about expectations of behaviour, and they respond very positively to the school's approach. They are friendly and polite.
Personal development and relationships	Children enjoy excellent relationships with each other and with the adults who care for them. They take turns, share, and help each other without being asked.
Attendance	Children are not of statutory school age, and reporting requirements do not apply. A significant number of children arrive late, with the result that they miss valuable learning opportunities and cause disruption to others.

Very good behaviour, excellent relationships and attitudes, make a positive contribution to the ethos for learning and the purposeful atmosphere found in the school. Children concentrate for long periods and show a remarkable level of perseverance. They are very confident and independent for their age.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years
Lessons seen overall	Very 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.

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. In the lessons seen, teaching was never less than satisfactory; 89 per cent was good or better and 50 per cent was very good. There are particular strengths in the teaching of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. Not surprisingly, children make very good progress in these areas of learning, which are linked in a wide range of practical and first-hand experiences; these stimulate children's interest and enrich their learning. There is a good balance between activities that require a high level of support from adults and those that encourage the children to be independent and to initiate their own learning. Activities are presented in an imaginative way, which makes learning exciting and stimulating. As a result, children work readily with a high level of concentration, participation and perseverance. Teachers have very high expectations of children's achievement. Regular and detailed assessments of what pupils know and can do, combined with teachers' very good knowledge of what children should be taught next, mean that activities can be pitched at just the right level to develop children's knowledge and skills. The teachers are skilled at adapting the activities to children's needs by varying the difficulty of the questions they ask. This challenges more able children and gives a good level of support for those who need it. Adults listen carefully to children and talk continuously with them to encourage spontaneous conversation and to help them develop a wider vocabulary. Just occasionally, adults

do not make the most of opportunities to engage in activities with children to extend their learning. Staff manage children effectively, and use praise well to boost the children's self-esteem. Adults set clear boundaries of expected behaviour, but the children are so absorbed in their learning that there is little need for reminders.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad, well balanced and covers all aspects of the areas of learning, with clear progression in the development of knowledge and skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Individual education plans include specific and achievable targets that are reviewed regularly and shared with parents. Staff are highly skilled and well trained to meet the severe needs of children attending the unit. This expertise is used more widely to provide well-focused and targeted support for children in the main nursery.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Children receive appropriate support to develop their language skills, following external help in identifying their language needs. The prominent use of visual stimuli and the general use of 'Makaton' help the children to find alternative ways to communicate.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent overall. Provision for moral and social development is especially strong and is reflected in all aspects of school life. Children learn to distinguish between right and wrong and to be sensitive to the needs of others. The way the staff work together as a team provides a particularly strong model of behaviour for children to follow.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. All the children and their families are known well to staff, who take very good care of the children on a daily basis. Their personal development and academic progress is monitored closely.

There is a strong emphasis on outdoor learning, and role-play is used effectively for creative and language development. There is a strong focus in the curriculum on personal, social and emotional, and mathematical development. The school's strong commitment to the integration of children with special educational needs provides a valuable learning experience for all.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She is supported very well by all staff, who share her commitment to the children. Teamwork is strong.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors do not have statutory responsibility for the school but are very supportive. They are becoming increasingly involved in planning school developments and in monitoring what the school provides.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Monitoring procedures are well established and the headteacher reflects critically on the school's provision. The development plan sets out a clear rationale for future improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use is made of financial resources, which are supplemented by payments from parents for full-time care. All proposed expenditure is considered carefully to ensure that the school gets value for money. Staff are very well deployed and the accommodation is used efficiently.

The school's aims and values are fundamental to all aspects of its work. The headteacher is forward-looking and constantly seeks to improve the quality and extent of the school's provision in response to parental and community needs. In the past, this has led to changes to the organisation of classes, the development of full-time care, and the use of the site by other providers, such as the local playgroup.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

(Based on nearly 70 per cent of parents, who responded to the questionnaire, and 18 parents who attended the parents' meeting)

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The teaching is good and this helps children to make good progress. • Children behave well and the school helps them to develop independence. • Staff at the school are approachable. • The school is led well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of parents would like to work more closely with the school; they would like more information about the progress their child makes.

Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by the majority of parents. They also endorse, in part, the views held by a small number of parents. The school provides good information on children's progress through a book of photographs and comments which parents see each term and keep when children leave at the end of the year. This is a delightful record of the children's nursery experience and the progress they make. However, staff do not always take advantage of informal opportunities to share with parents information about the children.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school provides an outstanding ethos for learning, which promotes very good behaviour and fosters excellent personal development and relationships between children

1. The school is successful in creating an excellent ethos in which young children flourish. Parents are rightly confident in the quality of care the children receive. They know that they will be well looked after in an atmosphere that resembles a large family. Children enjoy excellent relationships with each other and with the adults who care for them. Staff work together effectively as a team, and this is a strong influence on the way children treat each other. Children are very kind to one another and are willing to share. They don't snatch and they don't argue if another child has what they want. No arguments over resources were seen, partly because resources are so plentiful and well organised and partly because children know that there is an expectation that they will share. They co-operate with each other when taking turns to fill a large container with water, or when using the outdoor apparatus.
2. Staff are at pains to ensure that all children feel included. Children with special educational needs are integrated into the mainstream nursery during some sessions. The other children respond positively to this experience and to opportunities to visit the special needs unit. They are very tolerant and understanding of children with special educational needs who cannot always conform to expected behaviour patterns. The other children realise that there is a special reason for this and they ignore the screams of frustration, for example. Parents regard this strong commitment to integration as a highly beneficial learning experience for all children.
3. Staff have high expectations that children will be responsible and, in most cases, they are. This is evident in the way the children use the space and the freedom to choose activities for themselves. They enjoy taking responsibility for small tasks such as handing out name cards or helping adults to set out the cutlery at lunchtime. This is a sociable occasion where children show good manners. Children have a good level of respect for their environment, which is to be seen in their sensible approach to tidying up and replacing resources. On rare occasions when the children need reminding, staff do this sensitively and with the minimum of fuss. The children know that they are expected to be quiet in the book area, and one boy was seen taking responsibility to remind two others of this fact. Children look after their possessions and, in the main, cater for their own hygiene needs.
4. All staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour, and these are underpinned by the principles of the four 'goods'. They are 'good listening, good looking, good sitting, and good thinking'. Children respond positively to these gentle reminders at group times and are clear about these expectations. As one boy said at the end of a group session, 'I did good sitting today'. Children behave very well. They learn to socialise well with each other and are friendly. They are polite to each other and to adults. Staff take advantage of opportunities to reinforce small courtesies such as saying 'please' and 'thank you' when fruit is shared during group times.

Children achieve very well because teaching is very good

5. When they start school, most children achieve what is expected for their age. The exception is the group of children with identified speech and communication difficulties, who have been referred to the school by other agencies.
6. Children are making consistently good progress in all areas of learning and are well on their way to achieving the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Their progress in personal, social and emotional development, and in mathematical development, is particularly strong because of the good emphasis that staff place on these areas of learning. In these areas, most children achieve what is expected for their age and many exceed those expectations. In communication, language and literacy, children are making very good progress, and many achieve or exceed what is expected for their age.
7. The children listen well to familiar stories and join in with key phrases. They can recall the order of events in a story, and more able children can say why they think characters acted as they did. The staff's skills in signing and drama help all children to communicate at a level that reflects their abilities. Adults maintain an endless stream of conversation with children who are working at their designated activities, and encourage them to talk with each other. Just occasionally, adults do not talk to children enough to ensure that they engage children in getting the most out of the activities available. This happens when some staff have a general monitoring role rather than a specific teaching focus at one activity. Staff use 'Makaton' at group times, and all children are learning the most common hand signs. This helps children with special educational needs to express their basic needs. Children who speak English as an additional language also benefit from this strategy as well as from the emphasis on using story props and picture clues. An example was a picture of a harp in 'Jack and the Beanstalk', to provide a visual stimulus at group time. Groups containing more able children are introduced to key words from stories, which are spelt out and used to reinforce children's phonic knowledge.
8. Nearly all the children recognise their own names and know the initial letter. Some recognise the initial letter of a friend's name and a few more able children can give out all the name cards of their group. Stimulating activities encourage children to write. The children received a letter from the giant asking them to look for his button. A huge button, bigger than a dinner plate, gave children the impetus and stimulus to write back to the giant. Many children who engaged in this activity were able to sign their letters with their name, correctly written and with well-formed letters.
9. At group times, staff are skilled in involving and including all children, by directing questions to individuals if they do not readily offer answers. Adults listen carefully to children and encourage spontaneous conversation, but also strive to help them develop a wider vocabulary. For example, a short session with children with special educational needs focused on specific vocabulary such as 'on' 'under' and 'in'. In another activity, the teacher extended the children's vocabulary by using words such as 'gigantic', 'enormous', and 'huge' to describe the giant's shoes.
10. The school's recent focus on mathematical development is reflected in the good standards that many children are achieving. Most children count up to five objects and many count up to ten or beyond. Many children recognise the spots on a die without counting them individually. In one

group, children counted out the correct number of beans to match the spots on the die, and when a child counted wrongly another child said, 'You need one more'. Most children count accurately the number of peas that they have stuck on to their peapod, and more able children can write the corresponding numeral correctly. A group of more able children put numerals 0 to 10 in order along a line, and were not caught out by the fact that the teacher had hidden number 2. When asked whether or not there were enough pieces of fruit for everyone to have a second piece, one group of children counted the ten remaining pieces of fruit, counted themselves (6) and knew that there would be enough for another piece each.

11. Each session ends with a group time in which children are grouped by ability. The groupings are based on teachers' regular assessment of what children know already and their very good knowledge of what children should be taught next. This organisation is very effective because it means that the content of these short sessions can be pitched at just the right level for the group of children. There is a high level of direct teaching at these times. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the foundation curriculum but are also well aware of the content of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. This means that they know what children will be learning next, and they are not afraid to challenge children who are capable of achieving beyond the expectations for their age.

12. Teachers have very high expectations of children's achievement; they plan activities accordingly and in great detail. Staff make excellent use of the space and well-prepared resources to present children with a range of learning opportunities. There is always plenty to do, and this leads to a high level of participation and perseverance. The imaginative way in which activities are presented makes learning exciting and stimulating, so that children maintain a high level of concentration. Teachers are skilled in adapting the activities by varying the difficulty of the questions they ask, according to which children come to the table. For example, using a selection of pairs of shoes of different sizes, the teacher asked questions about which pair would fit her, the child, or the giant. A more able child was challenged to arrange all the pairs of shoes according to size.

13. Children are managed effectively with judicious use of praise. Staff set clear boundaries of expected behaviour and provide a positive role model in their relationships with each other. Behaviour management is not overt; the children need little reminding of expectations. In the main, this is because children are so motivated by the range of stimulating activities that they become totally absorbed in their own learning.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs in the designated unit is very good

14. At the time of the previous inspection, the unit for pupils with special educational needs, run by the local authority, had just been set up. Since that time the quality of provision has improved significantly.

15. Sessions are organised very effectively for the seven children who attend the unit. They provide a good balance of structured individual work, structured free choice, and group times. Each session follows the same routine so that the children become familiar with the sequence of activities and know what they have to do next. Repetition is the key to establishing order for these children,

so this level of structure is vital. The schedule of activities is depicted by a series of photographs, pictures, symbols or words, depending on each child's level of understanding. Staff guide the children to follow the sequence of pictures to reinforce the routines.

16. The classroom is clearly separated into discrete areas where a deliberately restricted range of highly visual and tactile activities is available for children to choose. These are stimulating, well resourced and carefully planned to provide a multi-sensory experience. Activities for individuals reflect their specific needs and the targets from their individual education plans. All staff are well aware of the individual, and often complex, difficulties of the children. This enables them to intervene at a level appropriate to each child's needs. All staff have been well trained in non-directive play therapy. They are skilled at making timely and purposeful interventions as the children play with whatever interests them. Staff are patient but their firm approach is essential, as they sometimes lead pupils physically to participate. They use praise effectively to reinforce good patterns of learning and behaviour. Staff demonstrate a high level of energy and commitment in their continuous interactions with these children, despite the limited response they sometimes receive.

17. Staff place a significant emphasis on promoting communication at various levels. For some children this may be a smile; others can say a few words, but all are learning to communicate their basic needs by signing or by using the picture cards made for them by staff. Singing is used regularly as a means of communication and for repetition. For example, at group times children sing 'hello' and play instruments, sometimes with help, to develop their physical skills, and they learn to conform to expected behaviour. As two children played a hide-and-seek game in the tunnel, the special needs support assistant sang a song, which helped to reinforce their actions. When a child showed interest in a small plastic frog another support assistant immediately engaged her attention with the song 'five little speckled frogs'.

18. Very clear boundaries are set for behaviour, but several pupils have difficulty conforming to these expectations. Their personal development and behaviour patterns are not yet established. With very clear guidance and structured support these pupils are learning to follow instructions and routines. Their progress, though made in very small steps, is clearly visible for all to see. Parents are delighted with the support and provision their children receive. All the children are beginning to recognise their names. The fact that the children will sit together at group times is a major achievement in itself. The children are learning to be part of a group, to socialise with others and to take turns. Group activities such as 'What's in the box?' stimulate the children and excite them as they anticipate their turn in opening the box and choosing an item. The items are well selected by the teacher to evoke a physical and emotional response from the children. Their favourite was the balloon, which they watched with wide-eyed fascination as it was blown up, and laughed with delight as the teacher let it go.

19. Each child has a book of experiences, which provides a detailed photographic record of what children do during sessions and the good progress that they make over time. These books offer a valuable insight into the work of the unit for parents, who are given helpful support and advice about the ways in which they can reinforce the school's work.

20. The school is strongly committed to integration for some activities. Children from other classes join the unit for some sessions and all pupils in the Nursery share outdoor time together. The influence of the approaches used in the unit can be seen throughout the nursery. The use of makaton and the emphasis on visual stimuli help to develop the communication skills of pupils with more general learning needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The school provides a rich curriculum; it is planned imaginatively so that it captures children's enthusiasm and helps them to develop a love of learning

21. The curriculum is broad, well balanced and covers every aspect of all areas of learning in a progressive and developmental way. Long term planning has been adapted to the new foundation curriculum but the teachers are already noticing areas where they would like to make improvements, and plan to make further revisions later in the year. Very good planning for weekly and daily activities ensures that children have a wide range of opportunities to experience all areas of learning. Activities are carefully planned to encompass a number of skills and reinforce knowledge from several areas of learning. Teachers place a strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematics. There is a good balance between activities that require a high level of support from adults and those that encourage the children to be independent and to initiate their own learning.

22. The very wide range of practical and first-hand activities stimulates children's interest and enriches their experiences; this helps the children to learn effectively. They are developing a very positive attitude to school and to their learning. Parents report that they have no difficulty in getting their children to come to school, because they are so keen. They can be seen skipping along in the mornings on their way to school. They are curious to explore new experiences such as using magnifiers, through which they look in amazement at the seeds growing, and to repeat familiar activities such as filling containers of different sizes with water. Adults expect children to concentrate for extended periods and children show a remarkable level of perseverance for their age. There was very little evidence of even the youngest children flitting from one activity to another. Indeed, some children became so absorbed in cutting vegetables to make soup that the teacher had to encourage them to leave the activity to make room for others who wanted to enjoy the experience.

23. Teachers use role-play areas to provide valuable opportunities for children to use their imagination, as well as to promote language development. For example, in the giant's castle children dramatised the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' in the correct sequence, with help from the nursery nurse. Children made a cross face like the giant's and tried to imitate the giant's movements by taking large steps in time with the beating drum. In the shoe shop, children bought new shoes for themselves or for their pretend children. They imitated real life as they selected shoes, tried them on, and posed in front of the mirror. The 'shopkeeper' was extremely helpful to customers, including the inspector, for whom all the shoes were either too big or too small!

24. Each week a different area of learning is the focus for assessment, so several activities are planned so that staff can assess a particular skill in different contexts. Activities are extended, sometimes daily, with the addition of extra resources, so that children are building on their experience from the previous day. For example, the number and range of containers in the water trough was extended each day to increase opportunities to make comparisons of size.

25. The school places a particularly strong emphasis on outdoor learning and makes very good use of the outdoor area. The garden has been modified recently, with funds raised by a local charity. It has been re-turfed and was therefore out of use during the inspection. The children benefit from a range of stimulating experiences that develop their appreciation of the world in which they live and their respect for living things. Their physical development is also very well promoted through the very good range of facilities and equipment, which is adapted imaginatively by staff. For example, one end of the climbing frame was very simply but effectively adapted to represent the giants' castle, and pupils were encouraged to role-play Jack climbing the beanstalk. A nursery nurse joined in the play as she recited 'Fe, fi, fo, fum, look out x here I come!' The sand contained a number of cooking utensils where the children were soon absorbed in 'making dinner for the giant'. As police officers at 'Surbiton Hill Police Station' the children communicated by walkie-talkies with other officers in the 'police cars' as they patrolled the streets, to make sure that the other drivers stopped at the traffic lights.

Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher the school constantly seeks ways to improve what it provides for the children, their parents and the wider community

26. The headteacher gives excellent leadership. Under her guidance and direction the school provides high quality care, which is balanced with a good level of academic challenge. Her various roles in managing the school, monitoring provision, curriculum responsibilities, and a part time teaching commitment are undertaken with energy and enthusiasm. She works tirelessly to ensure that the school meets the needs of the children, their parents, and the wider community. She is very well supported by both teaching and non-teaching staff, who share her commitment to the children. Teamwork is strong; this is exemplified in the way the staff plan together and support each other. All members of staff know what their roles are, and know that they are valued for the contribution they make to the school and to children's learning. Staff are deployed efficiently, and their expertise, particularly of those skilled in managing children with special educational needs, is used well.

27. Since the previous inspection, many improvements have been made, but not at the expense of those features that were seen as strengths. The most significant advances are associated with developments in the provision for children with special educational needs who attend the designated unit. These improvements have also had a positive impact on the provision for children in the main nursery, as good practice is shared. The school development plan identifies clearly the school's priorities for development over a three-year period. The teachers meet regularly to review the progress being made in meeting the targets set out in the plan. Governors are becoming increasingly involved in planning for the school's

development, as well as in monitoring what goes on in the school. The headteacher monitors the quality of provision throughout the school and is aware of some inconsistencies in practice that need addressing. The accommodation is used very well, and every small space is used to the best advantage.

28. The headteacher has a clear view of how she wants the school to develop. This can be seen in the ready willingness to actively promote changes that are beneficial to the school and the wider community. In response to parental needs for full-time care, and with the support of the local authority, the school has adapted its arrangements to provide places over an extended day and year. The complex organisation in this class runs smoothly, so that the provision is seamless for the children. The room, which houses the special needs unit in the afternoons, is used in the mornings by a playgroup and by the parent and toddler group. As well as making efficient use of the available space, this serves well the needs of parents in the locality. The school's strong links with a local charity, the 'Archway Trust', are most beneficial. The trust has sponsored improvements to the garden area, and parents speak highly of the useful workshops provided on topics such as child development, parenting skills, and autism. There are plans to develop a parents' room, using government funding, and a local authority bid for developing the school into an Early Excellence Centre is in its early stages. Both are further examples of how the school constantly seeks to make improvements to its provision. There is no hint of complacency at this school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The consistency of approach among key workers when encouraging children to get involved in the activities and when communicating with parents

30. Most key workers maintain a good level of dialogue with children, especially when they have a particular activity on which to focus. However, at times, children are allowed to play for too long without the level of adult intervention needed to support and extend the activity. Such missed opportunities restrict what children are able to learn from the activities on offer. It was clear from the discussion with some parents that their experience of support from key workers, and of communication with them, varied greatly. Opportunities to share information about the children are not always taken by key workers.

Procedures for assessing and tracking children's progress over time

31. The school maintains comprehensive and detailed information on each child's attainment in all areas of learning. Staff have worked hard to develop these systems since the last inspection, when assessment procedures were unsatisfactory. Weaknesses have been addressed and new procedures are in place. Taken as a whole, the quality and use of assessment is now good. Regular assessment of what children do on a daily basis is used successfully so that staff plan activities, which help children to take the next steps in their learning. However, there is some duplication of effort when this information is transferred into individual records, which are based on the stepping-stones towards the Early Learning Goals. The school has been piloting a new early years profile, which will enable staff to

identify the progress that children make towards achieving the Early Learning Goals during the year that they spend in the nursery. This profile offers further potential for use as a means of tracking the children's rate of progress over time, and for setting targets for children in key areas of learning.

The punctual arrival of children at the start of sessions

32. Each part-time session begins with the same routines, during which children meet in their groups with a key worker. They sing hello to each other, place their name cards on the board, count these, and then have some focused teaching to explain the activities on offer for the rest of the session. Adults are keen to start sessions promptly but this is difficult because so many children are late arriving. The children who arrive late miss vital instructions, information about activities and important opportunities for learning, and are a distraction for other children.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

33. The school is very effective. It has identified an appropriate set of priorities and should continue to pursue these as well as addressing the following:

- Ensure that key workers are consistent in their approach to engaging and extending children in the range of available activities, and in communicating with parents.
- Rationalise and develop further the procedures for assessing and tracking children's progress over time, and use this information to evaluate the school's success and to set targets for individuals where appropriate.
- Work with parents to improve punctuality.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	6

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	44	39	11	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)	55
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	28

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	7
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	88
Any other minority ethnic group	9

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

**Qualified teachers and support staff:
nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	190

Number of pupils per FTE adult	
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Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	362514.00
Total expenditure	356402.00
Expenditure per pupil	5092.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	8130.00
Balance carried forward to next year	14242.00

FTE means full-time equivalent.

The total income includes funding for the special needs unit and the contributions from parents for extended care

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	110
Number of questionnaires returned	74

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	19	0	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	39	1	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	47	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	26	7	2	36
The teaching is good.	59	38	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	34	8	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	18	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	39	4	0	17
The school works closely with parents.	51	37	8	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	69	27	3	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	33	0	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	23	4	3	16

Other issues raised by parents

Parents did not consider that questions on homework and out-of-school activities were appropriate for children of nursery age.