

INSPECTION REPORT

CENTRAL COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL

Derby

LEA area: City of Derby

Unique reference number: 112472

Headteacher: Ms K Ward

Reporting inspector: Mr Sean O'Toole
20891

Dates of inspection: 29th October – 1st November 2001

Inspection number: 198596

Full 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

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 5 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Nuns Street
Derby

Postcode: DE1 3LR

Telephone number: 01332 342647

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Appropriate authority: Local Education Authority

Name of chair of governors: Mrs P Wensley

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematical development Knowledge and understanding of the world Physical development	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed What should the school do to improve further
13526	Patricia Willman	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents
18537	Stella Derrick	Team inspector	Special educational needs Personal, social and emotional development Communication, language and literacy Creative development	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Central Community Nursery School is located close to Derby city centre and draws children from a wide area. The school has 52 full time equivalent places. Currently there are 24 full time children and 49 who attend part-time. There are many more boys than girls. (49 boys and 21 girls). Children are admitted to the school from the age of three and many attend the Family Care Centre on an adjacent site before starting at the school. The school offers a flexible number of sessions to the children with most of the older children taking seven each week. Almost all children stay for over a year before moving to the reception year of a large number of primary schools. Overall the children's socio-economic backgrounds are average. Almost all children are from white ethnic backgrounds; only three, whose home languages are Bosnian, French and Portuguese, have English as an additional language. The school has 13 children with special educational needs, which is about average, and one child with a statement of special educational need. The school is an Enhanced Resource School and offers support for visually impaired children; currently four of these children are being supported in school. Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes to the teaching staff and the headteacher has been absent for a long period. The school has had several acting headteachers. Attainment on admission to the school varies from year to year but is about that expected of three-year-olds.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. The children make good progress and attain the early learning goals in personal, social, emotional, physical and creative development. They are at an appropriate stage of development in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The teaching is good and the staff work together well in planning and supporting the children. Leadership and management are good and the acting headteacher, well supported by the governors, provides a firm steer for the school's work. The children are prepared very well for life in a culturally diverse society. The school makes effective use of the funds available and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Development of the children's personal, social, emotional, physical and creative skills.
- The good quality of teaching, including the work by the nursery nurses.
- Good leadership and management.
- The very good care of the children.
- The very good links with parents, particularly with the Family Care Centre, and excellent links with the community.

What could be improved

- Challenge for the oldest and brightest children, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The quality of planning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection in November 1997. The school has been through a time of significant changes in the teaching staff. There has been good recent progress in tackling the issues raised in the previous inspection report. Most of the issues identified in the report have been tackled successfully. The quality of teaching has improved and assessment is now sharper and is just beginning to be used well to set challenges for the more able in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. As a result, standards have been maintained at a sufficiently high level since the previous inspection and progress is good. The school is well placed for further improvement.

STANDARDS

By the time they leave the school the children are on course to attain the expected goals in three of the areas of learning and to exceed them in the other three. Almost all children achieve the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional, physical and creative development before they leave the school. They are on target to achieve them in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical development.

The children, including those with English as an additional language and special educational needs, make good progress. The staff are now much more aware of the needs of the more able and many of these children attain most of the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development before they leave the school although recording of writing and mathematics remain areas for further extension. There is a wide range of abilities in the school and the children achieve well in personal, social and emotional, physical and creative development in the light of their previous experience and attainment on admission.

The children have good speaking and listening skills and are very interested in reading although their writing skills are not as well advanced. The children have a secure knowledge of pattern and shape and count confidently, sequencing numbers correctly but as yet lack confidence in addition and subtraction. The wide range of teaching styles, experiences and materials available for creative and physical development stimulate effective learning and the children achieve well in these aspects of their development. The friendly and secure environment and very good care shown by staff enable the children to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and to be prepared well for the next stage in their education. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The children are enthusiastic and as soon as they enter the nursery they are keen to start work. They maintain concentration well and work hard. The youngest children settle quickly and soon learn the daily routines.
Behaviour	Very good. The children understand the school's rules and follow them. They share equipment and take turns. They move around sensibly and play together, showing care and sensitivity. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The children soon settle into school life and make friends. They relate very well to adults and build firm friendships. They are good at choosing and putting away resources.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The children enjoy school. Several families are late each day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Quality of teaching	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.

Teaching and learning are good and have improved since the previous inspection. The staff have a thorough knowledge of the individual needs of the children and plan work which meets the needs of

those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Recent changes in developing literacy and numeracy skills for the oldest and more able children are beginning to have a beneficial effect on raising attainment but more remains to be done. A strength in the teaching is the strong focus on promoting personal, social and emotional skills by giving children opportunities for independent work and many opportunities to work and play together. There is good and sometimes very good teaching of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development as the staff work well with groups of different abilities and needs. Story telling is imaginative and enthuses the children with a love of books. Much of the teaching of mathematics involves practical activities, learning rhymes and practising counting; these well-planned activities stimulate effective learning. The teaching of creative skills is very good. There is good teaching of physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children with special educational needs, including those with sight or hearing impairment, receive effective support and make good gains towards the targets in their individual education plans. Those with English as an additional language receive some specialist teaching. The school caters well for individual needs. The positive and encouraging approach taken by all staff underpins the children's development. The children quickly become effective learners who join in all activities with enthusiasm. They work hard and the oldest children are able to sustain concentration for extended periods. They love to talk about what they have learned and show much pride in what they have achieved.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The activities are stimulating and well planned. Strengths include the provision for creative development and outdoor play. The increased opportunities for writing are helping to raise the achievement of the more able. Long term planning is insufficiently focused on guiding staff on developing skills consistently.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good. The children benefit from well-focused support and their individual education plans are good. Parents are involved in regular discussion of the children's progress but are not involved sufficiently in formal reviews. There is particular skill in supporting visually and hearing impaired children.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good. The school provides bi-lingual support and draws on the expertise of a wide range of services to support the children.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The children are taught to be caring and thoughtful. The staff emphasise the different cultures and traditions of children attending the nursery and prepare them well for life in a culturally diverse society. There is very good emphasis on extending the children's social skills through co-operative play. The children are given very good guidance on how to behave.
How well the school cares for its children	Very effectively. The staff work together very well to care for and develop the children's confidence. There are good ways of checking on the children's progress and satisfactory use is made of the information to plan work, although the more able need further challenge.

The school involves parents very well in their children's learning. Parents make a very good contribution both financially and socially to the life of the school. The information provided about progress is of high quality.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school has made recent good improvement in leadership and management following a period of high staff turnover and long-term absence. The staff are an effective team
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very effectively. The governors have a good understanding of the school's work and are keen and involved. They contribute well to decision-making and keep a check on how well the school is doing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The quality of teaching is evaluated with increasing rigour and staff keep a good check on how the children learn. There are helpful and well-focused targets in the school's improvement plan which are monitored by the governors.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Levels of staffing are good. Principles of best value are applied appropriately. The school has sufficient resources although some are in unsatisfactory condition. The accommodation is spacious but some areas are in an unsatisfactory state of repair and decoration.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • The standard of behaviour and the way that the school helps their children to develop socially. • How well the school is led and managed. • Their involvement in the school. • The quality of teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents would like more challenge for their children

The inspection team endorses the views of parents. Teaching and learning are good. The staff are welcoming and make an effective team. The school has recently made better provision to challenge the more able but more remains to be done.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school admits the children from a wide geographical area and there is a broad variety of attainment on admission. Some children have benefited from pre-school education either in private nurseries or the adjacent Family Care Centre. These experiences prepare the children well for their start to school. On admission to the school the children's attainment in most areas of their development is about that expected for their age. Almost all children are three when they start school and have between three and five terms in the nursery before transferring to local primary schools. Many of the older children have benefited from some full-time provision in the nursery. The school attaches much importance to developing the children's personal, social and emotional skills and prepares them well for the reception year. There is a wide variation in the children's language skills with some being articulate and able to hold a simple conversation while other lack confidence in speaking in formal situations. The school provides good opportunities for the children to engage in speaking and listening in a variety of situations and sizes of groups and this approach does much to promote self-confidence. About a fifth of the children have special educational needs linked to delay in language development. Other children have visual or hearing impairment. The staff compensate well for deficiencies in language development through effective questioning and the provision of and involvement of children in activities to promote clear speaking and listening. About a fifth of the children are more able and come to school with good skills in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development.
2. The previous inspection report commented that standards were about those expected for the age of the children but were not as good as they should be in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. There has been some improvement since the previous inspection and standards are sufficiently high although there remain insufficient opportunities for the most able children to enhance their writing skills and record number work more formally. The teaching has improved since the previous inspection and there has recently been a stronger focus on developing writing and mathematics. These initiatives are in the early stage of development but are beginning to have a positive effect on attainment and progress. The staff are making good use of national guidance for children of this age which is now known as the Foundation Stage. The process of learning at this age is through what are called stepping-stones. Children make progress through these stepping-stones and attain the early learning goals, which are the levels expected of the typical child at the end of the reception year.
3. By the end of nursery most of the children have attained the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and this represents good achievement for the school. The staff focus strongly on ensuring that every child is comfortable with the routines and activities in the nursery and through much care, good attention given to assessing progress and effective teaching the staff promote this areas of learning well. By the end of the nursery, the children are confident and secure. They readily approach adults and take an interest in all of the activities provided. They are keen to do well and work hard. A particular strength is the way in which the children relate to one another, share equipment and toys and take turns. Their concentration

span improves and, by the end of their time at the nursery, most are able to sustain their interest in an activity for a long period. The oldest children are good role models for the new starters and often involve them in their work and guide them to the next activity. Throughout the nursery behaviour is very good and the children clearly love and respect the adults working with them.

4. By the end of the nursery, the children are on course to attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress. Most children attain the early learning goals in speaking and listening by the end of the nursery and have developed competence in conversation with their peers and adults. They make very good progress in listening carefully to instructions and stories and in following directions; they show they have understood stories by retelling them in their own words often using good expression. Most speak clearly in well-structured sentences and they sequence ideas correctly. The staff provide good opportunities for the children to develop early reading skills. There are daily opportunities to listen to stories and recite rhymes. The children show much enjoyment in books and often return to stories they have heard, narrating events in the correct order and identifying key characters and events. A few more able children are beginning to identify initial sounds and recognise their own names and those of their friends. They understand that print and pictures convey meaning although few recognise simple words and phrases. Recently the school has focused on improving children's writing. There are appropriate opportunities for the children to make marks and to experiment with a variety of writing experiences as in the "garage" where they make out bills and receipts. Several copy their own names, carefully tracing over their name cards. The more able now have opportunity to work in a small group recognising and writing initial letters but this is at an early stage and needs further development. The older children are beginning to form letters and attempt to write their names although the letters are often jumbled and of inconsistent size. Overall, writing skills are appropriate for the children's age but insufficient is expected of the most able.
5. The children make good progress through the stepping-stones of learning in their mathematical development. By the time they leave the nursery they are on course to attain the early learning goals. The children learn through practical experiences and particularly enjoy number rhymes and games. There is regular practice of counting up to 10 and the more able count to 20 in the correct sequence. The oldest children are beginning to recognise some numbers and attempt with appropriate success to write them. Progress in recognising and naming shapes is good and most children identify correctly circles, squares and triangles. The most able understand that two halves make a whole. The children improve their mathematical vocabulary and some understand adding and taking away although most are lacking in confidence in calculating. The more able have insufficient opportunities to record numbers and to attempt simple calculations.
6. The children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and by the end of the nursery are on course to attain the early learning goals in this area of learning. The staff provide a good range of activities for the children to explore the world around them as many topics are broadly based and include elements of geography, history, science, design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT). The children enjoy using computers and are adept at controlling the mouse. They know that the computer will respond to their commands and watch with fascination as they work. The children are creative and imaginative in their work on design and technology and this aspect has improved since the previous inspection. They collaborate well on building tracks and towers

and make good use of a range of construction toys. They successfully use tools when making pots from clay. The children enjoy science and are fascinated by the natural world. They carefully observe the changes in the seasons and talk about how these changes affect what they wear. In their sand and water play they explore different sizes of containers and know that wet and dry sand vary in usefulness when building sandcastles. Through topics about themselves they come to a secure understanding of how they have changed and studies about their families give them an appropriate understanding of how things change over time. They talk knowledgeably about their journey to school and through music lessons learn about different modes of transport. They talk about where they live and accurately describe key features in the area. The school celebrates many festivals and the children are prepared well for life in a multi-cultural society through finding out about customs and traditions around the world.

7. The children make very good progress in their creative development and by the end of the nursery most attain the early learning goals. The staff focus well on improving the children's awareness of colour, shape and texture and there are very good opportunities to collaborate on large projects such as the jungle scene from *Handa's Surprise*. Children rapidly improve their skills and techniques such as mixing colours and apply this knowledge well to their painting of sunflowers. Progress in singing is good with the children eagerly joining in many rhymes and songs often adding actions and responding enthusiastically to changes in mood and tempo.
8. By the end of their time in the nursery the children attain the early learning goals in their physical development. They make good progress and benefit from the challenging experiences provided through outdoor play. The children are agile and enthusiastic in outdoor play. They have a good awareness of space. They climb confidently and grow in confidence when using the very good apparatus to swing, balance and move in a variety of ways. They co-operate well and, by copying one another, extend themselves. Other physical skills such as holding pencils and cutting out using scissors are developed well with most having reasonable control for their age.
9. Children with special educational needs make good progress. They receive good levels of support and the work planned for them is linked carefully to their individual education plans. Children are identified early, and support staff with good expertise in areas such as visual impairment bring skilful teaching and good resources to encourage and stimulate progress. The school has identified several children who have English as an additional language and provides good support for them. There are good resources and some expertise from other agencies to help with setting work that is sufficiently challenging for these children. The children make good progress and leave the nursery with suitable levels of competence in speaking and listening. The more able have most of their needs met well through the interesting curriculum and the staff's careful use of assessment. However, in spite of recent initiatives there is still a lack of sufficient challenge in writing and in the recording of number for the more able.
10. Improved planning and an awareness of links between the areas of learning have led to a more effective use of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. In planning for creative development the staff make good use of the children's mathematical skills and knowledge to develop their understanding of shape and pattern. Outdoor play also provides good opportunities for the children to explore shapes and space. A very good link was made with knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematics when the children cut out leaf shapes and added

sticky tape then went outside to collect fallen leaves. They produced good patterns, paying attention to size and shape. Literacy skills feature strongly in role play as the children take the part of characters in the home corner and engage in lively conversation about what they are baking.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The children have very good attitudes to school. Their behaviour, personal development and the relationships they have with each other and with their teachers are very good. They enjoy coming to school and become quickly and happily absorbed in the many varied and interesting activities planned for them. Because all staff expect the children to behave well and constantly and consistently reinforce these expectations, the standard of behaviour both in the classrooms and outside is very good. Parents agree with and support the positive values promoted by the school and the majority bring their children to the nursery regularly, although not always on time. Since the last inspection the children's overall response to these aspects of their development has improved.
12. Because of the good quality of the learning opportunities provided, the children, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, quickly develop very positive attitudes to school. They enjoy coming to school because learning is fun. They post their names in the box on arrival, choose an activity and happily wave farewell to their parents or carers. They respond with enthusiasm and growing confidence to the structure of the day and clearly understand the established routines. The children enjoy listening to stories, and treat the books and other resources with appropriate care and respect. They particularly enjoy the outdoor play sessions. They make full use of the climbing and sliding apparatus, learning to co-operate and take turns with the equipment. They listen carefully to instructions and try hard to please their teachers.
13. The children's behaviour is very good. They quickly understand what is expected of them and respond very well to the consistently high expectations of all staff. Parents understand and approve of the school's positive approach to encouraging and praising good behaviour. Unkind behaviour between the children is not tolerated and they are beginning to understand how what they do or say may make their friends unhappy.
14. The personal development of the children is very good. Because they are treated with kindness and respect, they grow in confidence and self-esteem. They get on very well with each other and have strong and supportive relationships with all the adults who work with them. They make sensible choices about what they want to do and who they want to do it with. They happily take turns and share the toys, co-operating well in imaginative role-play. When choosing the mathematical shapes to complete their picture, for example, they not only learn the correct terminology but also the importance of keeping to the rules of the game. The children take responsibility seriously, learning to take care of themselves and each other. They are open and friendly with visitors and keen to describe what they are doing. During their time in the nursery, most of the children develop good social skills that provide a solid foundation for transfer into more formal education.
15. Although attendance is not compulsory at this stage of education, the children enjoy coming to school and the level of attendance is satisfactory. Most of the absence is the result of childhood illness. Because a significant number of parents also have older children to take to school, they are often late arriving at the nursery.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT

16. The quality of teaching is good and has a beneficial impact on learning. There are many strengths in the teaching and few areas for development. In the lessons seen the teaching was very good in 13 percent, good in 79 percent and satisfactory in 8 percent of lessons. No lessons were unsatisfactory. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Strengths in the teaching include the very good relationships between staff and children, the management of behaviour, the staff's knowledge of individual children, the effective links between home school through the use of the library and early learning sacks, the timely intervention during lessons and the breadth of opportunities provided. Recent changes, including the direct teaching of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development to small groups, have also begun to have a positive impact on the progress of the oldest children.
17. The teaching of children with special educational needs is good. Staff are very sensitive to the specific needs and difficulties of these children. Planning is effective as it focuses on the targets set in individual education plans and thorough assessment of the children's progress is used well to lead into the next step in learning. All staff, including the co-ordinator for special educational needs, contribute to daily discussions to determine the best course of action to meet the children's targets. Nursery nurses, and in particular the nursery nurses appointed for special needs support, make a good contribution to children's learning and to planning and assessment. Staff have a sensitive approach which inspires confidence in the children and enables them to achieve well. There is good intervention to move learning on at pace. The staff carefully question the children and pose simple problems for the children. These tasks are linked to practical experiences and are often supported by adults. As a result, the children are confident and secure and make good progress towards their targets. Staff are also knowledgeable in teaching children with hearing or visual impairment. They have attended training courses and use their skills well to ensure that these children can participate fully in the nursery's activities.
18. All staff have good awareness of the needs of children with English as an additional language. They make use of the school's good resources to ensure that these children can participate in all activities. The good range of books in two languages also helps all children to appreciate the needs of those with English as an additional language. There is suitable provision for bi-lingual teaching and the staff draw on the expertise of visiting specialists to enhance their skills.
19. A particular strength in the teaching is the emphasis given to promoting personal, social and emotional development. The staff have a high degree of awareness of the needs of individuals and through their caring and sensitive approach inspire confidence in even the youngest and most insecure children. Daily staff meetings to discuss individuals ensure that all staff are aware of any problems or concerns. There is a suitable balance between activities chosen by the children and those directed by adults and this allows the children to develop their sense of independence. The regular checks on the activities ensure that all are given suitable opportunities to take part. The children make very good progress in this aspect of their development because the teaching is very good. From the time the children start school the staff teach them effectively about the routines and also encourage them to take responsibility. At snack time the children are encouraged to choose their own food and to mark on a chart when they have eaten. Rules about behaviour and care for each other are simple and straightforward and all children understand

them. There is a strong emphasis on care for each other and for equipment. The staff also foster independence by encouraging the children to dress appropriately for messy activities and to clear away equipment after using it. Initially some children are very quiet and play on their own but they soon grow in confidence and become part of a group. The interesting activities and range of opportunities provided contribute much to equipping the children as effective learners. The staff encourage the children to persevere with tasks and to play and work together. In a cookery lesson the teacher patiently involved all children in weighing and measuring; they were taught how to share out ingredients and to work together and then to share what they had made.

20. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is good; a particular strength is the teaching of speaking and listening skills and as a result the children make very good progress in this aspect of their development. Overall, the teaching of this area of learning has improved since the previous inspection but more remains to be done to promote writing skills for the more able children. Because there is a lack of a skill development programme the teaching of writing in particular is not consistent enough in building upon what the children have already learned. The staff make very effective use of a wide range of approaches and resources to stimulate the children's interest, spoken language and listening skills. They spend time with individuals and build up a picture of their particular needs. They ask well-focused questions and encourage the children to respond by speaking clearly, often using short sentences or phrases. The staff show appreciation of the children's contributions by taking an interest in what they have done at home or on holiday. They skilfully get the children talking about their experiences, such as a visit to Blackpool, to draw out and extend the children's vocabulary. They value what the children say and take an interest in their home lives.
21. The teaching of writing is satisfactory. Although there are planned activities they do not always build on previous learning and provide sufficient extension work for the older and more able children. Planning lacks sufficient detail of which skills to be developed for each ability group. Writing activities in areas such as the "garage" and opportunities such as writing postcards are part of the planned activities but the approach is one of too often practising already learned skills rather than building progressively on what has already been achieved. At the start of the day the children are often given opportunities to practise making marks either on paper or in a tray of salt. They enjoy these experiences and begin to recognise some patterns in letters and shapes. In one lesson the teacher encouraged the more able to form the initial letter of their name and the children made good progress. Some children are able to write their full name by the time they leave the nursery but insufficient opportunities are provided for them to extend their writing skills further.
22. The teaching of reading is good. Staff have a clear understanding of how children learn to read; they provide good resources and opportunities for the children to "read" books, enjoy stories and take part in singing rhymes. The staff teach rhymes well in different sizes of groups and this enables all children to grow in confidence and to learn from their older classmates. Displays of children's work include key words and phrases and these are used to stimulate an interest in reading. In story times there is good involvement of the children in repeating well-known words and phrases. The staff motivate the children well through using interesting voices and actions which hold the children's attention. There is good teaching of basic early reading skills such as holding books correctly and turning pages in the correct order. The children enjoy books and often sit quietly absorbed in a story they have had read to them, sometimes sharing the book with their friends and sequencing the

story correctly. The school has recently started to introduce the oldest children to letter recognition and this, linked with practice of letter sounds is beginning to make an impact on standards in writing and raise the attainment of the more able. The staff have targeted writing as an area for improvement and are developing strategies to encourage the children to write more. They carefully observe what the children are doing and are now beginning to use the information to extend learning opportunities. The children work hard to improve their skills of reading and writing.

23. The teaching of mathematical development is good overall but it is satisfactory in developing the children's skills in using and recording number. Until recently there has been insufficient focus on extending the oldest and more able children in addition and subtraction and recording numbers. This situation is improving although the lack of detailed programme of skill development is hampering the rate of change. Planning for mathematical development is satisfactory. The staff carefully record what the children are doing and provide daily opportunities for the children to practise counting through rhymes and songs. There are regular opportunities for the children to be involved in practical work such as identifying shapes and the children make good progress in this aspect of their work. The staff make good use of apparatus to encourage the children to recognise patterns and then ask well-focused questions such as; "What would be the next colour?" A strength in the teaching of mathematics is the emphasis given to correct mathematical vocabulary. The staff encourage the children to use correct terms to describe shapes. They also use other areas of learning to promote mathematical awareness. In art, the children are taught how to build up a pattern or to arrange shapes to fill a space. In technology, the staff introduce measuring of ingredients and show the children how scales work. The children enjoy these practical activities, work hard and persevere with tasks. Number rhymes are used well to improve the children's skills in counting and sequencing correctly. The outdoor play area is used well to promote the children's awareness of space and shape.
24. The school has a good curriculum which enhances the children's development of knowledge and understanding of the world. The teaching of this area of learning is good. The staff have a good knowledge of the elements that make up knowledge and understanding of the world and plan lessons well to motivate and enthuse the children. Excellent use is made of visitors from other establishments to extend the children's appreciation of people with social needs. Staff make learning interesting by using imaginative approaches. There are good opportunities for the children to take part in scientific investigations. The range of available apparatus fascinates children and, when staff intervene, learning is brisk. There is a suitable balance between the children investigating on their own using such items as kaleidoscopes and colour wheels with intervention by the teacher in encouraging the children to comment on what happens when they look through a coloured sheet. The staff make good use of the outdoor area to stimulate the children's interest in seasonal changes. In the autumn topic the teachers prepare imaginative opportunities which excite the children such as collecting leaves and arranging them in sequence by colour or size.
25. The teaching of ICT is good. Staff carefully instruct the children and then allow them time to explore programs. Design and technology is taught well. Good use is made of a variety of resources to develop the children's awareness of size. There are good opportunities to use a wide variety of construction toys and the staff join in with these activities to give the children ideas and to move learning on. Staff also make good use of the children's own experiences to contribute to the development of knowledge and understanding of the world. Discussions of journeys and home

life help the children to appreciate that their experiences are valued. There is a good emphasis on developing the children's awareness of health and hygiene through snack time and food technology. The staff give the children much responsibility in these activities and have high expectations of the children. As a result, the children make good gains in their learning. Children are guided very well and allowed to experiment. The staff encourage the children to be inventive and through timely intervention move learning on at a good pace. In work with clay they encourage the children to use a range of tools and in discussion with them promote imaginative responses as the children talk about their models.

26. The staff have good skills in promoting the children's creative development and the teaching is good. The children's rate of learning is brisk as the staff focus very well on teaching basic skills and techniques and they achieve a good balance between creative opportunities and times to practise skills. The children really enjoy art and because these sessions are usually supported by a member of staff learning is purposeful and effective. The staff check on how well the children are doing and intervene at just the right time to move learning on such as encouraging the more able children to cut out fine strips of sticky paper to make branches to stick on their trees. They keep accurate records and ensure that all children have the opportunity to take part in the activities. The children are taught effectively how to mix paint and the range of brushes and paints available help the children to experiment and explore. Each day there are good opportunities to take part in music making and the children thoroughly enjoy the action songs and games and make good gains in their learning about how music can be used to express mood and movement. Role-play is an integral part of the planning for indoor and outdoor activities. The staff intervene effectively and successfully promote good spoken responses. The children work hard to improve their creative skills, they apply much effort and interest. The staff encourage the children to be careful and precise in their observations and as a result the children paint well-proportioned pictures of, for example, sunflowers. They teach techniques very well and establish routines that the children follow, for example, in mixing their own colours and in clearing away equipment after use. Planning for creative development is good as it includes reference to the development of basic skills in a consistent way. Staff use this guidance well.
27. The good teaching of the physical area of learning does much to promote the children's confidence and competence. Recent additions to the outdoor play equipment help to provide challenging opportunities for the children to enhance their skills. The children apply much physical and creative effort in their play and maintain energetic activity for extended periods; they move around confidently and have a good awareness of others. Planning for outdoor play is good and includes a balance between adult directed activities often linked to earlier sessions in the nursery and opportunities for the children to work on their own and to challenge themselves on the large climbing apparatus. The staff have a good understanding of the children's physical development and keep useful records of their progress. Good use is made of equipment to improve the children's agility and strength through riding bikes and pedalling cars as well as playing with hoops, balls and beanbags. In the daily activities of the nursery there are good opportunities to improve skills such as cutting with scissors, writing and using a variety of tools. The staff have a good understanding of health and safety and supervision of outdoor play is good.
28. In summary, the teaching is mostly good; all staff are meticulous in caring for the children and make good use of observation to monitor progress. They make good

use of resources and provide stimulating activities. However, planning does not always take sufficient account of the skills and techniques the children have already acquired and this hampers progress in writing and number.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS

29. The curriculum is good and provides the children with stimulating opportunities for learning. The curriculum follows national guidance for the Foundation Stage and includes all appropriate areas of learning. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection but more remains to be done to ensure that skills in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development are developed consistently. The lack of a detailed plan for skill development in writing and number inhibits the progress made by the more able children and this is an area for improvement. Provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good and has a positive impact on the way in which children learn and are prepared for the next stage of their education. There are very good opportunities for pupils to learn collaboratively, sharing equipment and ideas. The work done in the Family Care Centre is very good and helps to ensure that children settle quickly into school life. Parents expressed much confidence that the school provides the right curriculum for their children. The school has a good policy and promotes equal opportunities very well. There is good access for children and /or parents with disabilities. Care is taken to ensure that all are included. There is a good range of dual language books to support the teaching of English as an additional language. All children are encouraged to participate in the school's activities.
30. The staff are beginning to work together effectively to improve planning and the recent redistribution of responsibilities for the areas of learning have resulted in a better balance between teaching and support staff. Planning for personal, social and emotional development, creative and physical development is good. It is satisfactory for knowledge and understanding of the world, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. However, there has been too little attention to stretching the more able in writing and mathematics. The application and development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are good.
31. The staff have a very good knowledge of individual children and they provide good activities for children with special educational needs. Good individual education plans are in line with the Code of Practice. The targets set are focused on pupils' immediate needs and are accurately assessed from regular observations. Targets relate to personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, number skills, motor skills, imagination and creativity. Special needs regarding behaviour are appropriately recognised and addressed in individual education plans and through well-focused support. Good liaison with all relevant agencies and with parents benefits standards. Children's progress and attainment are monitored carefully and learning is planned to carefully match their individual needs. The children have full access to the curriculum often with additional support. Children with physical disabilities such as sight or hearing impairment are supported very well as the staff have good expertise and skills in promoting learning. The staff take much time to keep parents involved and informed about their children's progress. The new sensory room is an attractive and stimulating area and staff are in the process of training to use it. Children with English as an additional language also receive good support. Their needs are carefully assessed and identified on

admission and the staff seek support from outside agencies as needed. There are good resources to support the children's language development.

32. The school makes very good provision for the children's personal, social and health education. The school's work in this area is linked very well to many aspects of the curriculum. The children are taught about the dangers and benefits of medicine and drugs. Healthy eating is promoted very well. Road safety and an awareness of public services are promoted well through visits from members of the public services. The school works very hard to encourage independence, for example in dressing and undressing for activities. There is a suitable policy on sex education which is very appropriate for the needs of children of this age.
33. There is very good provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The staff create rich opportunities that excite and amaze the children, leaving them with a sense of awe and wonder. This was seen as children watched "whirly- bird" seeds blown down from trees and marvelled as staff told them that the trees they watched had grown from such small seeds. The staff develop a sense of wonder in the children by providing opportunities to study new life when babies, lambs and chicks were brought into school. The promotion of moral understanding is very good. The children are taught to have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and this is reinforced kindly and gently through the consistent application of the school's very good behaviour policy. There are good opportunities for the children to learn how to comfort and care for younger children as when one child comforted another who cried when left in the classroom, engaging him in play activities. The children are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and their possessions. On arrival at school they take name cards and "post" them to record attendance and independently return reading books to the reading corner. The children are encouraged to dress and undress themselves and to wear appropriate clothes when painting and doing messy activities. Good behaviour is praised and unacceptable behaviour is dealt with efficiently, frequently by distracting children from the source of the problem.
34. The development of social skills is very good. Staff are very good role models, working happily with all the children, other staff and visitors to the school. Visitors to the school make a valuable contribution to the development of social skills. A local police officer and fire officer talk about their work in the community and pass on a sense of citizenship to the children. A representative of a local Day Centre for disadvantaged people interests children in care for others in an interesting and entertaining presentation of assorted toy characters, made a very good contribution to moral and social development. Cultural development is promoted very well. The school celebrates Christian festivals, Diwali and Eid and the children are given very good opportunities to experience the dress, dance and traditions of these cultures and of Africa and the Caribbean. Local culture is celebrated when the children work to make a well-dressing and compete in a local competition. There are very good displays of children's art that offer opportunities for children, staff, parents and visitors to appreciate patterns, story illustrations and paintings inspired by Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*. Music is played throughout the school on occasions as a background to quiet activities, creating a calm, relaxed atmosphere. Children make music with a good range of percussion instruments; they enjoy singing the many rhymes that contribute to all areas of the curriculum. Visits around the school further children's knowledge and understanding of their own culture; they visit local shops and parks, and further afield farms, a canal and reservoir.

35. The nursery has good links with other local schools. Accurate records are transferred and staff meet to discuss children's progress. The children have good opportunities to visit their new schools and through very effective personal, social and emotional development are well equipped for the change. Parents are highly valued as part of the team concerned in their child's education and the school welcomes new parents through the Family Care Centre and provision such as the toy library which is staffed by volunteers. The interest and involvement of parents in their children's education is highly valued and is an added strength to the curriculum provision. There are excellent links with the community. The school is supported very well by local businesses such as Rolls-Royce in developing the sensory room. Other businesses provide prizes for fund-raising. The friends of the school are very supportive in helping in school and raising funds. There are very close links with Kingsmead Clinic who share some resources. The support given to families with hearing impairment, courses for adults on a wide variety of subjects and the very good toy library are all used very well to forge links with the community. The early learning goal sacks provide an excellent link between home and school. All of these activities and resources do much to create an effective learning environment and contribute to the quality of education provided by the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS

36. The welfare of all the children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, is a high priority for the school. The kindness and commitment of all members of staff ensure a very good level of care is provided for the children. The procedures supporting the quality of care have improved since the last inspection and parents value the care taken of their children whilst in school. The key issue from the previous inspection relating to assessment has been effectively remedied and the school now has good procedures for tracking children's progress. Although this information is used well to support the individual needs of the majority of children, it is not always an effective tool in providing challenge for the more able in some aspects of the curriculum. The formal and informal monitoring of children's acquisition of skills and their personal development is very good and the children receive a high level of effective educational and personal support and guidance. This has a very positive impact on the progress they make during their time in the nursery.
37. The school's procedures governing health and safety and child protection are very good and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. There is a good health and safety policy, regular risk assessments are carried out and staff have a very good awareness of the fundamental importance of maintaining a safe and healthy environment. Fire evacuation is carried out regularly and alarms tested. Provision for first aid is very good. Appropriate records are kept and parents are always informed if their child has been involved in an accident. The school's child protection policy follows recognised guidelines and the co-ordinator's training is up-to-date. The very good systems of communication between staff ensure that any concerns are identified early and carefully monitored in conjunction with external agencies as necessary. Staff teach the children how to use the resources sensibly and how to keep themselves safe. Visitors regularly come into the school to talk to the children about personal safety, for example, a member of the fire services is due to visit shortly to raise awareness of the danger of fireworks.
38. The school has good procedures to follow-up absence and most parents advise the school of the reason for their child's absence. The school reminds parents from time to time of the importance of arriving at school promptly but there is a significant

number of parents who do not bring their children to school on time. The school has improved the registration procedures since the last inspection and these are now satisfactory. All members of staff consistently apply the school's very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The staff who look after the children during the midday break are very kind and follow the school's procedures to ensure continuity and consistency through the day. The focus is firmly on constant, positive encouragement rather than punishment and, as a result, the children behave very well and revel in the praise they receive from their teachers. They experience the benefits of being part of a community in which they feel safe, valued and cared for and in which any unkindness is firmly discouraged.

39. Those children who have been identified as having special educational needs receive a good level of support and guidance. There are good links with outside agencies that provide appropriate professional advice and support.
40. The school has improved its procedures for assessment since the previous inspection. The staff work hard to record how well the children make progress and keep detailed records. They assess the children on admission to the school. Assessment procedures are good but the information is not always used satisfactorily as insufficient account is taken of the needs of the more able children. There is good day-to-day assessment as the staff carefully observe the children and include their notes in detailed records of achievement which are shared with parents and sent to the next school. Staff know the children very well. However, the lack of detailed planning and identification of key skills hampers the effectiveness of these assessments as staff are unsure of the next step to be taken in planning work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

41. Those parents who expressed an opinion prior to and during the inspection are delighted with all aspects of the school and inspection evidence confirms these very positive views. The school has very good links with parents through many channels of communication both formal and informal. Parents value the care the school takes of their children. They welcome the opportunities it provides to assist and willingly volunteer to accompany the school on visits. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning and their involvement has an excellent impact on the life and work of the school and on the progress the children make during their time there. The school has responded well to the key issue in the last inspection related to communication with parents. As a result the quality of the partnership between the school and the parents has improved.
42. The information provided for parents about the school and about their children's progress is very good. The new prospectus and governors' annual report give parents practical and interesting information about the work of the school. The last governors' annual meeting for parents, for example, included a presentation on how parents can help their children with early literacy skills. Parents have regular opportunities for formal and informal consultation with staff about their children's progress, and the progress reports provide a good record of what the children have been doing and how well they have done. The school has very good induction procedures for parents and children, and the Family Care Centre plays an important role in familiarising parents and their children with the nursery. As a result, the majority of children settle quickly and happily into the routines and parents have confidence that their children will be well looked after. Parents feel welcome in the school and the acting headteacher and other members of staff are always available to discuss any small matters of concern. This is an important element in the

continuity of care provided for these very young children. Displays around the school clearly outline the educational purpose behind many of the activities the children take part in. The school provides facilities for a twelve-week course for parents to learn how to help their children at home and regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date with activities taking place. Parents of children with statements of special educational needs are informed of statutory annual reviews and invited to attend. Parents of children at other stages on the register are not invited to attend termly reviews. They are informed of the outcome of meetings. The recently appointed co-ordinator for special educational needs has plans to remedy this situation at an early date.

43. The level of parental involvement in the day-to-day life of the school is very good and contributes well to the children's development. Parents read with their children at home, helping them to choose books from the school library boxes. Parents have helped to make the Early Learning Goal Sacks that have recently been made available for parents to take home. These have been well received and are helping parents to play constructively with their children at home. They raise funds to improve resources and their efforts to extend the facilities of the Toy Library, for example, have been extremely successful. Parents support the functions organised by the Friends association well and enjoy coming to school to watch their children perform, particularly at Christmas. Because the school gives parents opportunities to understand what and how their children are learning, many are able to extend the school's work at home. Parents understand the school's "five finger" approach to behaviour management and many endeavour to establish consistency between home and school. This active involvement makes a very positive contribution to the progress their children make. Parents are confident that their views and concerns are important to the school and know that they will be listened to and taken seriously. The school formally consults parents of children who have left about their experience of the nursery, and has recently extended this process to include new parents. This indicates a strong commitment to improve and to involve parents in that improvement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

44. The school has been through many changes of senior staff since the previous inspection and this has slowed the pace of development. Nevertheless, the staff are a hard-working and committed team who have tackled most of the issues raised in the previous inspection report. There have been three acting headteachers, which has meant that strategic development has been inhibited. However, the governors have appointed an acting headteacher for a longer period and she has helped to bring consistency and common purpose to the school's development. The governors have also developed their role well since the previous inspection and have a much clearer idea of the schools' strengths and areas for development. The leadership and management are now good and there is a shared commitment to improve. The school is well placed to build upon its strengths. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and with the new initiatives for more able children they are set to rise, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The new sensory room and extended outdoor play area are beginning to have a beneficial impact on standards. Assessment has also been sharpened up and the staff have a much clearer idea of the pace of children's progress. Parents speak highly of the school's leadership and management and are full of praise for the commitment of staff.

45. The school now has good plans for the future and the governors have been involved in setting objectives for improvement. The plan is a well-written and sharply focused document and is a useful tool to help the staff to move the school forward. It includes suitable timescales for implementation of changes. The school's priorities are clear and appropriate and the staff have already identified in it the issues raised by the inspection team.
46. The administration of the school is very efficient. Good use is made of ICT to keep records of children and to keep a track of spending. The school does not have a delegated budget but there are good systems to check on spending and to ensure that grants are used appropriately. Given the limited funds available to the school, the headteacher and governors successfully pursue best value in their purchases of materials and equipment. They seek tenders for major items of expenditure and look for ways to minimise costs and to use funds wisely. The school makes very good use of funds raised by parents to supplement the budget. Improvements to the outdoor area and the sensory room would have been impossible without additional fundraising. The school links spending to priorities in the improvement plan and the governors monitor spending carefully. There are no significant shortages of resources although many are now old and rather worn, particularly those for outdoor play. The school makes good use of funds available to support the work of the Family Care Centre and this provides an excellent link between parents and the school. Another good use of funds has been the provision of a toy library, which is popular among parents and their children and makes a good contribution to learning at home. The learning sacks provided by the school have also been very successful in promoting learning at home.
47. With several changes in staffing the headteacher has recently re-allocated areas of responsibility for the curriculum. There is a suitable balance of work between teachers and nursery nurses. The impact of these changes has yet to make a full impact on developing a systematic approach to promoting skills, knowledge and understanding consistently. Although much has been achieved in a short time, more remains to be done in providing a sufficiently detailed scheme for each area of learning to ensure sufficient challenge for the more able children.
48. The school has a good number of suitably qualified staff and they make a good contribution to learning. Staff have remedied the weakness in training identified at the time of the previous inspection and all attend courses regularly and share the information with their colleagues. This has proved very effective through a time of high staff turnover and helped to bring a consistency of approach. There is good guidance for staff about the school's routines and procedures and they are followed carefully, helping to bring a cohesive pattern to all that happens in the school. Staff look for ways to improve their skills in meeting the needs of the different groups of children at the school. All staff have received training in basic signing and those working with children with special educational needs are very secure in working with the visually impaired. Staff in the Family Care Centre are highly respected by parents and contribute much to forging effective links between home and school.
49. The school provides training places for nursery nurses and medical staff. In the past the school has been used for initial teacher training and because of the good quality of education provided it is a suitable place for trainee teachers.
50. The governors are very supportive of the school and have improved their skills and expertise since the previous inspection. They are good friends of the school and take a critical view of developments whilst being very helpful. They have a very

good understanding of long-term planning and work very effectively with the staff in setting targets and objectives. They regularly visit the school and monitor its performance. The governors have attended a variety of training courses and are aware of new initiatives such as performance management. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities very well. The governor for special educational needs has a very clear understanding of her role and takes a well-informed interest in the progress of these children.

51. The management of the provision for special educational needs is good. All statutory requirements are met and the children's individual education plans reflect what is needed to help them to achieve their targets. The register of special educational needs is kept up-to-date and statutory reviews are held with parents. The provision for English as an additional language is also managed well. The school allocates suitable staffing and resources to support these children. There are good resources and outside agencies providing bi-lingual support are involved appropriately.
52. The school has sufficient resources to support all of the areas in learning, although some are rather worn and in need of replacement. There are sufficient computers and a wide range of suitable software, although this is limited for children with special educational needs. There is a good number of books and the staff use them well to stimulate reading. The new equipment for outdoor play is of high quality and the children benefit much from the challenge it offers. The buildings are old and rather gloomy in appearance. Although the building is in need of decoration and some refurbishment the staff create attractive and stimulating environment both inside and outside making good use of the children's work in displays.
53. The school has a clear statement of aims and underpinning its work is a strong commitment to supporting learning in a caring environment. The school is successful in meeting its aims. Since the appointment of the acting headteacher there has been an increased awareness of school improvement. There is now more rigour in tackling the needs of the more able and in establishing a cohesive approach to learning. The costs of educating the children are high and these costs are met by the local education authority as the school does not have a delegated budget. Nevertheless, in view of the good quality of education provided, the standards achieved, the good progress and teaching the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

54. In order to accelerate the rate of children's progress and build upon recent improvements, particularly in working in small literacy and numeracy groups, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

***Improve the challenge for the more able in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development by:**

- Clearly identifying the more able pupils and setting more challenging work:
- Improving the teaching of writing and number work:
- Providing more opportunities for the children to write:
- Increasing opportunities for the children to develop skills in simple addition and subtraction.

(Paragraphs 4,5, 9, 20 - 23, 29, 30, 60, 62 - 64)

***Improve planning by**

- Providing sharper guidance for staff on developing the children's skills, knowledge and understanding:
- Developing the role of staff in monitoring what the children achieve and then setting targets for development.
- Making more effective use of assessment to plan work which challenges the more able.

(Paragraphs 21,28,29,30,40, 47, 63)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- *Implementing a programme of decoration and refurbishment, replacing worn out resources and increasing the information and communication technology resources for children with special educational needs. (Paragraph 52)

*The school has already identified these issues in its improvement plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed

24

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	19	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	13	79	8	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of sessions observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each session represents more than four percentage points.

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)

49

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

Nursery

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

1

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

13

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

N/A

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

N/A

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

School data

9.5

Unauthorised absence

%

School data

0.2

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)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.3

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	196

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	224,225
Total expenditure	233,741
Expenditure per pupil	4,031
Balance brought forward from previous year	27
Balance carried forward to next year	-9489

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	93
Number of questionnaires returned	58

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	86	11	0	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	54	29	0	0	18
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	30	0	0	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	32	2	2	27
The teaching is good.	71	20	0	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	21	2	2	16
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	16	0	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	36	2	0	21
The school works closely with parents.	64	25	4	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	70	27	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	20	0	0	11
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	30	0	0	16

Other issues raised by parents

Parents were very satisfied with the work of the school. They felt that the staff achieved a good balance between supporting their children and setting them challenging work. They were unconcerned by the instability in staffing and felt that the school had strong systems to cope with such eventualities. The parents singled out the work of the Family Care Centre for much praise.

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, social and emotional development

55. The staff focus strongly on ensuring that every child is comfortable with the routines and activities in the nursery and through much care, good attention to assessing progress and effective teaching the staff promote this area of learning well. Children of all abilities and backgrounds make very good progress due to very good teaching and a strong focus on individual work. By the end of nursery most of the children have attained the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and this represents good achievement for the school. The youngest children settle quickly and this is due to the sensitive way that staff encourage parents to stay with their children as long as needed. The children respond with much enthusiasm to all the nursery offers and even the youngest children have adapted well to the school's routines. Staff are always on hand to help and guide the children and keep a watchful eye on the new starters. From starting in the nursery the caring staff encourage independence and sensitively teach the children to follow routines and procedures. The children have a good understanding of health and hygiene matters and know that they need to change clothes for certain activities and wash their hands before cooking. By playing games with the children the staff teach them to share and take turns.

56. The children show much interest in all the nursery has to offer. New starters are keen to explore and spend time experimenting with sand and water testing the variety of apparatus and showing much interest in the different containers available. The staff capitalise on this interest and get the children talking about what they are doing and also make suggestions to move learning on. Older children talk confidently to visitors about their work. They are keen to share details of their interests and activities at home and also show good skills of listening to others and show consideration for their views. The children soon make friends and many engage in tasks together. This collaborative approach enhances learning. The children become independent and self-assured by the time they leave the nursery and have become confident in adapting to new situations. They willingly work with adults on focused activities such as reading and make a good contribution to discussion.

57. The children behave very well. Initially children new to the school are taught to respect others and to share and be kind. The children soon learn the school's rules and all have a good understanding of the differences between right and wrong. Through stories and when working together they learn how to respect each other. The children are polite and well mannered and respond well to the staff who insist on courtesy and kindness. The children build very good relationships with one another and adults. The school prepares the children well for life in a culturally diverse society. The children know about the traditions and celebrations of several faiths. They know that different people have various needs and that all are to be respected. The children spoke excitedly about the visit to the school of an adult working with disadvantaged people; they showed much concern for those less fortunate than themselves.

Communication, language and literacy

58. The children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress in most aspects of communication, language and literacy. The teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection with the introduction of focused literacy groups for older children. By the end of the nursery, the children are on course to attain the early learning goals in this area of learning. The development of children's speaking and listening skills is at the heart of the school's work. Most children attain the early learning goals in speaking and listening by the end of the nursery and have developed competence in conversation with their peers and adults. The organisation of the nursery so that children can work in different sized groups helps the children to grow in confidence in speaking aloud. Staff working with the visually impaired and those with hearing difficulties focus well on this aspect of development and the use of facial expression, eye contact and signing add much to language development and communication skills. In role-play activities the children are given good opportunities to play a part, explore familiar situations such as visit to the garage and in small world activities they are encouraged to be in a forest with a wide variety of animals. These and other activities promote imaginative vocabulary successfully. The children make very good progress in listening carefully to instructions, stories and in following directions; they show they have understood stories by retelling them in their own words often using good expression. One group listened to a story tape of the book *After the Storm*. They asked the nursery nurse to read the same story and were spellbound by the very effective story telling techniques. They then went on to learn much about trees, seeds and forest animals by using reference books and studying acorns and conkers. Most children speak clearly in well-structured sentences and they sequence ideas correctly by the end of nursery. In role-play they pretend to be different characters and often speak amusingly in character.
59. The staff provide good opportunities for the children to develop early reading skills. There are daily opportunities to listen to stories and recite rhymes. The children show much enjoyment in books and often return to stories they have heard, narrating events in the correct order and identifying key characters and events. A few more able children are beginning to identify initial sounds and recognise their own names and those of their friends. They understand that print and pictures convey meaning although few recognise simple words and phrases. Displays of children's work often include labels and the children enjoy looking at the pictures and pointing out their names. At registration the children come in and select their name card, often with the help of parents, although the more able choose their own name correctly. The recent introduction of literacy groups for the oldest children is working well and the staff focus effectively on improving reading by introducing initial sounds and teaching rhyming words. The children enjoy alliteration and simple rhymes. Books of good quality are readily available and included in displays which attract the children. The children often choose books on their own and sit with their friends "reading" the story. The school's library system works well and the good opportunities for children to take books home contributes much to the development of their early reading skills.
60. Recently the school has focused on improving children's writing. There are appropriate opportunities for the children to make marks and to experiment with a variety of writing experiences as in the "garage" where they make out bills and receipts. Several copy their own names, carefully tracing over their name cards. The more able now have opportunities to work in a small group recognising and write

initial letters but this is at an early stage and needs further development. The older children are beginning to form letters and attempt to write their names, although the letters are often jumbled and of inconsistent size. Overall, writing skills are appropriate for the children's age but insufficient has been expected of the most able. The school is rectifying this situation and there is now greater attention given to challenging the more able. In one lesson the oldest children wrote to "Percy". They used school notepaper and made a good attempt at copying letters. They carefully folded the letter and put it in an envelope and "addressed" it. This and similar activities are helping to improve the standard of writing achieved by the children.

61. The staff plan activities well to promote communication, language and literacy. Sessions are prepared thoroughly and include informal opportunities for the children to experiment with writing. The staff monitor the children's progress and check to see those who visit or do not visit the activities, although more needs to be done to encourage all children to participate. All staff enjoy spending time with the children in reading and story telling and these activities work well as there is a focus on groups of children of different abilities. The individual attention given to children with special educational needs is very effective and helps to build these children's confidence and to develop a love of stories.

Mathematical development

62. The children make good progress through the stepping-stones of learning in their mathematical development. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. By the time they leave the nursery most children are on course to attain the early learning goals. Most of the teaching of mathematical development is good but the teaching of number, addition and subtraction is satisfactory. The variation is due to the lack of emphasis on challenging the oldest and more able children. The school is improving this situation by having small group sessions for the more able. There has been recent good improvement in the teaching of mathematics when compared with the previous inspection.
63. The staff carefully observe the children at work and record what they have achieved. However, the information is not used sufficiently to plan work that challenges the more able. The staff encourage the children to learn through practical experiences and plan a suitable range of activities. There is a good emphasis on teaching number rhymes and games. There is regular practice of counting and sequencing numbers but little opportunity for the children to write and record numbers or to engage in simple addition or subtraction. Accurate records are kept and the information is used well to inform parents about their children's progress.
64. By the end of the nursery the children count up to 10 and the more able count to 20 in the correct sequence. The oldest children are beginning to recognise some numbers and attempt with appropriate success to write them. Progress in recognising and naming shapes is good and most children identify correctly circles, squares and triangles. The youngest children begin by comparing similar and different shapes and learn to distinguish their properties. They make good progress in understanding about space by completing increasingly complex jigsaws, building models using a variety of construction toys and learning about directions through outdoor play. The most able understand that two halves make a whole and are beginning to understand that some things can be measured accurately using items

such as kitchen scales when baking. When the staff are involved in an activity, progress is at its best. The good intervention and well-focused questions help the children to come to a secure understanding of pattern and shape. In one lesson, the teacher carefully guided the children through a series of patterns using cubes and then added further challenge by getting the children to count the cubes and to decide whether there were more white or red cubes. In a lesson on sorting the children made very good progress in sorting and matching “Smarties”. They recorded their findings on a simple graph and were able to say which was the most common colour. The most able compared the most with the least and showed a good understanding of one more or less than. The children improve their mathematical vocabulary because the staff take every opportunity to extend the children’s knowledge of words such as *longer*, *shorter*, *lower* and *higher*. A few children understand *add* and *take away* although most are lacking in confidence in calculating. The more able have insufficient opportunities to record numbers and to attempt simple calculations.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. The children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make mostly good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and by the end of the nursery are on course to attain the early learning goals in this area of learning. They achieve the early learning goals in aspects of information and communication technology, natural science and history. The nursery’s grounds provide a valuable resource to enhance the children’s learning and visits to places such as Darley Park enrich their understanding of seasonal changes. The staff provide a good range of activities for the children to explore the world around them as many topics are broadly based and include elements of geography, history, science, design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT). Progress is good in all of these aspects and has improved since the previous inspection.
66. The children are creative and imaginative in their work on design and technology and this aspect has improved since the previous inspection. They collaborate well on building tracks and towers and make good use of a range of construction toys. They successfully use tools when making pots from clay. The children are good at using several methods of joining materials. They know how to use scissors and other tools safely. The school has a suitable number of computers although there are shortages of programs specifically designed for children with special educational needs. The children enjoy using computers and are adept at controlling the mouse. They know that the computer responds to their commands and watch with fascination as they work. The use of computers helps the children to improve their dexterity and control. The children are able to drag and drop pictures in to the correct place to build a complete picture.
67. The children enjoy science and are fascinated by the natural world. In the outdoor play area they collect fallen leaves and look under stones to find insects. They show much care when observing small creatures and appreciate the delicate nature of plants and flowers. At appropriate times in the year the children dig the garden and plant seeds. They carefully observe how plants grow and show much delight in harvesting their produce. The children know about changes in the seasons and talk about how these changes affect what they wear. By studying the trees in the nursery garden the children developed a good understanding of how birds and animals are dependent on natural foods such as berries. The teaching of natural science is very good and the staff’s good knowledge and love of the natural world

help to inspire a sense of awe and wonder about creation. The children show much curiosity about the physical world. By exploring colour and kaleidoscopes they begin to appreciate the importance of light in our world. In their sand and water play they explore different sizes of containers and know that wet and dry sand vary in usefulness when building sandcastles.

68. Through topics about themselves they come to a secure understanding of how they have changed and studies about their families give them an appropriate understanding of how things change over time. The children particularly enjoyed the visit of babies to the school and in spring studied lambs and chicks and compared them with older animals. They talk knowledgeably about their journey to school and through music lessons learn about different modes of transport. They talk about where they live and accurately describe key features in the area. Through their walk to the park the children made good gains in their learning. They made simple maps and plans and the more able showed a good understanding of how symbols can be used to represent sites and places of interest. The school celebrates many festivals and the children are prepared well for life in a culturally diverse society through finding out about customs and traditions around the world.
69. The teaching is good and sometimes very good. The children are keen to learn about the natural world and respond enthusiastically to the activities provided. They work hard and concentrate for long periods being fascinated by how insects and birds enrich the environment. One brief incident when the teacher asked the children to find spiders' webs summed up the positive and imaginative teaching which brought excited and awe-struck comments from the children who observed the dew glistening on the strands. The staff give good opportunities for the children to record in pictures what they have seen. Questioning skills are very good and help to promote the children's thinking and encouraged them to investigate further.

Physical development

70. By the end of their time in the nursery, the children attain the early learning goals in their physical development they make good progress and benefit from the challenging experiences provided through outdoor play. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. The teaching is good; the staff thoughtfully plan demanding activities and link some of them to work done in the nursery earlier in the day. Each day there are several different activities to stimulate learning and the recently installed large apparatus is very popular as it is challenging and exciting. The children are agile and enthusiastic in outdoor play. They have a good awareness of space. They climb confidently and grow in confidence when using the very good apparatus to swing, balance and move in a variety of ways. They co-operate well and, by copying one another extend their skills. The outdoor area is a very stimulating environment and the school has focused very well on improving it. The financial support of parents has been of great benefit. Children are given plenty of time to play outside and this gives them the opportunity to persist and practise basic skills. The children grow in confidence as they achieve success in several physical skills such as pedalling fast, toys and changing direction as they cycle around the tracks. The resources are good and enable the children to become proficient in climbing under, through, around and between. The staff capitalise on these opportunities and intervene well to talk about positional vocabulary.
71. Other physical skills such as holding pencils and cutting out using scissors are developed well with most having appropriate control for their age. Inside there are

several activities which focus on improving the children's physical skills. The children play with different toys and equipment which encourage dexterity. In the sand tray they feel carefully for hidden conkers and then count how many they have found. One activity was particularly effective; the children cut out a large leaf shape, added double-sided sticky tape and then went in search of different leaves to make a pattern. Children with visual impairment are supported very well in practical activities and staff are always on hand to ensure safety but also allow the children to experiment.

72. The staff have a clear understanding of the stepping stones in physical development and structure their teaching to build on previously learned skills. They do this well as they keep careful records of the children's progress and monitor their involvement in activities. Through the provision of snacks, which the children choose and sometimes make, the staff teach the children about healthy eating. They emphasise the need for cleanliness and by the end of their time in the nursery the children have a good understanding of health and hygiene.

Creative development

73. The children, including those with English as an additional language and special educational needs, make very good progress in their creative development and by the end of the nursery most attain the early learning goals. This represents good achievement for the school. The staff focus well on improving the children's awareness of colour, shape and texture and there are very good opportunities to collaborate on large projects such as the jungle scene from *Handa's Surprise*. Children rapidly improve their skills and techniques such as mixing colours and apply this knowledge well to their painting of sunflowers. Progress in singing is good with the children eagerly joining in many rhymes and songs often adding actions and responding enthusiastically to changes in mood and tempo. Outdoor play contributes much to the development of children's creative skills. There are good opportunities for them to play a part in their role-play as garage receptionists of working in Percy's shed.
74. The teaching is very good. The staff have a very good understanding of how to develop the children's skills and techniques consistently and planning for this area of learning is effective. Much thought goes into the organisation of indoor and outdoor activities which are linked to the topic for the half-term. The autumn theme is being used very well to provide rich and stimulating experiences that hold the children's attention and also stimulate learning. Staff encourage the children to observe carefully and to record their observations in a variety of ways. The children really enjoy painting and have made good progress in learning how to mix appropriate colours to represent autumn. They make very effective pictures using coloured sticky paper and talk confidently about their creations. Other children spend much time in bark rubbing and enjoy the feel of different textures. The staff intervene well and this support ensures that the children clearly understand the differences between rough and smooth. The children are good at working with a wide variety of materials. They have good skills in modelling using clay and the staff extend this work to using a variety of tools. The children imaginatively use the tools, sometimes incorporating them in their models such as aeroplanes.
75. The staff also enrich the children's creative experiences through regular opportunities for creative dance. The children thoroughly enjoy country dancing and learn to co-operate and keep time. They show good balance and poise for their age, and most are able to work with a partner and have mastered sidestepping. In music

making the children enjoy playing instruments and singing. They know a good range of songs and rhymes and keep together when singing. The more able pick up the beat of a song and beat instruments in time to the music. Staff participate fully in these activities and their example spurs the children to improve and refine their performance.