

## INSPECTION REPORT

### LILYCROFT NURSERY SCHOOL

Bradford

LEA area: Bradford

Unique reference number: 107187

Headteacher: Ms E Larmour

Reporting inspector: Mr D Hardman  
17794

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> May – 9<sup>th</sup> May 2001

Inspection number: 198679

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lilycroft road Bradford West Yorkshire
Postcode:	BD9 5AD
Telephone number:	01274 545647
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Appropriate authority:	The Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Naylor
Date of previous inspection:	17 <sup>th</sup> November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>15</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Lilycroft Nursery School is a large nursery school situated in the Manningham area of Bradford near the city centre. The school serves an area, which is densely populated containing mainly terraced housing. Unemployment is high. The nursery has 80 children on roll and 35 attend on a part-time basis. Many pupils have at least one parent who speaks little English and all children are learning English as an additional language. Punjabi and Urdu are the main languages spoken in their homes and the families all originate from Pakistan. Forty eight per cent of the full time children are eligible for free school meals. This is a high proportion for nursery schools. The school has identified nine children on its special educational needs register. Many children's attainment on entry to the school is well below the level expected for their age, especially in speech and language skills in English and structured play.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good, vibrant school. Very good leadership and management by the headteacher, very well supported by all staff, provide clear direction for future developments. The quality of teaching is very good and children make very good progress in all areas of learning. All children begin nursery with English as an additional language and, as a result of the very good teaching and learning, many children are nearly at the expected level by the time they leave the school. Children are responsible and relationships in school are very good. The school does not have a delegated budget and therefore no judgement is made about value for money. The many significant strengths of the school far outweigh areas that could be improved.

#### **What the school does well**

- The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and deputy headteacher are very good and lead to high quality teamwork by all staff.
- Teaching is very good and leads to very good learning: children achieve very well in relation to their previous knowledge and understanding.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are excellent, particularly in English and children's personal and social development.
- The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The caring, family atmosphere created in the school makes a very positive contribution to children's learning.

#### **What could be improved**

- Occasionally, when all members of staff are working with groups, a few children are not actively engaged in their self-selected activities.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in November 1997. Since then it has made good progress in addressing the issues raised. The quality of teachers' planning has improved and clear learning objectives are identified for each activity. As a result, teaching has improved since the previous inspection, when it was good: it is now very good. The school has made great efforts to ensure that children arrive on time and stay for the whole session. The leaflet that new parents receive stresses the importance of punctuality and most parents respond well

and make every effort to comply with the requirements. However, despite these efforts a few children, mainly those attending part time, are still arriving late and missing the beginning of the session. The concern raised in the previous inspection that the “quality of education is constrained” when there are no adults available to support children working on their self-selected activities, is still a concern, especially towards the end of the longer sessions. Despite this, the school has maintained the many very good features found in the previous inspection and continues to make further improvements and to set challenging targets for the future.

## STANDARDS

Children arrive in the nursery with a range of pre-school experiences. The majority enter with standards that are well below the expected level for their age, especially with regard to their linguistic skills and their personal and social development. All children are learning English as an additional language and it is a credit to the school that most make very good progress in their communication, language and literacy skills. Although children’s attainment is below what is expected for their age in mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world, they achieve well and make good progress. In personal, social and emotional, creative and physical development children make very good progress and achieve levels expected for their age. This is because of the very good quality teaching, which encourages children to explore their environment, behave well and become independent learners. Children with special educational needs make equally very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The emphasis placed by all staff on the learning of English as an additional language means that children are given very good opportunities to develop their skills in all areas of the nursery.

## CHILDREN’S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have very good attitudes to the school and their work. They enjoy coming to school and most persevere with their tasks until these are completed. Occasionally, a few children lose interest, especially towards the end of longer sessions.
Behaviour	The behaviour of the children is very good. They clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. They respond well to instructions from all staff and they are polite and courteous towards one another and adults.
Personal development and relationships	Children’s personal development and relationships are very good. They respond very well to the school’s encouragement to take turns and share their resources fairly.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory; however, the rate of unauthorised absence is high. This is mainly caused by children’s absence to visit relatives in Pakistan or through attending religious festivals. No children have been requested to leave the school in the last year.

Children’s very good attitudes result from the school’s positive ethos and their response to the caring, family atmosphere in the school. This is a particular strength of the school. Children have very good relationships with each other and with staff. They are considerate of others when they move around the building, during lunchtime and play outside. They respond very well to the trust and respect they are shown by all staff.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	
Sessions seen overall	Very good

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

Twelve lessons were observed: in eight the quality of teaching was very good and in four it was good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching is better than when the school was last inspected. This very good teaching was seen in all areas of learning but teaching of communication, language and literacy and personal development is particularly effective. All staff show very good knowledge of the needs of children of this age. Staff work very well together and plan effectively as teams. The preparation and planning of activities are very good and children are offered an excellent range of activities to stimulate and challenge them. Staff are very good role models and this encourages very good relationships between staff and children and with each other. However, there are a few occasions when a small number of children finish an activity and the member of staff designated to have an overview of all the activities in that particular area does not notice this. As a result, a few children are not actively engaged in tasks for short periods and their learning slows.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities are excellent. The school provides a curriculum that enriches children's experiences in a very wide range of activities. Many opportunities are provided to stimulate children's curiosity, interest and understanding.
Provision for children with special educational needs	There are very good procedures and provision for pupils with special educational needs. All staff know the children very well and provide challenging activities that make a positive contribution to their attainment and learning.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	All children are learning English as an additional language. All staff work with groups and individuals to make sure they join in all the activities available and bilingual staff offer crucial home language support. As a result, children make very good progress in their knowledge, understanding and use of English.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The good role models of the staff and the high expectation of behaviour ensure that children develop positive relationships with others and responsible attitudes towards their learning resources.
How well the school cares for its children	Procedures for child protection and for ensuring children's welfare are very good. There are very good procedures for assessing children's attainment and progress.

The curriculum is very effectively balanced to include activities that are chosen by the children and those that are directed by adults. Priority is given to children's social and literacy skills, which are frequently reinforced in every session. Curricular provision is greatly enhanced by a very wide range of visitors and artists. The staff are constantly finding ways to broaden the horizons of all children. All children, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to the curriculum. All staff know the children very well and respond effectively to their needs. A feature that provides a variety of rich experiences is the outside area and garden, which is used effectively and enjoyed by children. The school has formed a very good

partnership with most parents, which makes a very good contribution to children’s learning both at home and in school.

**HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The headteacher, very well supported by the deputy headteacher, provides very good leadership and gives a clear educational direction for the school. The quality of teamwork by all staff is very good and fosters a very positive, family atmosphere in which all children are valued and their efforts well supported.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school has no governing body. A management board oversees the nursery schools in the area. Officers of the local authority, who are members of the board, visit regularly and have a very good understanding of the school and its aims.
The school’s evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school knows its strengths and areas for development. The regular observation of teaching and learning is having a very positive impact on the quality of education. All staff work very hard to improve their own expertise and the educational opportunities provided for children.
The strategic use of resources	The school is very well staffed and members of staff are well-deployed. Nursery nurses and classroom assistants play an important role in the life of the school and make a significant contribution to children’s learning. The accommodation is very well maintained. Resources to support children’s learning are very good and used effectively.

The quality of leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff is very good. All members of staff are experienced and dedicated to securing the best education they can for the children. The local education authority manages most of the budget centrally. The school always seeks the best value for the funds they control and these are carefully costed against the school development plan. A very significant feature is the way parents and volunteers help develop exciting projects, for example the garden area.

**PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Behaviour in school is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• They would feel comfortable to approach the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The way the school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to mature and become responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework for children.</li> <li>• The information about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• A few are concerned about the progress their children make.</li> </ul>

At the parents’ meeting, all were very pleased with the commitment of the staff and the way their children’s ability to speak English improved. Their main concern was the balance

between formal and informal teaching and the fact that children were allowed to choose their own activities too often. The inspection team agrees with the positive comments made by parents but finds that the balance between free choice activities and those directed by staff is about right and children are making good progress in all areas of learning. Occasionally, particularly towards the end of lengthy sessions, a few children lose interest and the member of staff designated to have an overview of all activities does not intervene quickly enough. The inspection team disagrees with the concerns over information about how well children are getting on. A wide range of information is provided for parents and the opportunity to discuss any aspect of children's progress with teachers is readily available because of the "open door" policy run by the school. Parents also have the opportunity to see their own child's record of achievements and add their comments to it. The school supports parents' request for work for their children at home and the development of the Story Sack Project, well supported by a small group of parents, has provided additional resources to extend children's learning effectively.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and deputy headteacher are very good and lead to high quality teamwork by all staff.**

The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and deputy headteacher are very good and have been a significant influence in maintaining the very good quality education provided during recent staff changes. The senior management team gives a very clear educational direction to the school. With the support of all staff a welcoming and stimulating environment is provided which creates an effective climate for learning. The school is successful in meeting its aims and this is clearly seen in the enthusiasm of the children and staff.

There are regular parent and volunteer helpers in school and they make a considerable contribution to children's attainment and progress. For example, the development of the garden and the skills of staff, parents and children in becoming "organic gardeners" has added a new dimension to the educational opportunities available. The school has a number of important links with other institutions and when they visit there is a clear commitment to work closely together for the benefit of all concerned. For example, during the inspection, a visitor, using sign language, told a story to a large group of children. They sat and watched in rapt attention and joined in enthusiastically when asked to do so. This kind of activity greatly enhances children's learning and provides opportunities for them to see how other people use their special skills.

The headteacher has a very dedicated staff that work very effectively together. The school development plan is detailed and effective and clearly identifies the priorities and targets to be tackled and guides the work of the school. It provides a baseline against which future development can be measured and is helping the school to continue to improve and develop. For the budgets that the school controls, educational and financial planning are clearly cross-referenced. The school has clear targets for improvements. Priorities include the further development of staff expertise in information and communication technology so that the new computers can be used more effectively. The staff regularly attend courses to develop their professional skills and knowledge and all staff have a shared commitment to the implementation of the recently introduced curriculum for children under five called the Foundation Stage.

**Teaching is very good and leads to very good learning: children achieve very well in relation to their previous knowledge and understanding.**

The quality of teaching throughout the school has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be good. It is now very good and teaching is clearly focused on the targets for all children, including those with special educational needs. Teachers and nursery nurses work particularly well together because they meet weekly to assess children's progress and to plan new activities based on their detailed discussions. This very good teamwork makes a very positive contribution to children's very good progress. The staff support one another and help each other with activities and resources. The school frequently monitors teaching and learning and the subsequent improvements contribute positively to the quality of education given to all children. Very good teaching and the learning opportunities provided are based on an excellent curriculum, which is vibrant and stimulating and children respond enthusiastically to the variety of activities offered.

There is a very high focus throughout the day on developing children's language skills in a wide range of activities and on encouraging them to talk about what they are doing. Children respond well by repeating new words, improving their vocabulary and talking with increased confidence as they get older. For example, when children are using the outdoor apparatus staff are always alert to opportunities to extend children's language skills. When using the climbing frame, questions such as "Which step of the ladder are you on?" and "Do you think you are high or low?" reinforce the every day use of language. There is an excellent range of activities on offer to children and staff support children's exploration well. For example, in a practical session using wood to make models, one child commented that his "was busted" and the teacher intervened to encourage the extension of the sentence and success was achieved when he repeated, "My model is broken".

There is a good balance of teacher-directed activities and those that children choose for themselves. For example, in a mathematics session a teacher worked closely with one child assessing his knowledge of numbers to five by using items on a washing line. The skilful questioning and reference to the story and the order the items were put on the line greatly enhanced both numerical skills as well as language skills. Sometimes teachers use two languages to help children to learn English as well as consolidating their own spoken language. For example, a teacher took a group of children into the staff room and told the story of the Enormous Turnip in English and Punjabi. Children were fully involved in the story and all pulled together to pull the turnip from the ground. This type of activity is extremely valuable in helping children develop and understand English.

The quality of the discussions that the staff have with children is very good. All staff and other adults take every opportunity to extend children's learning. A very good example of this is the lunchtime sessions, which are used very effectively. Staff sit with small groups of children and discuss the meal on offer, the size of portions they want and each child is encouraged to ask the adult for the meal they want. The correct use of language is emphasised when this is taking place. For example, many children in the group say "big" when asked if they want a whole or half a samosa, the teacher insisted on each child using the term "whole" and children showed obvious pleasure when they correctly identified their choice. After lunch sessions are equally important and a very good music session was greatly enjoyed by children and their knowledge and understanding were improved both of music and of language. This was because the big book "The First Musician" was used as the focus and the different musical instruments represented different aspects of the story. The development of these skills was particularly effective because of the use of descriptive words linked to the instruments and children identified the cymbals with lightning and the drum with thunder.

All staff have consistently high expectations of children's learning and behaviour. Children's very good relationships with teachers, nursery nurses and other adults in the school ensure that they achieve well. In many lessons children's very positive attitudes, high levels of concentration, eagerness to do well, very good behaviour and an ability to share ideas make very positive contributions to their learning. For example, in a music session the child using the glockenspiel offered one of the drum sticks to his next door neighbour and they both enjoyed playing in the "orchestra" at the end of the lesson.

**The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are excellent, particularly in English and children's personal and social development.**

The school provides an excellent range of stimulating activities both indoors and outside. The planning of the activities, a joint staff exercise, is very good. A long-term plan provides the basis for weekly planning and this ensures that all children have a range of activities that cover all areas of learning. Specific learning targets are based on essential learning skills and concepts, especially the development of communication, language and literacy skills. Children's progress in these skills is tracked regularly and examples of their achievements are recorded in their own personal files. Regular assessments by teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants are used to record children's progress in all areas of the curriculum. For example, a teacher working with children on the computers encouraged them to use the keyboard to create rows of numbers and letters. She noted the skills used as the session went on and these were to form the basis for more challenging activities in the future.

High priority is given to the development of early literacy and social skills. These aspects of the curriculum are frequently taught, as staff plan very good opportunities for the development of these skills in all areas of the curriculum. For example, when outdoors staff skilfully question children on the requirements of the plants they have just watered. Children are aware of the needs of plants and are keen to point out the ones they are looking after. Many aspects of the curriculum are developed at the same time. For example, in a session in the class "shop" the child operating the "scanner" says how much each item costs and when given the money, carefully places it in the till. Children begin to make their own marks on paper as their shopping list and one explained she was buying seeds and a watering can. Their social skills are developed in a variety of different ways, including the lunch time sessions, when children use "please" and "thank you" and patiently wait their turn to be served.

An improvement in the curriculum since the previous inspection lies in the detailed objectives set for each activity, which build effectively on children's previous experiences. This effectively promotes the new skills and concepts to be taught. In addition, the curriculum is greatly enriched by the projects in which the school is involved. For example, the Artists in School project recently involved a drama worker who provided a wide range of imaginative and stimulating activities for children, which had a positive impact on their learning. In addition, the school took an active role in the Reggio Emilia Exhibition staged locally and staff have visited Italy to see the philosophy put into practice and observe the methods used. This philosophy, that the child is the centre of all developments, is an important aspect of the school's work. This could be seen in a session with children making play dough with a teacher: all the group mixed the materials, talked about how the mixture felt as different ingredients went in and used the finished product to extend their knowledge of simple forces by pulling and pushing the dough into different shapes.

From the moment children enter the nursery very effective use is made of curricular resources to promote learning. Children feel secure and confident within the framework of well-balanced and established routines. All children, including those with special educational

needs, are given equal access and opportunity to the curriculum and their individual needs are met. No opportunities are lost by staff to develop children's personal and social skills. For example, in a group session when talking about a story the children had heard the day before, the teacher asked for contributions from the group and reminds them they had to take turns when responding and to listen carefully to the contributions of others. This was effective and some children showed they had listened by building on the previous answer that one sock was on the line by saying "and that makes two socks" when another one was added.

**The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The caring, family atmosphere created in the school makes a very positive contribution to children's learning.**

This aspect of school life has been maintained since the previous inspection and is still a very strong feature of the school. It makes a significant contribution to the aims of the school. Children are given many opportunities to become sensitive and considerate towards others with a firm understanding of their role in the nursery. The school provides an ethos that generates a happy, caring and supportive environment. Because the school sees this as part of its work, there is no reason to doubt that these strong features will be maintained.

The provision for children's spiritual development is very good. It is promoted thoughtfully through the carefully planned curriculum. For example, in small groups children care for plants, watering and watching them grow and they are taught to be friends with others and celebrate their achievements and special occasions such as birthdays. They are introduced to different religious festivals such as Eid and Diwali and the staff make events come alive by dressing children in saris. Visitors are used very effectively. For example, at one festival a dad came into school to show children how to put on a turban. Festivals at Christmas and Easter provide the children with opportunities to compare the culture of the church and make simple comparisons with their own religion. This consideration for different people around the world makes a significant contribution to their awareness of the spiritual aspects of life.

The provision for children's social and moral development is very good. Staff are very good role models and provide a very strong moral code. They provide clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour and take advantage of opportunities to make children aware of the difference between right and wrong. Staff frequently promote moral values by emphasising the importance of listening to others, playing fairly and taking responsible decisions. There is a very strong sense of community, which supports regular reflection on issues that affect children's lives; for example, new and younger children are always cared for and made to feel welcome on arrival. Children are encouraged to co-operate in small groups and to listen, talk and share resources with one another. In the creative play areas they role-play the cashier and customer in their shop. Children help each other; for example, in the outside area there are frequent occasions when the carts are shared and children take turns to drive or push.

The provision for children's cultural development is very good and has been maintained since the previous inspection. Through careful curricular planning, children are provided with many opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures in art, music and through stories. For example, the quality of the art work is very good and some attractive paintings in the style of Kandinsky were well displayed in one classroom. The school promotes music, dance and song, familiar and foreign. Children know Christian traditions and the school ensures that children gain an understanding of other cultures and faiths. A wide range of visits and visitors make a significant contribution to children's knowledge of their own and other cultural traditions. For example, in a music session the book "The First Musician" told a story about the start of music and children enjoyed playing a variety of instruments to create their own unique band.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**Occasionally, when all members of staff are working with groups, a few children are not actively engaged in their self selected activities.**

There are occasionally times during the day when a few children are not actively engaged in a purposeful activity. This sometimes happens towards the end of a session just before there is a change of focus in the activities offered. For example, in one room where children were actively engaged in activities until 9.30 a.m. a few lost interest in what they were doing in their self selected activity and wandered round the room. When the focus changed fifteen minutes later and the outside area was to be used all children opted for new activities.

The very attractive way the rooms are set up to allow different activities to go on sometimes means that children are not always noticed if they are not completing a set activity. This was observed when a child had been counting blocks on to a thread in a mathematical corner but had stopped the activity and sat apparently doing nothing. This was eventually noticed by the member of staff designated to have an overview of all the activities being offered and a new activity was immediately suggested to rekindle the child's interest.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

Ensure that, when all staff are working with groups, the designated member of staff who has the overview of all the activities being undertaken takes even greater care to make sure that children are actively involved all of the time.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	12
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	6

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	67	33	0	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	62
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	21

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	80

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	5.7

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)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	199

Number of pupils per FTE adult	5.2
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	240,030
Total expenditure	232,986
Expenditure per pupil	3,758
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,502
Balance carried forward to next year	11,546

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	80
Number of questionnaires returned	40

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	18	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	35	8	3	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	53	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	38	13	3	21
The teaching is good.	60	23	8	3	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	33	10	3	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	33	5	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	68	25	5	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	78	16	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	35	0	3	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	23	5	3	50

### Other issues raised by parents

At the parents' meeting, all were very pleased with the commitment of the staff and the way their children's ability to speak English improved. Their main concern was the balance between formal and informal teaching and the fact that children were allowed to choose their own activities too often.