

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KINGSWOOD NURSERY SCHOOL**

Watford, Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117076

Headteacher: Mrs M Randall

Reporting inspector: Ms R Frith  
2490

Dates of inspection: 9 – 10 July 2001

Inspection number: 198736

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: 3½ - 5 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Briar Road  
Watford  
Hertfordshire

Postcode: WD25 0DX

Telephone number: 01923 672 531

Fax number: 01923 672531

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs E Williams

Date of previous inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2490	R Frith	Registered inspector	<p>Personal, social and emotional development</p> <p>Communication, language and literacy</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of the world</p> <p>Creative development</p> <p>Special educational needs</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements.</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p>
1165	P Dannheisser	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
17913	B Frost	Team inspector	<p>Mathematical development</p> <p>Physical development</p> <p>Equal opportunities</p>	<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Kingswood is a community nursery school for children aged three and four. There are 84 children attending part-time for five mornings or afternoons per week. The school is situated in a large estate of privately owned housing in the north of Watford and children come from here and from the nearby local authority housing estate. Although children's attainment on entry to the nursery varies, the majority have skills that are average for three-year-olds. Each year, a few children come from ethnic minority backgrounds but currently no child speaks English as an additional language. Fourteen children are on the register of special educational needs and most of those who require regular additional support have speech, moderate learning or emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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

Kingswood is a good school where children are happy and confident in their learning. Despite having to face uncertainty about its future in recent years, staff have continued to improve the curriculum. They are currently awaiting major building works which will allow increased care provision for children from the age of two. Throughout this time of uncertainty and changes in staffing, the school has remained popular with the local community and parents are fully supportive of the work that staff do. The good quality of the leadership provided by the headteacher, the good teaching, and the effective teamwork of all those connected with the school, help children to make good progress overall in their learning. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social, emotional and creative development. Taking all these factors into account, the school provides good value for money.

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

- Children make very good progress with their personal, social and emotional development and reach high standards in these areas. Standards in their creative development are also above those expected for children of this age.
- Children have very good attitudes to school and their work.
- The quality of teaching is good and teachers are well supported by the work of the nursery nurses and welfare assistants.
- Procedures for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils are very good.
- The headteacher provides good management and leadership and all other staff and the governing body ably support her.
- Parents have very positive views of the school and are very supportive of the staff and the work that they do.

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

- Planning to systematically develop the children's skills when using the outdoor area.
- More planned opportunities for children to explore and investigate.
- A systematic programme of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in all areas.

*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 in many areas since it was last inspected in November 1997 and has the capacity to improve even further. Much thought has gone into the school's responses to the 'key issues for action' identified in the previous report, particularly in the areas of planning and assessing children's progress and attainment. Plans are produced around topics which identify the key experiences to which children have access and the skills they will be taught. These are carefully linked to the most recent government guidelines for the education of young children and are effective in extending the children's skills during the time they work in small groups with an adult. Planning for the activities which children choose themselves and for outside play is less well focussed but improving. The progress of each child is carefully monitored and attainment well recorded. Targets have been set. This has led to the provision of tasks and activities that are better matched to the children's levels of attainment. The teachers share responsibility for co-ordinating the

curriculum areas and monitor planning and children's work well. They have also recognised the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching further in all areas. Sufficient resources have been allocated to ensure a more consistent programme of lesson observations for the next academic year. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development has improved and is now good. Other improvements have been made with the outdoor provision, links with parents and the care and welfare of children.

## STANDARDS

Children enter the nursery with a wide range of skills and experiences but overall their attainment is average for three-year-olds. Most make good progress and by the time they transfer to other schools they have reached the nationally expected levels of attainment for children of that age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Most children have attained levels well above those expected for their age in personal, social and emotional development and above those expected in creative development. They achieve particularly well in these areas as a result of the good quality provision of interesting activities and the high expectations of staff. Children with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them due to the effective support of teachers, nursery nurses and welfare assistants. Their needs are quickly identified and appropriate experiences are provided to ensure that they work at a good pace. The staff are also quick to identify the needs of more able children and provide sufficiently challenging work to ensure that they, too, make good progress. Children become confident and enthusiastic learners and are well prepared for their next stage of education.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children enjoy school and are keen to talk about their learning. They are eager to explore the range of opportunities offered to them.
Behaviour	Very good. Children respond very well to the high expectations of staff and quickly adapt to the daily routines.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children quickly gain in confidence and develop good work habits. They select activities and use equipment sensibly and concentrate well for their age. They relate very well to adults and each other.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and most children arrive at school on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Sessions seen overall	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning was good in 57 per cent of the sessions seen and satisfactory in the remaining 43 per cent. All staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and develop, and the value of educational play. They work well as a team and the nursery nurses and welfare assistants support the teachers well, particularly in planning for the children's personal, social and emotional development; where teaching is very good, and a strength of the school. In those sessions taught by teachers, pupils make consistently good progress. Teachers interact well with the

children to develop their skills, extend understanding and assess progress. Skilful questioning encourages children to think about what they are doing and what might happen next. In some sessions taken by nursery nurses, this quality of provision is maintained but in others, opportunities to develop the children's thinking are missed. Also, particularly during outside play, opportunities to develop the children's language skills are sometimes missed. Overall, the pace of learning is never less than satisfactory, however, and often good. Reading and writing skills are taught well and counting takes place frequently, for example, at the start of the session when taking the register. However, there is too little teaching to develop the children's investigative and exploratory skills and too few displays to encourage their interaction. Children quickly gain independence and self-esteem due to the high expectations of staff, their management of children and the clear routines in the nursery. They are encouraged to make choices about their own learning and gather appropriate resources. Children are also specifically invited to take part in activities to ensure that they receive a broad and balanced learning experience.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A wide range of experiences are planned to help the children develop skills and extend their knowledge and understanding in all the required areas of learning. However, it is not always clear what children are expected to learn when using the outdoor area or how their skills of exploration and investigation are to be developed. The curriculum is significantly enhanced by enrichment days where children experience activities offered by visitors or visit local places of interest.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Children with special educational needs are identified early and supported well. This reflects the strong ethos of the school where each child is valued for their individuality and good experiences are provided to help them to achieve.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Staff work hard to provide a happy environment where children learn about themselves and the world around them.
How well the school cares for its children	The school's belief in 'valuing children' is well reflected in its work. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of their children and assess their progress and attainment well. They make very good provision for their welfare, health and safety. The care given to children is well reflected in the way they, in turn, respect and care for others.

The school's partnership with parents is very good and staff work hard to maintain this. Most parents are fully involved in the work of the school and support it well.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The good management of the headteacher has ensured that the school has continued to develop during an uncertain time in its history. She is supported well by her teacher colleague.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors support the headteacher and staff well and take their roles seriously. They share a commitment to improvement with all the staff and take a full part in shaping future developments.
The school's evaluation of	The headteacher and governors have made suitable arrangements to

its performance	monitor the school's performance overall. They recognise the need to improve opportunities for the headteacher to monitor and evaluate more systematically the quality of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Funds have been allocated to improve the nursery further, once building works have been completed. Correct tendering procedures are followed and staff and governors seek to obtain the best value for their spending.

Staff work well as a team and cover all responsibilities appropriately within the context of this small school. Overall, the accommodation is good and the outdoor accommodation has significantly improved to provide very interesting learning areas. There is a satisfactory range of resources which are used well.

### **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>• Children are happy to go to school and make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good and children are helped to become responsible and confident learners.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is good and teachers expect the children to work hard.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Staff settle children well into school through a good induction programme.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching staff and enjoy taking part in curriculum and social activities.</li> <li>• Staff liaise well with other schools so that children get to know their new teachers before they leave the nursery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minority of parents would like more information about how their child is getting on.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees fully with the positive views expressed by parents. They also acknowledge the views of a small minority of parents who would like more information about how their child is getting on but judge that the information provided for parents and the welcome that parents receive in school is very good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

- 1 Children enter the nursery after their third birthday and usually attend for three or four terms. A wide variety of attainment is represented on entry but overall it is similar to that found nationally for three-year-olds. Currently, 14 children are identified as having special educational needs and increasingly, a minority of children arrive with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- 2 During their time in the nursery, children make particularly good progress with their personal, social and emotional development, and with their creative development. By the time they leave for admission to full time education in reception classes, they achieve levels well above those expected for their age in personal, social and emotional development, and above those expected in creative development. Children make at least satisfactory and often good progress in other areas of learning and meet the expected levels for their age in relation to the national 'Early Learning Goals' of communication, language and literacy, mathematical and physical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- 3 The careful attention which staff give to assessing and planning for children's needs results in children with all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, making at least satisfactory and often good progress. Many achieve well in relation to their abilities. A scrutiny of samples of children's work and school records indicate that more able children are suitably challenged and make good progress. No differences were observed between the progress and attainment of boys and girls during the inspection but staff have identified the need to focus on improving the progress of boys in communication, language and literacy and the girls in mathematical development.
- 4 The school gives high priority to the development of the children's personal, social and emotional skills and by the time they leave the nursery children have acquired good work habits. They relate very well to adults and each other, play co-operatively and share resources well. They also show a high level of independence but have the confidence to ask for support when needed. The children quickly understand the routines of the nursery and move from small group work to independent activities sensibly and enthusiastically. They develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem when choosing activities. The high standard reached in this area of learning is a significant factor in the way pupils learn in other areas.
- 5 Staff successfully develop the children's communication, language and literacy skills through formal sessions and through their everyday interaction. By the time they are four, most children enjoy looking at books by themselves and also respond well to stories read to them. Most recognise their name and copy it and higher attaining children can write their name independently. They also make attempts at writing some letters, for example when writing postcards to friends and family. During their time in the nursery, the children's speech becomes increasingly mature as they use more complex sentence structures and a wider range of vocabulary.

- 6 By the time they leave the nursery, most pupils can count to at least ten and the higher attaining pupils beyond this. One particularly able child shows a very good understanding of number; is able to add in hundreds and knows that a billion is larger than a million. Children understand the meaning of words associated with measure, for example, when identifying that the bucket with more sand in is heavier than the other and they identify the biggest objects. They can name and match shapes such as a circle, square and rectangle and use these shapes to draw a girl.
- 7 Children enter the nursery with a basic general knowledge and build on this to help them understand more about themselves and the place where they live. Regular visits to local places of interest such as the park and a local school pond encourage them to talk about features which they like and dislike and develop their scientific and mapping skills. Children further use maps and follow direction in the nursery when trying to find parts of a flowers which are hidden in various places. At the end of this activity they could piece together the parts of a flower and used the terms 'petal', 'leaf' and 'stem' correctly. Children also learn about nature through observing plants growing and getting first hand experiences of creatures such as spiders when the 'bug man' came to visit the nursery. They talk enthusiastically about this and use a good range of vocabulary. Children select resources to construct and build, for example when one child makes a fishing rod with a 'reel' and continues to 'catch a big fish nearly as big as a whale'. Children use the computers confidently and are developing satisfactory use of the mouse and the keyboard.
- 8 Children achieve higher standards than expected for their age in creative development due to the good quality experiences they receive. Their clay work is of a high standard following a successful session led by a visiting artist where they developed good manipulative skills and skills of observation. They develop confidence to mix and use paint, for example stating that 'If I mix red with white it will go pink'. Children are encouraged to make appropriate choices of resources and materials when they make a face mask and wear the masks with pride. Children are justifiably pleased with their work and concentrate well. Imaginative skills are well developed when children play the roles of customer and shopkeeper in the flower shop and they persevere to tie bunches of flowers for sale. Regular formal singing sessions and the provision of opportunities during the day have resulted in the children performing a range of songs and action rhymes well from memory.
- 9 Children attain standards expected for their age in physical development by taking part in a range of outside play activities where they climb, crawl, balance and pedal wheeled toys. They develop a sense of their own abilities and the needs of others in the space around them. They use bats and balls and systematically develop their skills of feet, hand and eye co-ordination. Children hold scissors, pencils and paintbrushes correctly and safely. They have opportunities to cut, stick and join materials together, for example, when making a mask.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

- 10 The children's very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development reflect those highlighted in the last inspection and remain major strengths of the nursery. The thirty-five parents answering the questionnaire sent to them before the inspection all said that their children enjoy going to school. This was also evident during the inspection. They follow the daily sequence of events with enthusiasm and are fully involved in what they are doing. They listen carefully and maintain their concentration well when they sit around a table working on a particular task. For

example, pupils enjoyed looking at sea shells through a magnifying glass and listening to the sounds they could hear when the shell was held against their ears. They took care and were thoroughly involved; this was not cursory but a careful investigation.

- 11 Pupils know how to put up their hands and take turns in speaking even if they do not always manage to remember to do so. They show good listening skills. For example, they were read a story about going to the seaside, and showed by their questions and answers that they fully understood. They are able to share when they have a choice of a number of activities and are able to work for good lengths of time without constant supervision. The children are polite and careful as indicated when a group joined a circle of children for singing. They confidently asked to join in and their friends made room for them.
- 12 In outside activities, children also persevere in what they are doing, helped by the adults who are teaching and supervising their activities. For example, there was a long, concentrated session using the sandpit. Pupils worked together co-operatively, digging a single hole and 'looking for insects'. When one was found, it was carefully lifted up in some sand and gently deposited on a nearby plant.
- 13 Pupils are encouraged to select their own activities using planning cards to help them do so. They tidy up quickly and without fuss at the end of the sessions. They enjoy being given responsibilities when they are chosen to be the 'special child of the day'. They take considerable pride in their work and are happy to show what they have done to staff and to visitors.
- 14 Children behave very well and the school has very successfully implemented a positive behaviour policy. On occasion, children's behaviour is nothing short of excellent. Such behaviour was seen in a lesson taken outdoors which encouraged their observational skills and their ability to work and talk with each other. The children's ability to be calm, participate well, and respect others is also well demonstrated by the children who stay for lunch. They are very well supervised, enjoy the communal atmosphere of lunchtimes and behave very well. Similarly, 'snack time' is a social occasion, which is well used to encourage good relationships, good behaviour and healthy eating. There are the inevitable incidents, but staff are skilled at talking to the children and encouraging them to apologise. In this way they are taught how to take responsibility for their actions, to recognise the impact of their actions on others and to consider other people's feelings.
- 15 The last inspection report noted that levels of attendance were satisfactory and this appears still to be the case although no formal attendance statistics are kept apart from those indicated in the registers. Almost all pupils attend each day. A few children are recorded as arriving late. This is often because their brothers or sisters are taken to primary schools first. Lessons start on time and parents and carers collect the children promptly at the end of the sessions.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

- 16 The quality of teaching and learning was good in 57 per cent of sessions observed and satisfactory in the remaining 43 per cent. All staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and use their complementary skills well to provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning. The way new children are helped to get familiar with the nursery's routines, together with the grouping of children with

one key worker ensures that the children quickly settle into school life and become confident learners. The children's needs are quickly assessed and learning activities either adapted or additional support given to aid pupils with their learning in relation to their prior attainment. The on-going assessment of children is very good and all staff have a clear knowledge and understanding of the children's progress and attainment. For example, in order to ensure that the needs of a particularly able child were well met, the staff sought additional support from an external specialist and discussed how the curriculum could be extended to ensure appropriate challenge. Good links are also made with teachers in the receiving schools to ensure that they have a clear understanding of individual children's needs.

- 17 Staff are particularly effective in planning for the children's personal, social and emotional needs. As a result of the different teaching methods and the provision of a range of activities, children quickly learn to play with others, for example when building an aeroplane and 'flying' to their holiday destination. In contrast, children are also encouraged to develop their skills of working independently when they paint. A good balance is created between teacher-directed activities and those when children are able to choose their own activity. This develops confidence in the children and a growing independence and initiative when presented with choices. The children's skills are further developed as they follow instructions with increasing confidence. Children learn how to share resources and take turns, as a result of the high expectations of the teachers and support staff, who make appropriate comments to encourage co-operation, for example when playing outside. Staff act as good role models. Consequently, children are very well behaved and form very good relationships with each other and with adults.
- 18 The development of communication, language and literacy skills and mathematical understanding permeates the whole curriculum. Formal sessions to develop the children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are well taught, for example when the children were encouraged to use a list in order to pack the appropriate things to take on holiday. Initial questioning by the nursery nurse and the way in which she encouraged the children to 'guess' the objects in her bag maintained their interests well and encouraged good discussion. The children's understanding of the sounds which letters make was also well developed as they were asked to name the objects after being given the initial sound of the name of the object. The children gained a good understanding of the use of lists as they looked at their own before packing and also as they developed a list of requirements for a class 'trip'. Discussion following from this also developed the children's mathematical skills. One child suggested that they travel in a car whilst another stated 'No, there's too many of us'. In response to the teacher asking if they had enough food for all, one child suggested that they cut a cake in half, whilst another stated that this still didn't make enough. The nursery nurse was skilled in letting this conversation develop without interruption thereby developing the children's problem-solving skills. Also in this session, a child identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties was very well supported and consequently was interested and involved throughout.
- 19 Overall, the pace of learning was never less than satisfactory and good in over half of the lessons observed. It is consistently good when led by the teachers. Staff plan well to enhance learning when the children work in small groups with an adult. Clear learning goals are identified, together with the concepts and skills to be developed. Planning for activities which the children choose to take part in and outside play is less well focussed but improving. In some of these sessions, insufficient time is placed on developing the children's investigative and exploratory skills or

encouraging their interaction with others. Sometimes, particularly during outside play, opportunities are missed to talk with the children and develop their thinking and speaking skills. However, good practice is often evident, for example, when a welfare assistant encouraged the children to talk about their chalk drawings and a teacher encouraged the children to follow her balancing and moving around in the outdoor area. In these activities, staff were effective in getting children to think about what they were doing and what might happen next.

- 20 Staff work well as a team and keep up-to-date with current initiatives by attendance on courses and through gaining advanced qualifications. They share their knowledge and expertise both formally during regular meetings and informally when they discuss how things have gone at the end of a session. They evaluate the teaching and learning which have taken place and amend future teaching in the light of their findings. They take care to involve parents and encourage them to help with their children's learning at home and school.

### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

- 21 The school provides the children with a satisfactory curriculum which is appropriately broad, balanced and practical. The children are provided with a variety of first-hand, relevant learning opportunities which take account of the nationally agreed areas of learning for children under five. These experiences support the children's learning well and enable them to move, from a range of different starting points, towards the 'Early Learning Goals' for children under five. All staff place strong emphasis on the children's personal and social development and on the development of their literacy and numeracy skills across the whole curriculum. Current themes and topics are made known to parents so that they can support their child's learning at home.
- 22 Since the last inspection, the staff have devoted much time and effort in order to improve the quality of their planning. In many respects they have been successful. Plans are detailed and provide adequate guidance for the teachers and support staff. However, too few engage in exploratory or investigational aspects of the work either indoors or outside in the school grounds. In the classrooms, few displays encourage the children to extend their learning through first-hand observation of objects and materials, through tactile experiences or through experimenting to satisfy their curiosity.
- 23 While the planning shows much improvement overall, the planning for outdoor activities is not always linked sufficiently to the planning of the work indoors. Consequently, there are missed opportunities for the children to extend their learning, for example in understanding space, shape and number when they play and work outside in the school grounds.
- 24 Staff meet regularly to review their planning to see what adaptations are needed. This is a good feature of the provision which helps staff to match work closely to the children's different levels of ability. Children with special educational needs are identified early and supported well. Their needs are re-assessed regularly so that all staff are aware how to help them learn. Clear and appropriate individual education plans indicate how their curriculum should be modified or extended and resource implications are identified. Staff keep parents fully informed so that they too can support their children at home on particular tasks. The needs of more able children are also identified early and staff work with external agencies to ensure that

appropriate work is given. This results in the children being appropriately challenged and making good progress.

- 25 The school has established very good links with the community and the children benefit greatly from the variety of interesting experiences provided. For example, a local florist came in to talk about her work, a number of farm animals were brought in and the local fire fighters visited the school bringing their fire engine. In addition, the school takes the children into the local area as part of the planned programme. On occasions they are taken further afield to such places as the zoo. These valuable experiences serve to enhance and enrich the curriculum.
- 26 Since the last inspection, the provision for the children's spiritual and cultural development is now good and has improved significantly through carefully planned experiences throughout the curriculum. For example, the children in one group were introduced to the story of 'Handa's Surprise'. They were helped to reflect on their own lives and the differences in Handa's. They were given all of the seven African fruits mentioned in the story. Their sense of awe and wonder evoked by the smell, shape, look and taste of fruits which included the guava, mango, avocado and tangerine was clearly evident. The introduction of a well planned snack time also serves to promote the children's spiritual development through well chosen discussion topics which enable the adults to help the children reflect on their day.
- 27 All staff have worked hard to improve the cultural aspect of the children's learning. Recent work, for example, has included a celebration of the Chinese New Year when the children took part in dancing, making dragons and making prosperity packets. In addition, a production of Punch and Judy enabled the children to experience part of their own cultural heritage. Photographic evidence also indicates the promotion of the children's cultural development during a recent World Book Day. Parents played a big part in this, helping to make costumes so that their children could dress up as their favourite characters before taking part in a dance of celebration.
- 28 The school makes good provision for the development of the social and moral aspects of the children's learning. Throughout the day the children benefit from frequent opportunities provided for them to work with others, take turns, share fairly and to consider the needs and feelings of others. They are helped to gain an increasing understanding of what is right and wrong and to treat equipment and their environment with care.
- 29 Staff take great care to ensure that all of the children have equality of access and opportunity across the whole curriculum. The favourable adult to child ratio provides the children with frequent opportunities to ask and respond to questions, to recount their experiences and to seek help when needed. During the time set aside for the children to choose their own activities, staff use a tracking system. This is effective and helps them to check that each child selects a variety of experiences over time.
- 30 Good links are well established with the infant school to which almost all of the children transfer. A smooth system operates for the transfer of records and relevant attainment data. As part of the induction process, the children are taken to the infant school prior to transfer. They participate in some interesting activities and meet their new teachers.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

- 31 Children's welfare remains a high priority and continues to be well promoted since the last inspection. The staff and governing body contribute to the provision of a caring school in which the personal needs of the pupils are very well met. Full day care for children aged 2 years and 9 months is offered on site from 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. and a breakfast facility is offered daily. Many of the children who attend the nursery use this service to extend their day.
- 32 Procedures for monitoring the children's academic performance are very good. Key workers, to whom a group of children is attached, are able to track the progress of individual pupils over time. They know their children well and identify pupils who might need additional help to fulfil their potential. Welfare assistants often have the role of supporting the less confident children in a group and give additional support for pupils with special educational needs. Children with special educational needs, and more able children, are monitored closely. Their learning is planned accordingly. The school receives additional advice from outside agencies when needed. The staff collect a portfolio of children's work and analyse the standards reached. Teachers and nursery nurses make regular observations of children's achievements. These are based on the 'stepping stones' within each area of learning and are recorded on detailed forms that are fed into progress records. These records are used as a basis of formal discussion between parents and the relevant key worker at a parents' meeting once a term.
- 33 Procedures for supporting the children's personal development are very good. Staff know the children well and display high levels of care. They have very good relationships with the children and respond positively to their needs. Good work and behaviour are praised, and examples of good work are given 'smiley faces' stickers. Children are encouraged to take work home to share their success with their families. This all contributes to the children's confidence, and feelings of self-esteem. Staff work hard to ensure that children settle quickly into the school's routines and prepare them well for their next stage in their education. Children's personal, social and emotional development is also well monitored. From the time they enter the nursery, their progress and achievements are documented and parents are kept fully informed. Those pupils with behavioural difficulties are well supported and consequently make similar progress to others in the group. Staff are aware of child protection procedures and have had the necessary training and information.
- 34 The school reminds parents of the importance of punctuality and good attendance and has achieved satisfactory attendance. Most parents contact the school if a child is absent, but on those rare occasions when the school is not informed phone calls to the family are made at the end of a week's absence.
- 35 The premises are safe, clean and well cared for. Members of staff are qualified in basic first aid and keep good records of any incidents. Staff and governors undertake regular health and safety audits. There are regular professional inspections of electrical, fire prevention, physical education and other equipment. There are termly fire drills. All staff are aware of the importance of safety and keep a careful watch on all activities whilst giving the children an appropriate degree of freedom to learn.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

- 36 Parents agree that the school actively encourages them to contribute to their children's education and to the life of the school. They have opportunities to visit the school and are encouraged to take part in many activities. A few parents help in class, and many parents help on trips and with school projects such as cake making and sewing. Over the last few years, many have helped by brightening the outside of the school with murals and by gardening. The school has sent a questionnaire to all parents asking them what skills they may wish to share.
- 37 Children are at nursery school for three to four terms and consequently it is difficult to establish a parent teachers' association over long periods of time. However, the school organises several successful events and parents take a very active part in these, raising funds and contributing greatly to the spirit of the school community.
- 38 The school has considerable success encouraging parents to come to meetings, despite the fact that many parents have family and work commitments. There are regular review meetings about the progress of pupils with special needs and parents are closely involved in the reviews of their individual education plans. Also, parents of more able children are encouraged to talk regularly with staff about their child's progress. The quality of information for parents is very good. Parents are sent a good amount of information about school activities through friendly newsletters and additional information about the planned curriculum. Notices at the school entrance also keep parents in touch with the topics being taught. Additionally, parents are encouraged to come into school on special occasions such as fathers' day, mothers' day, and even grandparents' day. Parents were very positive about these events. Plans exist for courses to be offered to parents in the near future.
- 39 The main termly reports for parents cover all learning areas, and these describe individual progress and targets for the following term which are agreed with the school. There are three planned consultation meetings each year at which parents discuss their children's progress. They are very well attended. There are occasional curriculum meetings, for example on writing, or on computer skills at the annual parents' meeting. Several parents commented positively on sessions that they had attended where, for example, they learned how their children developed their skills when working with clay. Despite all of this, a small number of parents say they would like more information and some parents would like a meeting with staff soon after their child comes to the school. However, parents acknowledge that staff are accessible and always willing to talk with parents about their children.
- 40 Significant improvements have been made in the links with parents and the information that they receive since the last inspection and these areas are now judged to be strengths of the school. The headteacher has gained the confidence of parents and people in the community and the school continues to have a good reputation. The inspection team fully agrees with the parents' very positive views of the school.

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

- 41 The good management of the school has a significant impact on the standards achieved by the children and the progress that they make. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection despite possible closure of the nursery, a reduction in the number of children taught and consequent reductions in staffing. Throughout this difficult time, the morale of staff has been maintained and the extension of the building and increased provision are now confirmed. From March

2002 the extended care provision will be located in its own purpose built unit which will mark the celebration of Kingswood's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

- 42 The headteacher has a good understanding of child development and uses this well as a basis for her leadership. The aims and values promoted by the school support the education of young children and ensure that they receive an appropriate range of learning experiences that reflect the national recommendations for children of this age. The school development plan gives a good overview, reviews the school's progress and identifies appropriate future needs. Evidence of this is reflected in the way that the areas for improvement highlighted by the inspection team have already been identified through the school development planning process. The headteacher is well supported by her teacher colleague who undertakes management duties.
- 43 The school has successfully addressed the key points arising from the last inspection and improvement has been good. A complete review of the curriculum has taken place and all areas of learning are regularly monitored through a scrutiny of planning, review of children's progress and observation of sessions. Staff and governors have recognised the need to develop further a more formal system of observing teaching and learning and have allocated sufficient fund for this to take place in the coming two terms. Improvements in assessing the children's progress and attainment have provided staff with clearer information which they now use to plan work that appropriately challenges children of all abilities. In addition, staff plan more effectively for the children's spiritual and cultural development. The school's aims of raising standards and improving the quality of education are increasingly reflected in its work.
- 44 Governors give full support to the school and they and the headteacher have worked hard to develop the nursery provision, raise standards and involve parents and the community. Governors have good levels of knowledge and are well informed, which helps them to be fully involved in discussions and developments. They undertake their duties diligently and fulfil their roles well. They have trust in the headteacher and staff and are involved in many school activities, including some governors regularly supporting in sessions. This gives them a good insight into the workings of the nursery and the needs of the children. Governors, headteacher and staff continue to show a clear commitment to maintaining the pace of improvement and developing provision for parents and carers in the community. A culture of monitoring and target setting is now developing and this is beginning to ensure that the school moves forward towards achieving its aims. The headteacher and governors share a clear vision for future developments and have been successful in gaining additional funding.
- 45 Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for more able pupils is well managed. There are procedures for identifying specific needs early and providing appropriate support, with the help of external agencies, when appropriate. The strong ethos of the school which reflects the staff's commitment to valuing and meeting the needs of each individual child is seen in the way they support all children well, regardless of social or cultural background, gender or ability.
- 46 The school employs an adequate number of staff and uses them to support children working in small groups. This aids the children's learning. Parents and governors also volunteer their help in sessions and make an effective contribution to the work of the school and the pupils' learning. Staff development is good, based upon

balancing individual needs with those demanded by new policies and practices in school, such as performance management. Procedures for the formal appraisal of teachers and nursery nurses are appropriate and developing in line with the national requirements for implementing the new performance management arrangements at the beginning of the next academic year. The school secretary, although relatively new to her job, is making good progress towards understanding the complexities of her work and developing more efficient systems. She contributes well to supporting other staff, children and their parents. Satisfactory use is made of new technology, and systems were being introduced during the inspection to improve the office and safety procedures. The headteacher is skilled in bringing together a team of people with a shared vision and they all work well to the benefit of the children and their parents.

- 47 The accommodation provides a satisfactory range of facilities for teaching the curriculum and ensures that children are taught in small groups. It is clean and used appropriately to provide areas for learning which, for example, develop the children's creative and imaginative skills. Teachers set up attractive displays of children's good work as examples to emulate and this raises the children's self-esteem. Display overall, however, does not truly reflect the ethos of the nursery which focuses on children learning through play, enquiry and investigation. Few displays, for example, encourage interaction and the display of books does not particularly encourage children to browse. There are however, restricted opportunities for staff to display pupils' work. The outside of the building has been well painted and provides a welcoming site for parents and their children.
- 48 Significant improvements have been made to the outdoor areas which provide an interesting range of learning opportunities. Staff and parents have worked well together to build a new sand pit area which provides good opportunities for children to develop a range of skills. The planting of new trees and bushes, and the 'den' area provide children with interesting opportunities to explore plants and creatures. Currently, the area for climbing is out of use for reasons of safety but the school has budgeted to provide good quality equipment once the building works have been completed. The caretaker works hard to keep the whole site tidy and clean and the provision of plants and hanging baskets create an attractive environment. Overall, the spacious accommodation and grounds provide good opportunities for the children's learning and help to develop their confidence when moving around freely.
- 49 Overall, resources are satisfactory and adequately support children with their learning. There is a good range of books. Although there are only two computers, these are used well throughout the day to ensure that all children have satisfactory access in order to develop their skills. The quality and range of resources for outdoor play are generally good but staff now need to identify more closely in their planning how these are to be used to develop the children's skills, and interaction with others, in a systematic way. Children are encouraged to select and tidy away their equipment and resources and this helps to develop their personal and social skills.
- 50 Due to the uncertain future of the nursery and changes in the number of children attending, staff have gone through a period where it was difficult to plan and use finances. However, overall, the school plans and uses its finances satisfactorily. School developments are costed for the year ahead and specific grants are used well for their designated purposes. Staff and governors have good control over the budget and have reserved sufficient funds to meet planned expenditure after completion of the building works and to increase the number of teaching hours for

the next two terms. Correct tendering procedures are followed and staff and governors seek to obtain the best value for their spending. The school has recently undergone a financial audit. Most recommendations have already been implemented and there are plans to implement the final two, following discussion at the next governing body meeting. Overall, due to the good progress that children make, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development, the very good care they receive and the very good links with parents, the school provides good value for money.

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

- Improve planning to systematically develop the children's skills when using the outdoor area by:
  - clearly identifying the specific skills to be taught through each activity;
  - providing a closer link between indoor and outdoor play;
  - providing a good range of resources and experiences to encourage interaction between staff and children and between children.  
(Paragraphs 19, 22, 23, 49, 74, 80 )
  
- Provide more planned opportunities for children to explore and investigate by:
  - systematically highlighting these in the session plans;
  - developing interactive displays;
  - improving the book areas.  
(Paragraphs 19, 22, 47, 58 )
  
- Implement the planned programme of monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning in all areas of learning.  
(Paragraphs 43 )

**The school has already highlighted through its school development planning process the need to improve practice in the areas identified above.**

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of sessions observed	21
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
0	0	57	43	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**

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	42
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	4

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.7
Number of pupils (FTE) per qualified teacher	24.7

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	162.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.9
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2000/1
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	£
Total income	185,229
Total expenditure	189,277
Expenditure per pupil (FTE)	4,506. 60
Balance brought forward from previous year	47,509
Balance carried forward to next year	43,461

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	84
Number of questionnaires returned	35

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	94	6	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	31	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	43	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	26	3	3	54
The teaching is good.	66	31	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	37	11	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	20	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	31	0	0	9
The school works closely with parents.	60	31	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	86	14	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	23	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	23	0	3	26

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Good links with other schools ensure that the children become familiar with the teachers that they will work with when they leave the nursery.

## **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**

- 51 Provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good and a strength of the school. Most of the children come into the nursery with levels of development that are satisfactory for their age. Due to the high priority given to this area and the very good teaching, the children make very good progress and by the time they leave the nursery most reach standards which are well above those expected for children of that age. They develop good skills for working independently and with each other, take responsibility for their own actions and concentrate well. This means that the children are well prepared for learning in all areas and for their transfer to their next school. No direct comparisons can be made with the findings of the last inspection as this aspect was not reported on at that time.
- 52 School routines are well-established and adhered to so that children quickly learn what is expected of them in each session and are clear about what to do. Children are divided into four groups of 10 or 11 and each group has one 'key person'. Children relate closely and have very good relationships with this adult. A key feature of the development of personal and social skills is the teachers', nursery nurses' and welfare assistants' very good knowledge of the individual needs of children and of child development. On entry to the nursery, the children's needs are assessed and additional support is allocated when appropriate. Regular observations take place and the children's progress is monitored and recorded well. It is very easy for all staff to quickly see what a child has achieved through looking at the records which are linked to the 'stepping stones' of progress towards the early learning goals set nationally. These 'stepping stones' identify developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes which the children are likely to achieve by the end of the foundation stage. By making reference to these, teachers are able to plan sessions that provide appropriate challenge and consequently enable children to progress. It also ensures that the children feel secure in their learning as the work is appropriate and builds systematically on what they already know.
- 53 Opportunities are provided for the children to work independently and in small and large groups. A good range of activities is provided throughout the set routine of each session. Children are encouraged in their decision making by having to make a choice about which activity they would like to do. Also, staff ensure that the children experience a range of activities by making suggestions that they might like to join in. Most respond well to this. Activities to support social interaction and develop relationships are usually good. For example, children work together to build an aeroplane, ensuring that it has two wings and enough space for them all to sit. Also, two or more children use the wheeled vehicles at the same time. Two boys, in particular, were observed co-operating well when they took turns to pull each other in a trolley around the grounds. Snack time and lunch time provide particularly good opportunities for the children to talk with each other and the adults, and to experience sitting together to eat lunch. They need little encouragement to say 'please' and 'thank you', and are polite and interested in what others say.

- 54 The children are expected to take responsibility for choosing their resources and equipment and for clearing away. They know where things are kept and respond well. Staff act as good role-models and the children copy their actions, for example by wiping the table or sweeping up the sand. The children are also aware of the need for personal hygiene and wash their hands before lunch in a sensible manner.
- 55 The very good provision, teaching and support given to this area of learning results in children leaving the nursery with a strong self-image, confident in their learning. A particular strength is the way in which children sense that they are a valued member of the community.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

- 56 Teaching and learning in this area of the curriculum are never less than satisfactory and often good. Most children attain appropriate standards for their age and a significant minority achieve above this. This reflects the findings of the last inspection.
- 57 Language learning permeates the whole curriculum with a particular focus on speaking and listening. Teachers use every opportunity to talk with children and extend their vocabulary and language structure. For example, when a group was discussing plants, the careful questioning of the teacher resulted in the children deciding that plants 'suck up water from their roots' and then they went on to talk about things that were 'alive'. One boy stated, '.... homes aren't, people are – they need water'. In some sessions, support staff do not always extend the children's learning in this way and miss opportunities for development. However, good practice was observed. For example, when a group of children were 'flying' to their holiday destination, the nursery nurse extended their thinking and language well by asking them what they could see out of the window. The children's speaking skills are also systematically developed by the provision of specific activities, for example in the imaginative play areas. Children were encouraged to play the roles of customer and café owner and gave interesting examples of the food available. The good interaction and questioning by the welfare assistant sustained this activity well and resulted in the children using terms like 'menu' and 'paying the bill'.
- 58 Children listen attentively to stories and share books with interest. They give reasons for their favourite story or book, which indicate a good understanding of character and story line. They handle books carefully and know that print carries meaning. They listen carefully when 'Katy Goes To The seaside' is read and indicate by their answers and questions that they have understood what has happened. Most follow and recall a story by looking at the pictures. Although the school has a good range of books, these are not displayed well and consequently do not encourage the children to browse and settle to read on their own very often. All children are encouraged to choose books to take home and share with their parents. This has a significant impact on the progress that they make and the standards that they achieve.
- 59 Most children recognise their names and are beginning to write them independently. Regular teaching helps children to recognise letters and the sounds that they make. A satisfactory range of resources to encourage writing and communication is available. As a result, the lower attaining children make marks on

paper and the higher attaining children write postcards with recognisable letters. Staff develop the children's understanding of writing for different reasons well through, for example, writing a list of things to take on holiday, taking an order in the café and writing to friends and family whilst on holiday. A good balance is kept between adults supervising these activities and the children being free to develop their skills independently. Much time and thought had gone into planning an activity where children had to pack their own bags before going on holiday. Each had a list with words and pictures and chose correctly from a good range of resources.

- 60 Planning for this area of learning is good and clearly identifies learning goals for each session which develop the children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in a systematic way. Activities are centred around a set topic and encourage the children to work both independently and with each other. Key concepts and vocabulary are highlighted, together with the processes of learning. This means that regardless of which group the children are in, they receive a similar experience appropriate for their age and ability. The staff assess the children's learning needs well and those with special educational needs are identified early. They receive good support and consequently make similar progress to that of their peers. Regular observations and assessments of the children's progress and attainment are undertaken and these are well recorded so any member of staff can quickly see what stage of learning a child had reached. Portfolios of children's work show good progress over time.
- 61 The children display enjoyment in their learning and take part enthusiastically, particularly when working as a whole group with the key worker. Staff manage the children very well mainly because of their high expectations, very good relationships and very good knowledge of the children's abilities. Consequently, the children feel secure in their learning and behave very well.

### **Mathematical development**

- 62 The attainment of the great majority of the children matches that expected nationally for children of their age and they make satisfactory progress towards the nationally agreed early learning goals, for children under five. Children with special educational needs and more able children also progress well towards the targets set for them. This shows a maintenance of standards and provision since the last inspection.
- 63 Well-planned activities are effective in helping the children to count accurately. For example, in one group, they listened intently to the story of 'Handa's Surprise'. They were helped to count to seven as Akeyo put fruit in her basket and carried it on her head. When a monkey took a piece of fruit out of the basket the children knew that one less meant she only had six pieces left. They had to check this by counting. Towards the end of the lesson, the children reinforced their learning by sorting a basket of similar fruits successfully, first by shape and then by colour.
- 64 Good quality planning enables the children to develop their numeracy skills in a variety of relevant contexts. For example, during registration, children were invited to arrange the daily notice board. They were able to select the date, recognising the correct digit prior to positioning correctly on the board.

- 65 The teaching incorporates well-planned assessment opportunities which enable the staff to plan increasingly more challenging activities. For example, in one group, the teacher took them outdoors on a treasure hunt. The children were helped to move to six different areas as the teacher 'found' clues written on a card. At each area, the children were asked to find a natural object to put in their empty egg box. Well judged incidental questioning enabled the teacher to assess the children's developing numeracy skills. For example, at the second clue station one child was asked "How many more objects will you need to find to fill your box?" The child was able to count accurately and to solve the problem mentally.
- 66 In the classroom, the children are helped to develop an increasing understanding of shape, space and measures. They use a developing mathematical language when talking about quantities, shape, size and position. Many can recognise and repeat simple patterns. For example, one child was able to fit together coloured plastic 'Zubes' to construct a quite complex repeating pattern using five colours.
- 67 The children enjoy the mathematical experiences offered to them. Overall, they make at least satisfactory progress in their learning in response to the activities organised for them. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and frequently it is good. Teaching groups are well managed and the children respond with behaviour of a high order. Children with special educational needs benefit greatly from the care and attention they receive from all of the adults who work with them. Children are well integrated into the life and routines of the nursery and well-planned mathematical activities help them to acquire increasingly appropriate mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding in this area of learning.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

- 68 Children enter the nursery with a basic knowledge of where they live, things around them and what has happened to them since they were babies and develop this well during their time in the nursery. Teaching and learning are good and the children at least attain appropriate standards for their age with a significant minority achieving above this. This indicates an improvement since the last inspection.
- 69 Children are encouraged to develop their scientific skills of observation and investigation, for example, by using the outdoor area to make a collection of plants and objects by following clues. The teacher reviewed and assessed the children's understanding of their senses and reminded them that they were not going to use their sense of taste during this activity. The children responded well to this and were aware of health and safety issues. They followed instructions well and most responded to the clue to, 'Find something that smells nice near the sand pit', by identifying the lavender bush. Good questioning by the teacher extended the children's understanding of how things grow. One child suggested that 'Plants grow in the summer when it is sunny', whilst another stated that 'Plants need rain or we have to water them with a hose'. Children enjoyed their learning and were excited about what they found. They also displayed a sensitivity to living things when, for example, a snail was found. After much discussion, it was decided to place it carefully away from where children were playing. The children learn about the weather and are encouraged to identify what the weather is like each day.

- 70 Visitors and visits to places of interest also enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of things outside their immediate experience. Some children were confidently using the term arachnid following the visit of the 'bug man'. This session captured their interest in living things and they responded enthusiastically. Following this work, they dressed up as creatures and performed for their parents. This also maintained their interest and developed their confidence and self-esteem. Regular visits are also made to the local park where children identify features on route and use these to develop a sense of map making. Children also meet people with different jobs in the community, including a florist and a fire fighter. These visitors enhance the children's learning experiences and encourage them to relate to a range of different adults, thereby increasing their confidence.
- 71 Most children use computers confidently by working through simple programs. They develop sound control of the mouse through careful support by the welfare assistants and nursery nurses who maintain a good balance between helping the children and encouraging them to work independently. The children move the mouse with increasing dexterity, make selections and, with help, change their original decision to achieve their desired intention when moving around the screen. Opportunities are provided for children to assemble and disassemble simple models, using a variety of construction kits to try out ideas. Children displayed a sense of awe and wonder when making circuits on prepared picture boards to make the bulb light up. They also sustained good levels of concentration and responded well to the high expectations of the teacher when making a 'fishing rod'.
- 72 Children are given the opportunity to develop their understanding of different places and cultures through, for example listening to Indian music and through reading stories which are based in other countries. Their spiritual and cultural development was enhanced when they were encouraged to touch the wide range of fruit provided to support the reading of the story Handa's Surprise and when they carried them on their heads like Handa.
- 73 Children are given the opportunity to develop their understanding of the world through the provision of imaginative play areas. This also develops their speaking and listening skills. They have a clear understanding of a garden centre and flower shop and relate well to each other, sharing resources and playing the roles of customer and owner. They are encouraged to develop their mathematical skills by paying for their flowers and receiving change. The roles of café owner, waitress and customer are also developed as they take orders, prepare food and pay for their meal.
- 74 The outdoor area is used well to develop the children's knowledge and interests. The recent development of the sand pit provides a good area for the children to discover the texture and properties of sand when dry and wet. Also the areas for gardening encourage the children to understand what plants need to make them grow. Overall, the development of the outdoor area is a key feature in developing the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The school is now at a stage to clearly identify in the planning which skills can be developed using this area. The staff are enthusiastic and work hard to improve the facilities for the children and are aware of the need to continue to develop the children's enquiry skills. Their very good relationships with the children and the range of interesting activities result in children who are keen to learn and behave very well.

## **Physical development**

- 75 The vast majority of the children attain appropriate standards for their age. On entry to the nursery, they make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. This shows a maintenance of standards and provision since the last inspection.
- 76 During outdoor activities, most older children control their movements confidently. They show much maturity using space safely and they are aware of the space others need. They control a range of appropriate wheeled vehicles with increasing skills. The children know how to vary their speed, to move vehicles forwards and backwards and to stop safely.
- 77 Many show good skills of control and co-ordination when moving around, balancing and climbing. For example, one group used some well-positioned circular posts sunk into the ground to jump from one to another. They were set at a challenging distance apart. The children clearly enjoyed jumping from one to the other, keeping their balance while selecting the route they wanted to take.
- 78 The children's personal and social development is often developed through activities within the physical area of their learning. For example, a group of four children was asked to put a bus away at the end of the session. They were required to lift it out of a large wooden play boat. They worked out a mutually acceptable way to do this but then ran into a problem. Each time they tried to push it over the ground it went round in circles until one child said, "Look we'll never do it. I will get in and steer and you all push". Subsequently, the bus was parked successfully.
- 79 In the class areas inside, the children demonstrate increasing skills using a range of small equipment, tools and materials safely. For example, during a painting activity, the children knew how to load their brushes with just the right amount of paint for their requirements. When one child put too much on, she wiped the excess off on to the side of the pot before putting her brush to the paper. By the time they are ready to leave the nursery, the older children hold correctly a range of appropriate writing and drawing tools. They understand how to manipulate some quite challenging plastic link construction kit. At the computer station, most children control the mouse, making images move around the screen as they intend them to.
- 80 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. The activities planned generally help the children to build successfully on their prior learning and extend their current understanding, knowledge and skills. The results of regular assessments are used effectively to plan new experiences or to adapt existing ones to help the pupils to make the progress expected of them. On occasions, however, too little positive interaction is planned by the adults during outdoor physical activities. The main role of nursery nurses is frequently of a supervisory nature and, as a consequence, there are missed opportunities to extend the children's learning.

## **Creative development**

- 81 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children respond well to what they see, hear, feel and imagine. Their creative development is successfully fostered through a range of activities. In response to the good teaching, the children make

good progress and achieve higher standards than normally expected for their age. This indicates improvement since the last inspection. This aspect of learning is well planned and co-ordinated, and a strength of the school.

- 82 Staff have a good understanding of the stages of learning and development in this area. They maintain a good balance between guiding and supporting the children and encouraging them to explore and develop their skills independently. A good example of this was observed when a boy chose to make a mask. He was encouraged to talk about what he wanted to do and asked which materials he might need. Other children followed this lead and a small group sustained good levels of concentration and completed the masks, which were of a good quality. The nursery nurse intervened at an appropriate time to ask how the mask would stay on and took the opportunity to develop the children's mathematical skills by supporting them to cut elastic of an appropriate length. The children then discussed how they could join materials and made appropriate choices of sticking and stapling.
- 83 Interesting opportunities are provided for children to develop their painting skills, for example when mixing colours. They are encouraged to explore the consistency of the paint and know that by adding one colour to another they get a third colour. They use appropriate vocabulary, for example by stating that the paint is getting 'thicker' or 'darker'. Most spontaneously wash their brushes and change the water when necessary. A display of their individual work shows a good use of colour when painting sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh. The work is well displayed and the children are rightly pleased with the results. Their creative and observational skills are further developed when they make flowers with playdough.
- 84 Throughout all activities, staff encourage the children to develop their language, communication and mathematical skills. For example, when printing patterns with fruit they are encouraged to develop an understanding of shape, texture and colour. When using clay, they are encouraged to talk about its texture and describe what has changed when they add water. One boy stated, 'It's sloppy and not the same as the other which is dry and hard'. The children thoroughly enjoyed this activity, made sounds with the 'sloppy' clay and maintained good levels of concentration. By the time they leave the nursery, children have developed confidence in using a range of tools and materials.
- 85 Musical skills are developed through playing instruments, singing songs and becoming involved in Music Education Workshops. Children were observed playing the instruments in a group of three. They handled them carefully and with interest, exploring the sound that they made. All the children come together twice a week to sing and this provides them with good opportunities to work in a larger group. In one session observed, all participated well and sang songs and action rhymes confidently from memory. The quality of singing was good as the children responded by singing more loudly or quietly, fast or slow, as appropriate. The choice of songs was well related to the topic of 'Summer' and staff used this opportunity well to reinforce the need for protection when out in the sun. These sessions develop a sense of community in the children and contribute positively to their spiritual, social and cultural development.
- 86 The role-play areas provide opportunities for children to play co-operatively and to develop their creative imaginations. They extend their language skills by re-enacting familiar situations or making up their own. The range of resources in the

'flower shop' captured the interest of most children who maintained good levels of concentration when making bunches of flowers. They exchanged money when 'selling' the flowers and sustained good conversations. Train tracks were provided outside and some children laid these to create scenes. There was little discussion between adults and children during this activity, however, and opportunities to develop speaking skills and imaginative play were missed.

- 87 The curriculum is significantly enriched by the work of visitors, including an artist who worked with children, parents and staff. All reported on the value and enjoyment in this session and the work produced by children was of a high standard. The children also have the opportunity to dress-up and perform, for example as minibeasts. This develops their confidence and is very popular with the parents and children. Overall, the good quality teaching and provision of a wide range of activities support the children's learning well and maintain their interest and concentration. Consequently, they are active and involved and display very good behaviour.