

INSPECTION REPORT

KNOWLES NURSERY SCHOOL

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110197

Headteacher: Mrs M. Gordon

Reporting inspector: Mrs S. M. Barnes
16249

Dates of inspection: 27th - 30th May 2002

Inspection number: 230314

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 category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-4
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Queensway Bletchley Milton Keynes
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Appropriate authority:	Milton Keynes Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Ann Pegg
Date of previous inspection:	30 th June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16249	Mrs S. M. Barnes	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage, equal opportunities, special educational needs, English as an additional language	Standards, the quality of teaching, leadership and management, what the school should do to improve further.
01305	Dr B. Rance	Lay inspector		How well the school cares for children, attendance, links with parents.
27899	Mrs G. Beasley	Team inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, curricular opportunities, provision for spiritual, moral and social development, assessment arrangements.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Knowles nursery is situated near the centre of Bletchley on the edge of Milton Keynes. Children who attend come mainly from the Fenny Stratford and Eaton wards but also from homes further away. Their experiences of pre-school provision are varied. The boys and girls start school in the term before their fourth birthday. They attend part-time for either an afternoon or morning session, transferring to various local schools at the start of the term in which they will be five. From September, children will start at the beginning of the year and they will leave the following July. About one in five of the children speak English as an additional language. This is a higher proportion than at the time of the previous inspection. Most of the families of those children are from the Sylhet region of Bangladesh. The proportion of children identified as having special educational needs is lower than at the time of the previous inspection at around four per cent. Attainment on entry to the school is overall below that expected for children of that age. At the start and end of morning and afternoon sessions the children are organised into four “key worker” groups led by the two teachers and two nursery nurses. For the rest of their time in the nursery, the children have full access to a range of activities both indoors and outside, when they are monitored carefully by key workers, other support staff and volunteers. Currently, children stay in the same group with the same key worker for the start and end of each session between the time they first start nursery until they transfer to main school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. The leadership and management of the school, by the head teacher and governors, are very good. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. This, combined with a very well planned and varied curriculum, and the excellent assessment of children’s progress, which is used exceptionally well, results in boys and girls from all groups and of all levels of ability learning very well in all areas of the foundation curriculum. Their achievements in personal and social and physical development are excellent. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above those expected in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, creative skills and knowledge and understanding of the world. They are well above those expected in personal and social and physical development.
- The leadership and the management of the school are very good and have resulted in all staff having a commitment to high quality. As a result, the ethos of the school is very positive and effectively supports children’s well-being.
- Teaching is very good and children make very good gains in their learning. Children’s level of achievement is therefore very good.
- Assessment procedures are excellent and are used extremely well to plan stimulating activities that motivate all the children.
- Procedures for monitoring, guiding and supporting children’s personal development are excellent. As a result, relationships within the school are very good.
- Links with parents are very good. They are kept very well informed about their children’s progress and thus are enabled to make a very positive contribution to their children’s learning.
- Provision for children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and this has a beneficial effect on their attitudes to work and behaviour, both of which are very good.

What could be improved

- The organisation of teaching in key worker sessions does not allow all children to benefit from the specialisms and expertise of all the staff.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The key issues identified at the time of the previous inspection have all been effectively resolved. Planning is now very good. The school development plan includes strategies to monitor progress. Staff leadership

roles have been fully developed, staff appraisal is fully in place for all staff. Governors visit the nursery regularly and have a good understanding of the work of the nursery. In addition, standards have been raised in all subject areas. Teaching and learning have been improved and are now very good. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is improved and is very good in all aspects. Assessment procedures are excellent and their use is exemplary. The quality of the curriculum is very good. The leadership of the head teacher is very good, and she is given very strong support by all staff and the governing body.

STANDARDS

There are no standardised assessments for children at the end of nursery school, but inspection evidence shows that children achieve very well and make very good progress overall. Children's personal and social skills, and physical skills, develop extremely well. Achievements in these aspects of the curriculum are excellent and standards in these areas are well above expected levels by the time the children leave the nursery. In communication, language, literacy and, mathematics, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world, children's achievements are very good and standards are above those expected, by the time they leave. Children from all groups achieve well and make very good progress. This is due to the very good teaching and very good curriculum. Children with special educational needs make progress commensurate with their age and ability in all aspects of learning. Children with English as an additional language make very good progress and achieve very well. The school does not set formal targets, but sets individual objectives for children in the main areas of their learning, which it meets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have very good attitudes to school. They enjoy their work and play and are interested and fully involved in the activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Children are aware of the conventions of the nursery and follow them.
Personal development and relationships	Children's personal development is very good. They develop very good levels of initiative and responsibility.
Attendance	There are no national comparisons for attendance at this age. However, children enjoy school and arrive on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery
Quality of teaching	Very good

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall. All teaching staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and of the curriculum for children of this age. Planning is very good and excellent use is made of the exceptionally good assessment and monitoring systems. As a result, teaching meets the needs of boys and girls from all groups very well. Children with English as an additional language are taught very well. The quality of the teaching of communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills is very good. The management of these young children is very good and a range of very effective teaching methods are used, including the very good use of questioning to allow children to work out correct answers for themselves. Children make very good gains in their learning as a consequence.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of	The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good. There are

the curriculum	very good strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills. The provision for personal and social development and the development of physical skills are excellent.
Provision for children with special educational needs	There is very good provision for children with special educational needs and they make very good progress in their learning.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	The provision for children with English as an additional language is very good. They are very well supported in all areas of their learning.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is very good. The ethos of the school is very positive. As a result children have high levels of well-being, which has a positive impact on their self confidence and learning.
How well the school cares for the children	Child protection procedures are good. Procedures for monitoring and supporting children's academic and personal development are excellent.

Links with parents are very good. They have very positive opinions of the school and its work. They are very effectively involved in the work their children do and the progress they make. The information provided for them is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school by the head teacher and key staff are very good. This has led to a very good level of improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in standards the children achieve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very committed to the school and, although they do not have fully delegated powers, they play a very important role in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The procedures the school has in place for monitoring its performance and taking effective action are very good. There is a very strong commitment to improvement and high standards by all staff.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic use of the resources the school has is good. The match of the numbers of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory. The accommodation is good and learning resources are also good overall. The principles of best value are effectively applied.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • Teaching is good. • The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable approaching the school with a question or a problem. • The school is well led and managed. • There is an interesting range of activities provided for the children. • The school expects the children to work hard and to do their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant numbers of responses highlighting areas for improvement.

The inspection team agree that the children like school. The quality of teaching is very good and all staff expect children to work hard and to do their best. The school works very closely with parents and provides a wide range of interesting activities for the children. The leadership and management of the school is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter nursery school with levels of attainment that cover the full range usually found amongst three-year-olds. However, when children first start school their standards of attainment are below those expected for their age. This indicates a change since the time of the previous inspection, when standards of attainment on entry were judged to be average. These changes are due to demographic changes in the area. About one in five of the children speak English as an additional language and many of these start school with very few words of English. Initially this prevents them taking full part in all activities, although they are very well supported by all staff. Many of the children come from homes where they have had limited opportunities to run and climb freely outside and so their physical skills and confidence are not developed fully.
2. There are no standardised assessments for children of nursery school age, but inspection evidence shows that their achievement is very high and that children make very good progress overall. In communication, language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world, children's achievements are very good and standards are above those expected, by the time they leave. Children's personal and social skills and physical skills are developed extremely well. Their achievements are excellent and standards in these areas are well above expected levels by the time they leave the nursery. This is a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, when children were judged to be making good progress in their personal and social development, but only satisfactory progress in all other areas. Attainment at that time was judged to be average overall.
3. Currently, all children achieve well and make very good progress, due to the very good teaching and very well-structured curriculum. Children with special educational needs make progress commensurate with their age and ability in all aspects of learning. Children with English as an additional language make very good progress in their learning and achieve very well. The school does not set formal targets but sets individual objectives for children in the main areas of their learning. These are used very effectively when planning the curriculum so that each of the children is enabled to reach his or her potential.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

4. Children have very positive attitudes to school. The school places great value on the amount of involvement the children have in all activities and monitors this closely. Consequently, through constant quiet persuasion, children are encouraged to take part in all that is available to them. Due to the interesting nature of the activities set, the children are keen to take part and do so fully. They enjoy their learning and are keen to show each other and the adults around them what they have learned to do.
5. Behaviour is very good. Children get along together very well due to the positive atmosphere created by adults and the positive encouragement they are given. Expectations for good behaviour are clear. All members of staff and helpers reinforce these constantly and consistently within the positive and happy atmosphere. This gives the children clear messages on how to behave and they rise to the expectations magnificently. Children with challenging behaviour associated with their special educational needs are very well supported. They are given consistent reminders on how to behave and this helps them to take part constructively in all activities. Careful assessment by staff makes sure that the learning of all children is not interrupted by any potential outbursts of unacceptable behaviour.

6. Relationships are very good. All adults respond well to the children and treat them with a great deal of care and giving them the attention they need to help them to develop into well-rounded individuals. Children have a sense of well being and develop high levels of self-esteem and confidence as a result. Children get on with each other in the same polite and friendly way, following the very good role models displayed by adults.
7. Children are developing very good levels of personal skills. This is reflected in the self-confident way they approach learning. They are happy to try everything because they know that the adults will intervene at opportune moments either to support or adapt the activity slightly, which gives each individual just enough challenge to extend their skills, and to succeed. The children operate independently during free choice activity time. They enjoy the responsibility of being able to select from the very wide range of structured activities on offer. The gentle steer they are given to address the specific learning that the school wants them to develop is skilfully done and children co-operate fully during these times. It is particularly impressive that as soon as it starts raining, for example, the children know that they must get off climbing equipment immediately. They can often be heard explaining to each other "It's raining. We must get off". This level of initiative is commendable for children of this age.
8. Children's attendance at school is satisfactory. Even though attendance for children of this age is not compulsory, school registers are used in the normal way and registration is formally taken at each session. Attendance statistics are not calculated and there are, of course, no national comparators, however, scrutiny of the registers shows that once children have started attending school the majority attend regularly and punctually so that they have the opportunity of a full days learning. However, there are a small number of children who miss several weeks of education at this very important stage through being taken on extended family holidays to Bangladesh.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

9. The quality of teaching is very good overall. This is good improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be mainly good. Teaching sessions are planned with good regard to the individual needs of all children. As a result, boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make very good gains in their learning. During the current inspection none of the teaching was unsatisfactory and the great majority was at least good, with much very good teaching observed.
10. Staff all plan very effectively for all aspects of the curriculum for young children. Learning activities have clear objectives and staff make very good use of information from assessment of children's progress. They are especially good at providing opportunities that allow children to explore their environment and find solutions to tasks, such as finding something to stand on to reach the top of a tower they are building. The children respond very readily to the challenges of the tasks they are set. The good relationships between staff and children, combined with consistent routines and expectations of children results in them being happy, well adjusted and confident. They trust the teachers, concentrate well and sustain their interest in work for quite long periods because the sessions are interesting and enjoyable.
11. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the children and of the curriculum. They give children good opportunities to use their initiative and to work within clear boundaries. They provide many very good opportunities for children to question and explore, within a safe setting, to look for patterns and deeper understanding in the world around them. As for example, looking at wild-life in the garden or experimenting with making patterns with bubbles or shaving foam. Children know what is expected of them and due to the good use of encouragement and support from staff, they have belief in their ability to succeed and so approach work with optimism. They are confident to ask questions and to suggest why things happen. Children in the nursery are highly involved in their work and are persistent, even when they do not achieve success first time, for example, when learning to throw a ball through a hoop. Children know that all staff will listen

to them and as a result of this good example their interactions with others are positive and they respond well to new experiences.

12. Teaching of children with English as an additional language is very good and they are given very good levels of support. This is particularly the case for those children who speak Bengali, who have stories in their first language and translations that enable them to extend their learning and to take a full part in their play with other children. There are good opportunities throughout the day for them to speak and hear Bengali. Key workers have made a point of learning simple phrases and numbers, for example, and, as a result, these children make very good progress in their learning. Children with special educational needs are supported very well and key workers assess and monitor their progress carefully to ensure that they too make very good progress.

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

13. The curriculum has improved greatly since the previous inspection. It is very broad and balanced and provides very well for the children's inquisitive minds. It is particularly rich, due to the very wide range of activities on offer during free choice time every day. These times are monitored closely to make sure that the children take part in a full range of activities. Careful interventions by staff ensure activities are purposeful and appropriate to all. Planning is very good and covers all areas of learning. A very good range of interesting and practical activities is provided for the children so that they learn appropriately through play.
14. The school is committed to a child directed approach, which, because it is particularly well planned, meets the needs of all children. The starting point is children's own interests and this means that the planned activities are particularly relevant. As a result, children are fully involved in the work set. The Effective Early Learning project supports the school very well. The detailed monitoring of the different activities helps the staff to adapt and extend the learning opportunities on offer, which leads to a very good balance between child focussed and adult led activities.
15. Children stay with their key worker throughout their time in the nursery. This helps the children to build strong relationships with one adult and to relate to small groups of children. All adults know the children very well and this is particularly beneficial during free choice activities. In group times, at the start and end of the day, children benefit from the curricular expertise of this one adult and, due to the particular skills of each key worker, this leads to more emphasis being given to some aspects than others. Children do not all benefit from the curricular expertise of all adults during group times and opportunities are missed for all children to fully develop all skills.
16. The curriculum provides very well for developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. When the children come at the beginning of each session, registration is usually organised for example, so that the children count how many of them there are in each group. A note is made of the number of children who want milk that day and the number recorded to order the correct amount at the kitchen. The children enjoy this activity as it has real purpose and relevance to their day. Sometimes the children place their name labels on their favourite number and this gives those who only remember a few numerals confidence to join in with the activity. Role-play plays an important part and provides very good opportunities for children to develop their imaginative language. Whether they are playing outside building a home from crates, or inside in "the travel agent's", the children talk freely to each other, in role, about what they are doing.
17. All areas of learning have detailed schemes of work, which are matched appropriately to the stepping-stones and early learning goals recommended for children in the Foundation Stage. Resources are identified specifically for each task so that the children have very good opportunities to develop identified skills, knowledge and understanding. Specific learning opportunities have been identified for each learning area so that interventions are carefully

planned. This guides teaching and learning very well and allows the children to be given balance between the right amount of challenge and achieving success.

18. There are very many visits into the local area and to places of interest, which add considerable interest to the children's learning. These extra curricular activities are of very good quality and make a significant contribution to the children's experiences and development of their knowledge and understanding of people, places and the environment. The school has very good links with the local community and this makes a significant contribution to children's learning through this first hand experience. The recent links with a local building firm has led to wonderful development of the school grounds. The children enjoy sitting quietly on the bench, which they helped to build and have planted the raised beds with vegetables and flowers. Induction procedures are very good. Home visits give the school useful information about the children's likes and dislikes and this helps them to prepare a well-matched curriculum, which interests all children equally.
19. The school makes sure that all children have equal access to all activities. Children with English as an additional language are very well supported during free choice and group times to make sure that they understand the purpose of the activities and are taking a full part. All children listen well to stories, which are read in Bengali and English. They all show an equal fascination for each other's language and listen attentively as the stories are read.
20. The school provides very well for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This reflects the very good improvement in provision since the school was last inspected. The school successfully builds on the children's own interests and balances this with learning through real contexts. This causes a great excitement for learning in which all children take part. The recent nurturing of butterflies from egg to adult is an example of this approach. Children learned how to care for these small creatures and developed a very good sense of how they must look after animals, plants and the world in which we live. The sense of wonder as the butterflies were released was evident on the children's faces as they watched them fly off to begin their adult life.
21. The provision for spiritual development is very good. The outside garden area has numerous places where the children can explore the environment and there was great excitement one morning when a frog was found. The children bounded in with great excitement to tell the adults what they had discovered. This was capitalised upon with the afternoon group when the adult related the event to this different group of children. They were reminded about how to be careful if they found small creatures outside, but duly encouraged to look out for the frogs that afternoon. The willow structure is a place where the children can sit quietly and reflect. The very wide range of visitors into school also supports this aspect of the children's development very well.
22. The school provides very well for children's moral development. Children have a very clear understanding of what is right and wrong, due to the constant reinforcement of these concepts within a caring environment, which sets very clear expectations. The approach is calm and quiet so the children always listen to the positive guidance they receive. Stories are carefully chosen which lend themselves to discussion about what the children would do in the same situation. Due to the dual language support provided at many story sessions, all children make very good progress in developing positive moral attitudes. They develop great respect for the feelings of others through the play situations and pay due care and thoughtfulness to their own and other's safety when climbing on apparatus or steering the wheeled toys outside.
23. The school provides very well for children's social development. All activities lend themselves to playing co-operatively and children are happy to join in with small groups or to play alongside others. They feel secure because all children respond to the expectation to make each other feel welcome. Thomas the Tank Engine is a particular favourite in the afternoons and the children are content to share this favourite toy with others. They accept the expectation that when the egg timer has finished it is time for someone else to have a turn. They know that eventually it will come around to their turn again. The varied role-play situations and co-operative games activities

make significant contributions to children's social skills. Whether the children are playing basketball, tennis or "organising a holiday for a friend", the children share and take turns willingly.

24. The provision for cultural development is very good. Children learn enthusiastically about the many festivals from different faiths and cultures. They listen attentively to music, sing songs and sample special food. When they learned about the Chinese New Year, the children ate food with chopsticks giving them a real taste of Chinese culture. When a visitor came in to show her wedding dress, this led to the children acting out Christian and Bangladeshi weddings in the role-play area. This gave very good opportunities for children to develop respect and knowledge of each other's cultures. Resources reflect the cultural make up of the nursery and are available for the children to use throughout the day. Posters, labels and books in dual language raise the children's awareness of languages other than their own.
25. The school's links with the community and partner institutions are very good, with the latter improving significantly since the last inspection. These aspects are a real strength of the school, and have a positive effect on pupils' learning. The children enjoy visits to local shops, to an estate agent and to the library. They also have visits from a number of interesting people such as the police, a farmer, who brings along some animals, a nurse, musicians and storytellers. With the help of the Construction Industry Training Board the opportunity was taken recently to build some small features in the school grounds. The school is pleased to welcome the Milton Keynes toy library service on a weekly basis, and makes the school's family room available for "The multicultural mothers and toddlers group" on one day each week.
26. The school now has a very close relationship with the first school on an adjacent site and an increasing number of children are transferring to that school when they leave the nursery. The reception class teachers visit the nursery regularly to get to know the children and a transition record is passed on to the first school and shared with parents at the time of transfer.
27. The head teacher liaises with other schools in the area through a formal cluster of nursery, first and middle schools. The school regularly offers work experience placements to secondary school pupils and training placements to students studying for nursery nurse or NVQ qualifications. The contribution of these students is carefully managed by the key workers in the school so that it enhances the learning of the children.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. The steps taken by the school to ensure children's welfare, health and safety are good, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The school provides a caring environment, where the key workers and the support staff know the pupils very well. Child protection procedures are in place, with the head teacher undertaking the role of designated person. All members of staff are aware of their responsibilities in this regard. Routines for dealing with first aid and accidents are well established with all staff having received emergency first aid training. Health and safety risks are reviewed regularly by governors, and any corrective action required is taken and reported to the local education authority. Safety checks on equipment take place annually, and practice evacuations of the premises take place each half term, in both the morning and afternoon sessions.
29. There are excellent procedures for assessing what each child can do. The individual record books contain extremely detailed information that includes what the children say, as well as what they do and how much they take part in activities. Regular notes are taken during the day to record children's learning in all areas. The information is closely matched to the stepping-stones and early learning goal information and gives excellent information of how the children are doing. It provides excellent information for the children's receiving school.

30. The use of the information is highly effective in making sure that the children take part in all activities. Adults use the information to target individuals during daily interventions so that when they see the children at a particular activity they make sure that questions are focused carefully on what they want the children to learn next. The adults look carefully to see if there are any gaps in individual children's skills, knowledge and understanding in any particular aspect of the curriculum. They then make sure that these areas are addressed during the following week. These excellent procedures make sure that support and guidance are very closely focussed and this leads to the higher than expected standards and very good achievement of all children. The Effective Early Learning project supports these highly effective procedures through the focus on children's well-being and involvement as well as on what they have learned.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

31. Parents' views of the school are very positive. In the parents' meeting, the questionnaire and in informal meetings with parents before and after school, reactions to the school were very positive. Parents appreciate the caring, multicultural ethos of the school, and the standards of behaviour that children learn. They feel welcome and able to approach the staff or head teacher at any time.
32. The information provided by the school to parents is very good and has improved since reported in the last inspection. There are regular newsletters and much of the current information is displayed on notice boards in each teaching area. Most of this information is also presented in Bengali. Support staff are at pains to ensure that parents who are not fluent in English understand all the available information. At the beginning and end of each session staff are always on hand to discuss children's progress, or any concerns that parents may have. The formal Prospectus and the Governors' Annual Report documents are made available, but many parents tend to prefer the informal style of the Parents' Handbook. Building on the excellent assessment arrangements, a record of achievement folder (the "Blue Book") is maintained for each child by staff and is regularly shared with the parents, with the assistance of a translator if required. At the end of each child's time in the nursery a transition record is prepared for the school to which they transfer and this is also shared with the parents.
33. All parents' are fully involved in the life and work of the school. The school continually invites parents to come into school to help in whatever way they feel able. Several mothers assist in the kitchen with cooking for small groups of children. Others assist in a variety of ways, for example one mother came into school during Diwali to show the children the special clothes that she wears at that time. Parents are always very generous in providing food items at the time of the different religious festivals so that all the children can learn about the various cultural traditions. Support for fundraising activities organised by the school such as the "fun and sports day" is always good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

34. The leadership of the head teacher is very good. She has a clear vision of the high quality of education that she wishes the school should provide and a very good understanding of how to achieve it. She has ensured that there have been very effective opportunities for all staff to undertake regular additional training to improve their skills and to gain further understanding of how young children learn. This has led to the development of a school firmly committed to the principles of best practise in education, where all staff work together well and provide high levels of constantly good and very good teaching in an attractive and stimulating environment. The school aims to provide high quality learning experiences for all children and all staff are committed to this. Care is taken with all aspects of the provision, from the high standards of cleanliness and order to the bright and attractive displays that show children and their parents and carers how much they and their work are valued. The head teacher has maintained the strong, clear direction to the school's work celebrated at the time of the previous inspection.
35. Teachers, nursery nurses and support staff work together effectively to refine and improve the quality of education provided. The school development plan is effective in identifying areas for improvement and is used well to evaluate progress. All staff have targets for professional improvement and performance management is undertaken effectively. Clear-sighted evaluations of performance make a positive contribution to the school's understanding of its own strengths and its areas for improvement. The management of the school is very good. The governing body does not, as yet, have devolved powers, but provides very good levels of support for the school. They play an effective role in shaping the direction of the school and have a very good knowledge of its strengths and areas for improvement.

36. There are very good systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. This is firmly based on an ethos of honest self-evaluation that is agreed by all staff. As a result, the targets the school sets itself are very appropriate and the action taken to meet them is good. A great strength of the school is its shared commitment to improvement. The school is in a very good position to maintain the very high standards it achieves and to improve them still further. The school does not have a fully devolved budget, but as at the time of the previous inspection, the school's financial planning is sound. The decision, agreed by the local education authority, to purchase specialist support from a nearby local authority has proved very effective and has had a very positive influence on teaching and learning. Good use is made of new technology. Specific grants are used effectively.
37. There are suitable numbers of staff who are very well qualified to plan a rich and varied curriculum for all children. The Performance Management procedures are very good and help the school to identify any further areas for personal development for all members of staff. There are good systems for induction of new staff and students. This is closely linked to the needs identified by the school through its very focussed monitoring systems. The Effective Early Learning project helps to guide this monitoring very well and provides the school with important information about how well the children are learning in all areas. This in turn informs the priorities for further improvement and makes sure that the children are constantly provided with sufficient challenge for them to make very good progress in their learning.
38. The range of resources is good. The school plans very carefully which resources are to be used for each planned activity. This helps to guide the children's learning in the direction identified by the assessment information. The interesting way that these are presented motivates the children to take part and develops their particular skills. For example, the interesting computerised stories encouraged all children to learn to turn the pages on screen, developing careful control of the "mouse" in the process. It also motivated those who had previously shied away from the computer area to take part.
39. The school's accommodation is good. There is sufficient room for all the children to learn through playing in all aspects of the early learning goals. Smaller rooms around the larger main room are devoted to particular activities such as water and sand, or painting and clay. The premises are decorated and maintained to a very high standard throughout, and are enhanced by attractive, interesting and informative displays on the walls, including pupils' own work. The caretaker organises his time to be able to clear up during the lunch break so that the school is as sparkingly clean and tidy for the afternoon session as it is for the morning. The outside play area is also of a good size, and part of it is covered so that children may enjoy outdoor activities even in inclement weather.
40. The outside play area does, however, give cause for some concern. The safety surface around the climbing frames is very good, but the tarmac surface is broken and in disrepair, with large puddles after rain and presents a risk. This limits the use of the outside area and causes severe problems for parents coming into school, especially those with other small toddlers and push-chairs.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

41. In order to raise standards further the head teacher and governors should:-
 - (1) ensure that the organisation of teaching in key worker sessions allows all children to benefit from the specialist skills and teaching styles of all key workers.
(Paragraph No. 15)

In addition the following minor issue should be taken into consideration:-

The surface of one side of the playground is broken, uneven and prone to flooding after rain, causing a hazard to parents and carers leaving and collecting children and limiting the space available for safe play in wet weather.

(Paragraph No. 40)

THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

42. Children with English as an additional language are very well supported in their learning. The quality of teaching they receive and the curriculum is very good and opportunities to enhance vocabulary effectively are built into the daily range of activities. Key workers and support staff ensure that children with little knowledge of English are provided with a secure environment, with regular well-known routines that enable them to relax and feel confident. As a result, they make very good gains in their learning. This is a very good level of improvement since the previous inspection, when they were judged to make progress that was “as well as expected”. Support for children who speak Bengali is particularly good and these children have frequent opportunity to talk about their activities and to listen to stories in that language. The excellent systems for assessment and monitoring the progress for all children and the efficient use of this to guide planning has a very beneficial effect on the progress these children make in their academic and social development. The school is used as a base for a parents’ support group, which further strengthens links between home and school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	12	11	2	0	0	0
Percentage	4	46	42	8	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	52
Number of full-time children known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery
Number of children with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register	4

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of children with English as an additional language	20

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	N/A
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	N/A

Attendance

There are no national comparisons for attendance in nursery schools.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	N/A
Black – African heritage	N/A
Black – other	N/A
Indian	N/A
Pakistani	N/A
Bangladeshi	N/A
Chinese	N/A
White	N/A
Any other minority ethnic group	N/A

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	4.4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	136
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

The school does not have a fully devolved budget, and the local education authority directly funds many aspects of school life. As a result, figures which are available are not directly comparable to other schools. Spending for many aspects is incorporated into local education authority's budget and is not easily separated from them.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	104
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	88	6	0	0	6
My child is making good progress in school.	73	21	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	85	9	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	21	0	0	43
The teaching is good.	70	24	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	36	3	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	18	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	33	0	0	25
The school works closely with parents.	70	27	0	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	70	24	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	24	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	15	0	0	32

Please note that on occasion figures may not add exactly to one hundred, due to rounding of percentages.

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

43. Children attend the school on a part-time basis, either mornings, or afternoons, from the term before their fourth birthday until they transfer to a reception class in one of various local primary schools in the term before they are five. The children are taught in four groups at the start and end of the morning and afternoon. Currently the majority of the oldest children attend in the mornings. Each group is led by a “key worker”, who is either a teacher or a nursery nurse. The groups do not rotate around the nursery so that each child only has opportunity to work in one of the areas for these key sessions. However, the work is carefully planned so that all children have equal access to the opportunities offered. Children with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are very effectively supported in their learning. Work is also very well matched for children who are potentially higher attaining, to ensure that suitably challenging work is offered. Approximately a fifth of the children have very limited knowledge of English on entry to the school. Overall, standards on entry are below that which is typical of children of this age.
44. Good arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth transition into school. Key workers establish positive links with the children and their families in home visits prior to their start in school. Relationships in school are good and adults provide good role models to the children in their care. Expectations of the children’s work and behaviour are appropriately high. Staff all work together very well to provide a friendly and effective learning environment for boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups. Teaching is very good overall. Planning is very good and is based effectively on the appropriate foundation curriculum for young children and also on the excellent assessments of the attainment of each child. The opportunities for learning that the school provides are very good. Children’s behaviour and learning are managed very well and as a result, they learn to work and play effectively with others.

Personal, social and emotional development

45. Children start school with below average personal and social skills. They make excellent progress due to the consistently very high standards of teaching and the very well planned curriculum and, by the end of nursery, are attaining well above expected levels in their personal, social and emotional development. Achievement in this area of learning is excellent. This is very good improvement since the previous inspection, which judged progress in this aspect of learning to be good. Free choice activity time encourages the children to take responsibility for their own learning and helps them to develop high levels of independence. They decide for themselves whether they need to put on their coats when playing outside. They fetch these and return them to the right place before and after they start playing. Should it be necessary to wear coats and the children have decided not to, adults expertly pose questions to guide the children towards the most suitable decision. The children play very well together at all times. They negotiate well to take turns with the favourite toys. They invite each other to join in with games and are happy to ask other if they can play if they are particularly drawn to an activity someone else is engaged in. All children join in whole-heartedly with clearing away and performing minor day-to-day jobs around the nursery, such as taking register numbers and putting out milk.

Communication, language and literacy

46. Due to very good teaching, all children make very good progress in their learning of each aspect of communication, language and literacy. Standards are above those expected by the time they transfer to main-stream education. This represents very good levels of achievement for all of the children and is a good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be in line with those expected. The key workers and other staff create an environment in which

children feel at ease. As a result, they are developing the self-confidence required to speak to other children and adults about their wants and interests. They use conversation to initiate exchanges and to gain attention, “I have just made a marvellous pizza!”, “What is your name?” and “I am making a pie for dinner, and I am going to put chocolate on the top” are typical examples. They enjoy new words and happily find words that rhyme - “take, bake, cake” or words that describe new experiences such as “sloppy shaving foam”. Some children use simple statements linked to gestures, but most attend to what others say and use language to negotiate and to resolve disagreements. Most of the older children negotiate plans and activities and take turns in conversation as they play together or alongside each other. They speak clearly and show that they know what a listener needs to do to gain information.

47. There are good opportunities to look at books in small groups and also as part of the free choice activities which form the main part of each morning and afternoon session. Children learn to enjoy books. They listen to stories with rapt attention and can recall the main events and characters. They often choose to look at books, either on their own or with friends, and turn the pages in order, often recounting the story out loud. Frequently, children persuade an adult to read with them and listen with enjoyment, responding with relevant comments and questions. Children for whom English is an additional language take great pleasure in listening to stories in Bengali and English.
48. Children in the nursery develop early writing skills well. They know that writing records information and daily opportunities for each child, in turn, to write the milk list for their group, provides a practical example. Each day other children read the lists and set out the required numbers of drinks for each group. Many children can write recognisable letters from their name. Older children recognise their name in print and many can read all their friends’ names as well. They label drawings and paintings holding pencils correctly. There are very many daily opportunities to write, in the “travel agent’s”, the writing corner and as part of the everyday life of the nursery. Adults provide good role models, making notes and transferring information into written form. Each member of the school has a “pigeon-hole” which is named and has an identifying photograph. These are regularly used to post letters and messages, effectively underlying the importance and enjoyment of the written word. All children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language have positive attitudes to reading and writing and enjoy taking part in the many tasks with enjoyment.

Mathematical development

49. Children make very good progress in their mathematical development and attain standards above those expected for their age. This is a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be average. Very good opportunities are built into registration time so that the children are learning to recognise, count and order numbers to thirteen, (the potential number of children in their key worker groups). They know various rhymes, which challenge them to count forwards and backwards to and from ten, and the children are heard to sing these during their free play. Adults ask astute and focused questions of individuals to take this learning forward to include noting which of two groups has the greater number or deciding how many more straws are needed to make sure everyone has one for their milk.
50. The range of activities provide well for children’s understanding of shape and measures and timely interventions by adults make sure that the children are learning particular mathematical concepts. Although the children cannot explain what they are doing using the correct vocabulary, when challenged they are able to build structures which are symmetrical and point to show off what they have managed to do. By carefully measuring one brick against the other, the children can decide whether the bricks are the same height to make their tower of bricks stable or whether it will fall down. The children can sort shapes into sets of triangles, squares, rectangles and circles. Adults pose questions, which allow the children to show what they know and understand about each of the shapes. Therefore, although they cannot always name the shapes, or explain the

similarities and differences between them, the way they answer the questions shows that they are beginning to notice some of their attributes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

51. The school provides very good opportunities for the children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They achieve very well and attain standards above those expected for their age. This is a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be average. The opportunities for the children to learn through first hand study are excellent. Visits by many different people means that the children's experience is very varied. They learn how to care for living things through their handling of small animals. They know that they should be careful not to hurt them and that they need water and special food. The garden beds have provided the children with very good opportunities to plant seeds and they watch with fascination as these grow into plants. They are awaiting the fruits of their labours and will no doubt enjoy these in a cooking activity at a later date. Regular opportunities are provided for the children to cook. The recipes chosen reflect the cultural diversity of the nursery. During these sessions, the adults skilfully direct the children's attention into noting the changes that are taking place during the cooking process. This includes talking about the changes in the pizza base mixture as water is added in terms of its consistency and then comparing the differences between the raw and cooked base.
52. Visits into the locality spark off the children's interest and their learning about buildings and simple map skills. Following on from the work the children did on buildings, one higher attaining child drew a plan from a bird's eye view of the inside of the nursery and a very accurate pictorial representation of the areas outside. Through careful intervention and discussion, the flowerbeds, house, climbing frame and grassed and tarmac area were all drawn in the right places. Children have good opportunities to use computers on a daily basis and understand how to use the programs, which are set up ready for them to use each day. Their control of the "mouse" is developing very well. The very well organised activities make a very positive contribution to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Physical development

53. The teaching of both aspects of physical development is very good, as is the regular provision of a very good range of opportunities to develop children's physical skills. Children of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make excellent progress in their learning and attain standards which are well above those expected by the time they transfer to reception classes in other schools. This is a very good level of improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be satisfactory.
54. Key workers plan a very good range of activities for the children, both indoors and outside each day. These develop physical skills and co-ordination. There are plentiful opportunities for children to develop their hand and eye co-ordination and to learn how to use tools and equipment effectively. Each day a suitably wide variety of different, exciting experiences are provided. Children have free access to painting, modelling and building tasks. They use brushes and small tools, such as scissors and beaters and complete puzzles and use small construction toys with increasing control. They are also given good opportunities to do things for a real purpose, for example when they carefully count out the number of milk cartons needed for each group and insert the straws ready for snack time. This also has a positive effect on their social development.
55. They show increasing control over objects, pushing, pulling and twisting materials to form them into shapes. They learn to manipulate materials such as clay and dough to achieve their desired effect. Children hold pencils and brushes with an easy, comfortable grasp, understanding that tools have to be used safely. They develop increasing control over fastenings on items such as clothing and aprons and locks and catches. They learn the correct clothing for each task, such as

wearing boots outside when it is wet and putting on aprons for painting, and this enables them to have increasing independence in their work around the nursery. At the end of each session they all help to carry equipment to its correct storage place and put it away safely.

56. The school provides very good daily opportunities for children to practise skills of climbing, sliding and balancing. Depending on the weather, either the whole playground including the garden area is used, or alternately, if it is raining, or has been very wet, just the covered area alongside the main building. Children play chasing games, weaving their way around obstacles and each other with ease. They are agile in their movements and move backwards and sideways safely and with confidence. Due to the regular, almost daily opportunities to climb, boys and girls have highly developed skills of balance and co-ordination. They balance and scramble on large and small equipment happily and confidently slide down the “fireman’s pole”. They are highly motivated and persevere, repeating attempts for prolonged periods when learning a new skill, as when learning to throw a ball through a hoop or return the service of a ball. Some children have very good co-ordination and can already intercept and control moving footballs or serve and return small balls with plastic bats.

Creative development

57. The teaching of the creative aspects of the curriculum is very good. As a result, boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make very good progress in their skills and understanding. Standards are above those normally attained by the time children transfer to the reception classes of the local schools. This is a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, which judged children’s creative development to be average.
58. Key workers all provide good opportunities for the children to take part in a rich and varied range of creative activities each day. Children enter into the world of imaginative play whole-heartedly. They organise their own games with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. They play with and alongside each other, engaging in the same activity, such as cooking lunch, in the home corner, or building a railway with the train track and blocks. They carefully build imaginary castles, towers and homes with milk crates and large wooden bricks, selecting the blocks carefully and having a clear idea of what they want to achieve. These “buildings” are then played in with great enjoyment. They visit the “travel agent’s” and book holidays, or serve customers. Talking on the toy telephones to explain what they have done.
59. Children are given regular good opportunities to listen to and join in with music. They tap out simple rhythms on steel pans and drums and play thoughtfully with triangles and bells, exploring the different sounds the instruments make. They join in singing simple songs and rhymes, following hand actions and simple movements carefully.
60. They use paint, pastels and a wide range of materials to make patterns and models. They paint with concentration and a good degree of accuracy, applying bands of colour to their paper. They represent other people and objects in their drawings, and on occasion draw plans of their environment. When making “miniature gardens”, they deliberate over which flowers and pebbles will achieve the look they want. They mould dough and clay to make models, exploring its texture, making small models and “cakes and pies”. They arrange the toppings on the pizzas they cook to make them look as attractive as possible.
61. The children are given good opportunities to respond to what they see, hear, touch and smell in a wide variety of ways. After watching butterflies emerge, for instance, they dressed in diaphanous scarves and danced in the garden being “beautiful butterflies” themselves. They enjoy all these activities, and enter into them whole-heartedly, concentrating for sustained periods and sharing their findings and enjoyment with each other.