

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BROOKHILL NURSERY SCHOOL**

East Barnet

LEA area: London Borough of Barnet

Unique reference number: 101251

Headteacher: Sue Wadhams

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Silcock  
21261

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> April – 1<sup>st</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 230671

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 - 5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brookhill Road East Barnet Hertfordshire
Postcode:	EN4 8SD
Telephone number:	(0208) 4490601
Fax number:	(0208) 4417367
Appropriate authority:	London Borough of Barnet
Name of chair of governors:	Paul Curran
Date of previous inspection:	23 <sup>rd</sup> June 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21261	Pauline Silcock	Registered inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Communication, language and literacy Creative development English as an additional language Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are children taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9420	David Martin	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15011	Marion Wallace	Team inspector	Mathematical development Knowledge and understanding of the world Physical development Special educational needs	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Brookhill Nursery School is on a corner joining a residential street to a busy road in East Barnet. It caters for three and four year olds. Children start in September or January after their third birthday and most transfer to a Reception class in the September or January after they are four. Some parents opt for their children to stay until they are five. The Nursery feeds into around 17 schools. Most children are in Nursery for between three and five terms, depending on their date of birth, although some may stay six terms. There were 121 children on roll at the time of the inspection, most attending part-time. Two were full-time and a further 31 shared 16 full-time places, staying for a varying number of sessions throughout the week. The school applies local education authority admissions' criteria when offering full-time places. Children's attainments on entry are varied, representing a full range of abilities. Approximately 15 per cent on roll learn English as an additional language. Of these, six per cent are at an early stage of such language learning. These get support from a specialist assistant funded through ethnic minority achievement grant funding. The main languages other than English are Arabic, French, Somali and Turkish. Approximately 2.5 per cent of children have Refugee status. The school has introduced its own school awareness list of children who are being closely monitored for special educational needs purposes. Approximately 20.7 per cent are on the list. One child has a statement of special educational needs and two children are monitored under 'school action plus'. Children who stay throughout the day bring a packed lunch from home and the proportion eligible for free school meals is not known. Two children (representing 1.7 per cent of the school roll) left school other than at the usual time in the year prior to inspection. Two entered.

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

Brookhill Nursery is a very good school with many excellent features. It offers a high quality education. Teaching is a real strength, being never less than satisfactory and most often very good. Relative to their age and differing abilities, all children achieve well, frequently reaching much better standards than might be expected, especially in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. The headteacher is a strong leader and is well supported by her deputy, with whom she works very closely. They are well supported by all members of staff and governors. The school is very well managed. It remains under the control of the local education authority but governors work hard on its behalf and fully support its values, which stress equality of opportunity. All children are included fully in school life. Within the limits of its financial management, the school gives very good value for money.

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

- Frequently very good teaching helps children develop positive attitudes and a remarkable capacity to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Children come to school eagerly, thoroughly enjoying their time there.
- The curriculum has very good breadth and balance; the quality and range of learning experiences are excellent. Activities are well matched to children's learning needs.
- Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress because of consistently good or better quality support.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Excellent procedures and practices for monitoring and supporting children's personal development are important in ensuring children become independent learners.
- The quality and range of information for parents are excellent.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and sets the tone for the school in her high expectations of what individuals (child and adult) are capable of.

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

- The allocation of responsibility for writing individual education plans for those children on the school's awareness list of special educational needs, who are assessed as requiring such plans.

*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 improvements since the previous inspection in June 1998. It has dealt successfully with all the issues raised for action. Assessment procedures have been improved and, in fact, the school now sees such procedures as central to ensuring planning takes proper account of individual learning needs. These needs include those of more able children. Procedures for monitoring attendance have been made more rigorous. Registers are marked assiduously at the start of sessions and show absence and lateness. The school expects to be informed about the reasons for a child's absence and pursues such matters when absences continue. Very good procedures for performance management are in place, well matched to staff members' professional development needs as well as those related to school improvement. The school has vigorously pursued improvements such as those regarding behaviour management. It continues to accept that improvements in teaching are key to raising standards. Initiatives are in hand to extend work with families and provide play facilities for two-year-olds for part of each week. An excellent commitment and capacity to succeed is found amongst all staff.

## STANDARDS

Children reach very good standards in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world relative to their ages and levels of ability. They reach good standards in mathematical development, and in physical and creative development. These judgements include children with special educational needs (and those with a Statement of special need), who achieve at least in line with their prior attainment and often do better than expected. For example, during a writing activity observed, a child completed a storybook to a good standard because of excellent support from a teacher. Children learning English as an additional language, too, often achieve in line with their peers because of good support from adults. Inspection evidence suggests that most older children (those transferring to a Reception class in September) will reach the Early Learning Goals in each area of the curriculum by the time they reach statutory school age. Some more able children have already reached these goals in some aspects of learning. For example, they show a good grasp of reading. They can talk about events in a storybook shared with an adult and predict what might happen next. Children have very good storytelling skills and enjoy dictating their own stories to an adult on a computer. Older children are familiar with story conventions, such as "Once upon a time...". Children acquire very good handwriting skills, too, and even the youngest can settle to write purposefully. These children's emergent writing makes writing patterns often showing recognisable letters. Children across the age range have very good speaking and listening skills. They ask pertinent questions about mini-beasts they observe and talk knowledgeably about similarities and differences between these. Children are full of curiosity about the natural world and thoroughly enjoy opportunities to investigate creatures such as tadpoles, spiders and stick insects. They know they must handle these gently, and are thrilled to watch a creature crawl from one hand to the other. Older children negotiate play with a friend or in a small group. Pupils of all ages sustain interest in a chosen activity for long periods. They have very good competence in number. More able older children can name and count numbers to 30, pointing to each number on a number line. Younger children count up to three or five objects accurately and know numbers beyond this. Children of all ages use apparatus set out as an obstacle course. They climb up, over, on and through the climbing frame without hesitation and slide down the slide. More able children understand the language of position and can explain what they do. Older children can jump from steps and land with knees bent before straightening up. One boy was seen twisting in the air as he jumped. Children show good imagination during creative activities. For example, a younger boy persisted with assembling materials using sticky tape, saying he had made a ship. "Smoke and fire come out of this" (a straw). An older girl painted with care. She considered where each colour should go on, making shapes to her liking, sometimes mixing colours on the paper. Children love role-play and invent their own stories based on familiar, domestic events or stories they have enjoyed.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children are eager to see what is on offer each day.
Behaviour	Very good. Children usually consider each other's point of view. They are polite and courteous to peers and adults, including visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Children show extremely high levels of responsibility in choosing what to do and helping with routine tasks. They make excellent relationships with one another and with adults.
Attendance	No official statistics for attendance are kept. However, attendance is

	generally good, with absence usually due to common childhood illnesses. Most children arrive promptly for sessions.
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This is an area of considerable strength. Children develop good levels of awareness about the impact of their behaviour on others and respect others' views. No instances of oppressive behaviour such as bullying were observed during the inspection. Evidence finds that available sanctions (such as a brief 'time out' to reflect on inappropriate behaviour) are rarely used. Rather, children are very good at getting along together amicably, playing side-by-side or co-operating in the main. In only a small number of instances were some younger children seen to need support when sharing toys. These instances were dealt with promptly by adults, who took time to ensure children could share and work with their peers.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	
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.*

Teaching is usually very good. It is never less than satisfactory and at times excellent. Teachers' and Nursery Nurses' early years' expertise means all children make good gains in learning because provision is well matched to needs. This includes children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Specialist staff are good and well deployed to support children with such needs. All staff are good role models when interacting with one another and with children. They are consistently courteous, showing great respect when listening to children's views and so sustaining attention and enthusiasm for the task in hand. Such strategies support learning in all areas to good effect. Planning is managed jointly by teachers and Nursery Nurses in each base, taking excellent account of children's learning day by day. Adults devise a stimulating range of activities to engage children, well aimed at ensuring they progress along the stepping stones for learning towards planned goals. Especially notable is the way children are helped with communication, language and literacy skills through imaginative links across subjects. Children's mathematical development is carefully structured so important concepts are learned, especially those relating to number. Children's social, personal and emotional development is similarly well catered for in the many opportunities aimed at promoting co-operative play and turn-taking. Children love helping with tasks. They show exemplary skills in tidying up at the end of sessions, working together to make sure things go back where they belong.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent. Stimulating activities indoors and outside across all areas of learning involve children's interest and imagination successfully.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Very good. Care is taken to make sure children engage in a full range of activities on offer alongside their peers, using good quality support.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Very good. Bilingual children, too, take full advantage of the learning opportunities offered. They are helped by a stress on practical activities, and by visual cues, as well as by adults' good support.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Children are thrilled when handling small creatures. They understand adults' high expectations with regard to 'right' and 'wrong' behaviour and work hard to live up to these. They come to understand and value diversity in languages, faiths and cultural traditions.
How well the school cares for its children	Very well. Children's care and welfare are at the centre of the school's concerns.

The school's partnership with parents and carers is very good. Interesting initiatives are aimed at extending links between home and school. Curricular provision is a strength. Children learn to exercise choice so as to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas. Excellent use is made of outdoor spaces as integral to provision. There is a very good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Visits to places of interest and visitors to school extend provision in line with planned goals. Assessment

procedures are rigorous, structured so that adults make well-informed planning decisions based on close observation of children's responses to activities. Planning exemplifies the school's emphasis on equality of opportunity for all.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and her deputy work in close partnership towards common goals, well supported by all staff members. The headteacher has excellent leadership qualities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. In fact, governors do not have overall control of the school. They are keen to fulfil the responsibilities they do have and work hard at this.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. All aspects of the school's work are systematically monitored and reviewed to inform school improvement planning.
The strategic use of resources	Very good within the limitations set by the school not having full control of budgetary matters.

There are sufficient teaching and support staff to meet curricular demands. Adequate accommodation is extremely well used, although it is well beyond its planned life span. Sufficient learning resources are of very good quality. The headteacher sets the tone for the school with her high expectations of children and adults. Her vision for the future of the school is shared with all staff and governors who therefore feel part of decision-making processes. Within the limits of its financial control, the school consistently seeks best value for money in the services it needs.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children love coming to school. They become confident, independent, learners.</li> <li>• They make good progress because there are many interesting activities which they enjoy.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and adults know children very well. They care about children.</li> <li>• Teachers, Nursery Nurses and the headteacher are easy to see if there are concerns.</li> <li>• Adults make sure parents and carers know about their child's achievements.</li> <li>• Information about the school is very good.</li> <li>• The school works well with parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction procedures.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views, finding no evidence to support the criticism that parents are poorly informed about induction procedures or that these are not always tailored well to children's and their parents' or carers' needs. Rather, information about the school is judged excellent in quality and range. The importance of meeting each child's needs is paramount, and this is the reason why some parents may spend more days than they think necessary making sure a child is settled at the start of schooling. During the inspection, very good evidence was seen of the careful way judgements of such matters are made.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children's attainment on entry to school is varied. Well-established systems of observing individuals and assessing their skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to the 'stepping stones' for each area of learning are rigorous. Records show children make good progress in each area over time. These areas are: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. Inspection evidence supports the positive picture presented by school records. It reveals older four-year-olds (who will be transferring to a Reception class in September) well on their way to reaching the Early Learning Goals in all areas by the end of their Reception year. More able children are likely to reach some goals before then. For example, they can already read familiar stories confidently and answer questions and make predictions about what will happen next. Indeed, children across the age-range achieve well, especially in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need, make good progress and achieve at least in line with their prior attainment. At times, they do better. This was seen during a book-making activity when a girl showed how well she grasped the purposes of work being done, using well-developed handwriting skills for copying words dictated to a teacher. Children learning English as an additional language also make good progress. They take a full part in all activities and achieve on a par with their peers. All children with specific learning needs are greatly helped by a wealth of stimulating activities and consistently good quality support from the adults working with them.
2. Children reach very good standards in personal, social and emotional development. At times, the youngest may find it hard to share toys while playing with others but even they are aware of adults' high expectations. For example, a young bilingual boy very much wanted a certain train when he decided to join a group. "I want that one" he repeated pointing to a train, "it's long". Yet he got another when an adult explained the one he wanted was already taken. Children make considered choices about what they will do from the moment they step in to the Nursery at the start of sessions. They know where things are kept and help themselves to toys (for example, two girls wanting to do a jigsaw together didn't hesitate to choose from a selection on a nearby shelf). Older children and more mature younger ones co-operate in developing their play, sometimes making large-scale constructions with big blocks of wood. They choose shapes they will use and tell one another what is happening, negotiating what to do. Others most frequently play side-by-side amicably. Children with special educational needs are helped to focus on chosen activities while working productively alongside peers. Gradually, their periods of concentration are extended. For example, during a skittle game, a child was helped by a teacher to finish the game then keep the score sheet. All children put on their own coats for outdoor play and hang them back up when they come inside. They have a well-developed sense of personal hygiene. They know they must wash their hands after using the toilet and that sticky tables will need wiping to make them clean. They manage such tasks independently. Children across the age-range are extremely good at tidying up. They do this efficiently with high levels of co-operation, putting all model food and cookery equipment away in cupboards in the home area, explaining to one another exactly where things go and helping each other when necessary.
3. Children also reach very good standards in communication, language and literacy. They have many opportunities to speak and listen to adults in ways guaranteed to catch and hold their interest. Through these activities, they learn to take turns in putting forward ideas, taking account of what others (adults and children) say. For example, children extend their knowledge of different kinds of fruit as they compare the seeds found in pears, plums and strawberries when making a fruit salad, learning that plum seeds are called "stones". Such activities are linked to story work, where children consolidate their knowledge of books they have enjoyed by recalling a sequence of events in a favourite story. Older children and more able younger ones have a very good grasp of how books 'work'. They find the right page to check how many plums the 'very hungry caterpillar' ate so the correct number is picked for a fruit salad. Children across the age-range know that writing serves a purpose. They write their names on lists to show they want to take part in an activity when there is a space (as when riding tricycles and scooters outside). Very young children play in the 'baby clinic' and write arrangements in the appointments book as they talk on the telephone. Their writing makes recognisable patterns, although

letters may not be distinguishable. Older three-year-olds sit at the book-making table and write “my letters”, covering a sheet of paper with care and attention to the shape and size of the marks they make. They are beginning to show a good understanding of how to form the most familiar alphabet letters, such as occur in their own names. Almost all can identify their name correctly at the start of sessions and hand their name card to the adult taking the register. Four-year-olds and some able younger children dictate stories to an adult for recording on the word-processor. They have an extremely good grasp of story conventions. Older children begin with “Once upon a time” and more able children like using interesting words to describe the events they conjure up.

4. Children reach above average standards in mathematical development. They gain very good number skills, which they practise in many contexts. For example, they count how many are present in a group to see if there is a free space when the number allowed to take part is limited. Older, more able, children count how many are present in a class and recognise numbers on a number line. For example, a boy counted 26 children present on the class ‘milk line’, pointing to each number as he counted and going back to check when he stumbled. When playing with trains, younger children can pick out numbers below five: in response to an adult’s suggestion, they find an engine or a carriage with a given number. One boy put numbers one, two and three in a correct sequence. Older children do the same with numbers to 10. A girl selected five ‘people’ to stand on the station platform, counting one-to-one. Children play skittles and keep score by matching a number (1 to 6) on a score sheet with the number they have knocked down. With adult support, a younger boy counts 17 balls of clay stuck together to make his ‘hungry caterpillar’ knowing it is “very long”. When playing with blocks or constructing with materials, children compare lengths, using terms such as “it’s too long” or “it’s short” as they hold one wooden block against another. They also compare “big” and “little” pieces of fruit and the size of seeds found inside as they make their fruit salad. Children comment that a large melon is “very heavy” when they pass it round the group and pretend to nearly drop it because it is hard to hold. They explain they are going “under” or “over” or “through” apparatus outside and say “It’s going under the bridge” as they push trains along a track. Few instances were observed or seen in records of children learning about the properties of shape, although they regularly use a wide range of variously shaped materials. For instance, they play with large, differently shaped blocks when making three-dimensional constructions.
5. Children reach very good standards in knowledge and understanding of the world. This is seen in many activities they choose but especially in the ways they enter into imaginative games with one another for role-play, linked to everyday home experiences. It is also revealed in adult-led activities when children talk about what they do and closely watch an adult to emulate appropriate behaviour. For example, girls were observed bathing dolls. They promptly responded to a teacher’s reminder not to get soap in the dolls’ eyes. They talked about their own experiences of watching younger siblings and were interested in looking at a picture book about caring for babies. One girl asked “Is that in the olden days?” as she studied a picture of a baby in a nappy fastened with a safety pin. She had just put a padded paper nappy on her doll, fastened with self-sticking tape. Children watch snails moving around and talk about the difference between baby snails and the much bigger ones in the tray. An older girl informs an adult that baby snails “come out of eggs. Mummy snails lay them”. She finds a picture in a book to support these statements. Younger children are curious about where wood lice can be found and watch with interest as an adult turns over a log and they see several on the underside. Children know what various magnifying tools are for and like to look at creatures closely, holding a glass over a spider, or gently picking a snail up to put inside a magnifier. They know why it is important to take care in handling mini-beasts. Children like using a computer. Older children click on a mouse to choose a colour when drawing on the screen. They know how to make the colour cover parts of the screen and are learning to control the mouse as they experiment. They call up the menu and give instructions to print a copy of their work when they have finished. On the woodwork bench, children know they must use two hands to saw pieces of wood. Older children clamp wood securely in a vice while they saw, although they find this hard. They can join pieces of wood together with nails.
6. Children reach good standards in physical development. Opportunities for them to acquire dance skills are limited because there is no suitably large indoor space, although good use is made of the outdoor area. Nevertheless, older children have very good body control and hand-eye co-ordination for climbing, balancing and jumping from apparatus set out on grass. They stand still before jumping from a height and land expertly on a mat, bending their knees before straightening up. They also manoeuvre wheeled toys along paths and around wider spaces so as not to collide with others. Younger children, too, delight in such activities and any having difficulty (maybe lacking confidence or with physical difficulties) are supported by adults in ways ensuring success at levels appropriate to them. For example, children nervous at travelling across a horizontal ladder put their feet on the ground, while older children use their

hands and feet to balance above ground. Children also develop very good fine motor skills through handling many tools for different purposes, linked to areas of learning, as when they aim a ball to hit skittles for a mathematics game or build complex constructions with wooden blocks in their imaginative play. They choose tools to write and paint with, cut sticky tape to the required length using the cutting edge of a spool and use scissors adeptly. Younger children were seen making good progress at handling scissors as they cut out spiral shapes linked to their investigation of snails. These children hammer nails into pieces of wood, controlling the hammer by holding it close to the head. Older children hit nails skilfully with more flexibility of movement. Children roll dough flat and press and cut out shapes. They roll balls of clay in their hands and mould and pinch it or stick pieces together to make replicas of objects, as when they make pieces of fruit and other foods eaten by the 'hungry caterpillar'.

7. Children reach good standards in creative development. Opportunities for role-play activities are many and varied. They suit roles to their own purposes, well matched to resources set out for them to explore. They engage in realistic telephone conversations in the baby clinic office, change dolls' nappies and dress and feed them from babies' bottles. Older children differentiate between playing 'in role' and stepping 'out of role' to decide how their play will develop. This was observed when three girls talked about whether they should leave the office to make a visit somewhere and then pursued this idea with notebooks and filo-faxes clutched under their arms, agreeing to let a younger girl accompany them. Children paint pictures to their own ideas, choosing where to place colours and how to fill the picture space. A girl was absorbed over quite a long period deciding how to make a painting to her satisfaction. She took her time applying each colour and experimenting with mixing colours on the paper in some spaces. A younger boy was seen similarly engrossed in making an object to his own design, using boxes and fabric, and sticking parts together until he judged it was finished. "It's a ship, it can go in space," he said proudly. As noted above, older children develop very good story-telling abilities through dictating ideas to an adult. Younger children make up simple stories about events that have happened to them or about a favourite toy. Children commonly invent stories for their indoor and outdoor play. For example, they give rides to passengers on the large tricycles and talk about their journeys. They enjoy listening and dancing to taped music in a music corner. They play untuned instruments such as shakers as they jig around, listening to the different sounds made by the different instruments. Children build up a repertoire of familiar songs and rhymes over time and older children know these by heart. When reminded by an adult, children can sing quite tunefully rather than shout out words.
8. Although boys only were sometimes seen playing on tricycles and scooters and girls only engaged in doll activities supervised by an adult, both genders were seen participating in the full range of activities on offer indoors and outside, during the inspection. Records, too, show that a gender distinction does not normally characterise children's activities. No significant difference in attainment was observed between genders or between different groups of children (for example, those learning English as an additional language and their monolingual peers). As already noted, bilingual children make good progress - an improvement since the previous inspection. It is, however, difficult to make direct comparisons with findings of the previous inspection because the curriculum for this age has altered since then, and children's achievements are judged differently. Still, improvements seem to have been made overall since children now reach very good standards in some areas of learning relative to their age and differing abilities and good standards in others. Also, learning goals for *all* children are matched to their needs, so the more able make good progress towards the next 'stepping stone' in line with assessments made of their learning potential.

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

9. Children have very good attitudes to school and to learning. They are enthusiastic about the work they do and willingly engage with activities. They are courteous to each other and to adults, including inspectors, using inspectors' names and occasionally shaking hands before leaving at the end of sessions. They respect others' feelings and quickly seek adult help when someone is upset or seems unwell.
10. Children with English as an additional language take full advantage of what the Nursery has to offer, choosing activities and playing happily with or alongside their monolingual peers with ease. They interact confidently with adults and can make their needs known very clearly when necessary. Children with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need, are happy and secure within their class groups and the school environment. They relate very well to their class teacher, Nursery Nurse and teaching assistant. Those identified as 'school action plus' under the new Code of Practice criteria mix well with other children. Such very good relationships help children join in

confidently with all school activities and explore new, challenging areas. They work well in classrooms, concentrating eagerly on tasks. Their independence is encouraged and they respond to this encouragement very well. Support staff and teachers skilfully use strategies signalling what is expected, while supporting in ways likely to ensure children achieve expectations. As with their peers, children with special educational needs recognise guidelines and expectations for behaviour and attitudes to work. They respond well to the firm, consistent messages given throughout the school.

11. Children make excellent use of opportunities to show initiative and assume responsibilities, conscientiously taken and carried through. To illustrate: they organise equipment and toys they need when choosing what to do, selecting, for example, big blocks from shelves when these suit their purposes. They know they must put wet paintings on a drying rack and take care to do this. They routinely tidy up after each session. Those who stay throughout the day help clear up after lunchtime activities. These children have very good social skills. During their meal, they reply to adults' questions about what is in their lunch box and initiate conversations about foods they like. They listen politely to peers and know conventions associated with eating in a group round a table. They wash their hands before opening their boxes.
12. Children work independently very capably, with concentration and minimal supervision, as during sand and water activities. They play sensibly, taking care not to get dry sand in someone's eyes or shower water on them. They are also keenly aware of when an adult's help is needed. For example, a boy listened to an adult explain to a peer with special educational needs that he must *not* drink the water in the water tray. When her back was turned, this child promptly filled a cube and began to drink. The watcher immediately tapped the adult's arm. "He's drinking it!" the watching child said and made sure this was dealt with before going away. Because of their excellent relationships with each other, children are able to co-operate in activities such as dance or at tidy-up time.
13. Children's excellent behaviour is an area of strength throughout the school. There appears no need for anyone to implement sanctions. Children show no signs of oppressive behaviour such as bullying. Parents endorse the view that behaviour is very good and children have good attitudes.
14. Recording attendance is not a statutory requirement and no official statistics of absence rates are available. However, registers are assiduously taken at the start of sessions and a record of absence or lateness is kept. Children usually arrive promptly, eager to begin the day's activities.
15. Although the previous report painted a positive picture on the whole about this aspect of school life, these latest findings represent an overall improvement in children's attitudes, values and personal development because they are inclusive of *all* children.

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

16. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection when it was judged satisfactory in the main. It is now a real strength of the school with none found less than satisfactory and much that is very good or excellent. In fact, 29 per cent of all teaching was judged good, 57 per cent very good and a further 11 per cent excellent. Just four per cent was satisfactory. Judgements are based on observing teachers and Nursery Nurses working with children in various settings (such as whole class, group or one-to-one activities). Adults' excellent knowledge and understanding of how three and four-year-olds learn underpins planning so that children's needs are systematically assessed in all areas against the appropriate stepping stones. Also, classroom assistants' interactions with children targeted for specific support (such as those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language) are of good or better quality, further helping children to reach planned goals.
17. A strength is the team work within and across the three classrooms (or bases) whereby knowledge of children is shared. All adults contribute to planning for all children in each area of learning, although class teachers take overall responsibility for matching agreed goals to children's learning intentions. While this approach can appear complex, it is well understood in practice by everyone involved and works to very good effect. It upholds what is seen as a fundamental educational principle by the professionals concerned – that children should learn to make informed choices and take control of their own learning. On a daily basis, teachers and Nursery Nurses work closely in separate teams to review work done and plan future work within their base, linked to a current theme. Such planning pays close attention to children's responses to learning opportunities, helping to pinpoint the 'next step' in an area so that adjustments to provision can be made where appropriate. While teams take responsibility for the

children who 'belong' to their base, the fact that children may choose to work in other bases for long periods means all adults must observe children so as to plan suitably for them. In addition to passing on observation notes to the relevant base, staff from the three bases meet regularly to pool information and check whether longer term planning should change. Planning takes excellent account of outdoor provision as integral to Nursery practice, maximising its use across all areas within constraints imposed by inclement weather. Even when bad weather prevents the use of a hard surfaced area and the garden, a small covered area allows a limited number of activities to be offered outdoors. Teachers' planning for some aspects of physical development is, as already stated, hampered by the lack of a suitable indoor space.

18. The teaching of basic skills is very good. It is especially strong when linked to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. As noted above, children make especially good gains in these areas. Previous learning is built on systematically showing adults' evident skill in making links across areas of learning meaningful. For example, when children make fruit for the 'very hungry caterpillar', developing their physical skills and understanding of the properties of clay, a Nursery Nurse draws their attention to a chart on the wall showing paintings of the pieces of fruit against the appropriate number. In talking about how the chart was made and who was involved, she helps this group recall the activity, while shaping the clay and counting the correct number for each fruit. Cross-curricular links successfully promote the crucial skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, building on concepts being taught. Adults are accomplished at keeping such concepts in view, even while reacting with real interest to the apparently random talk of young children at play. This was seen in the doll-bathing activity described. A girl wanting help dressing a doll noted how a teacher held an arm to put in a sleeve. "Babies don't like their arms going back" she said, linking this to talking about her baby brother. When soapy water is 'flicked' in her direction while the doll is bathed, she adds "Ooh! What's that? I thought it was rain!" This was followed by a remark on how some children stayed out in the rain earlier, leading to a consideration of the shelter above her head and how it was made. The teacher patiently answered questions and continued to dress the doll, eventually able to lead the girl back to the task and work in hand. Many instances of such exchanges were observed, whereby adults respected children's initiative in leading conversations and their need to talk about things of immediate, if fleeting, interest while holding to the main purpose of an activity.
19. Adults provide excellent role models in their evident pleasure at leading an activity. For example, a Nursery Nurse rolled, squeezed and pummelled clay with obvious enjoyment, modelling small pieces of fruit as she talked. Children watched closely and rolled and shaped in exact imitation, with good levels of success. Similarly, teachers were seen sharing their interest and wonder when studying mini-beasts, talking about how carefully they should be handled and helping children pick them up gently. "Look, look, a tiny spider!" a younger boy pointed out. A girl carefully picked up a snail and turned it over to study its underside to see why it wouldn't 'stick' to a piece of wood like others she had put there. Adults' practical manner helps children overcome reservations they may have about taking part in an activity. A boy claimed he didn't "like yukky things" when invited to join the clay group but got drawn in when the Nursery Nurse commented "it washes off" and suggested he look at what they had done. Studying the storybook his interest was finally grabbed. "I could make a sausage!" he decided, and donned an apron. The calm atmosphere in the Nursery was much appreciated by parents in the meeting prior to the inspection. Adults have excellent child-management skills. They are watchful of what is happening, even when not ostensibly involved, and quickly diffuse potentially difficult situations. For example, when a teacher realised the growing number of children playing trains at a table was creating problems, she sat on a spare chair and watched more closely. She had an immediate calming effect on events. Two boys agreed they could play better with their cars on the road map, and the teacher helped them set this out in a carpeted area.
20. Teachers plan very effectively for all learners, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Where possible and deemed helpful, staff members' bilingual skills are utilised with these children. However, a rich variety of learning opportunities indoors and outside together with strong visual cues and the way practical activities are stressed means bilingual learners can take full advantage of what is on offer. Consequently, they play and work alongside peers productively even when not supported by an adult. For example, when two girls worked in an area set out for writing stories, the older girl concentrated hard, producing neat lines of 'script' similar to writing patterns, eventually filling a page with her story. The younger girl explained her more 'scribbly' text (also achieved purposefully) was about "Meg Mog", one of her favourite stories. It was clear this girl had limited English but a very good grasp of what she was doing. She chatted to her friend companionably, inserting some English words with the correct cadence for English sentences,

suggesting she was asking questions or making comments. Both children were happy with their work. Later, it transpired the older girl, too, was bilingual and not yet fluent in English, so the smiles, gestures and nods between the two conveyed their friendship and enjoyment in a shared task, although they did not share a common language. Such body and facial language is well modelled by adults who show their interest by making eye-contact with children. Similarly, children with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need, are well catered for. They have very good relationships with the adults who support them. At the start of one session a boy was rather upset but was soon involved by a classroom assistant in handling a large soft-toy caterpillar, before looking at the 'hungry caterpillar' storybook. He became immersed in this, counting the number of fruit on his fingers and showing a good understanding of the story when questioned, quite forgetting his earlier worries.

21. An emphasis on literacy skills extends to making sure children take books home in a 'book bag' to share with parents and carers. Books are changed regularly and careful attention is paid to helping children choose, so reading is promoted as an enjoyable activity. The headteacher makes herself available for 'library time' for some sessions. She asks children about books they have brought back and listens as they re-tell a story or talk about the pictures, asking questions and sharing amusing bits. In this way, children are helped to think about what they liked in the book and what they will choose next. Parents at the meeting prior to inspection said they find homework tasks pitched appropriately for their children, especially reading. Occasionally, they explained, children are given words to a song they are learning so they can rehearse it and know it by heart.

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

22. The school provides an excellent range of high quality learning opportunities. Curricular planning is inclusive, so all children's needs are catered for to very good effect. The school strongly emphasises making sure all areas of learning are planned in line with the latest guidance, in a consistent manner. A good curricular balance is achieved. This positive picture represents an improvement on provision and planning since the previous inspection.
23. Curricular provision for children with special educational needs is very good. The school fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. A list identifying pupils at each stage is reviewed regularly. The school has not yet fully implemented the New Code of Practice but has a clear action plan for this with an appropriate time-line. Children have equal access to all curricular areas organised in class bases and outside, alongside their peers. Provision is augmented by the effective deployment of adults who make sure pupils with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need, fulfil their maximum potential.
24. Teachers and Nursery Nurses plan the curriculum together, long-term, deciding on a focus for work and resources to match. This joint decision-making is a strength. Planning aims well at providing an excellent range of activities indoors and outside, which children freely choose from. Activities are well designed to stimulate a natural curiosity and joy in learning. Such stimulation is thought integral to developing skills, knowledge and understanding within each curriculum area. As well as initiating their own learning, children also take responsibility for the time they spend at an activity and take part in adult-directed tasks. Giving responsibility to children in this way strongly motivates them, fostering very good levels of concentration. Each of the three teaching bases has a special focus, but organisation skilfully enables children to pursue this focus through many activities linking across areas. For example, the focus in one base is on creativity. Children may opt to make objects to their own design with a range of materials; they can experiment with print-making techniques, engage with toy trains or sit to write stories, amongst other things. While all these activities are planned with a view to fulfilling the demands of the stepping stones towards the Early Learning Goals, in creative development, they also support learning in other areas. The outside area is extremely well organised to complement indoor activities and further enhance provision across the curriculum. It is also an interesting environment in its own right, giving opportunities to observe living things at first hand, including watching how trees and plants change through the seasons. However, planning always includes focus activities, designed so that adults work closely with children for specific purposes. For example, clay and fruit salad making, led by adults in one room, linked to extending children's knowledge and understanding of the world through their senses and through close observation of similarities and differences between the fruits. Children were encouraged to look closely at pictures of the fruits in the storybook they used for their clay work and at the real fruits they cut up for their salad.

25. Provision for developing literacy skills is excellent. Children have excellent opportunities to choose books and talk about their content and characters. The 'extension library group' appropriately challenges the more able. Many activities are designed so children write with a purpose, as when they record information about the snails and stick insects they study. Adults use questions extremely well to encourage children to describe and talk about what they have seen. Vocabulary is introduced skilfully to extend knowledge and awareness. The provision for developing numeracy skills is good. Adults seize every chance to encourage children to count and record their scores in simple number games. There are also many opportunities for children to learn about capacity and time. Shape work is less prominent. Children often handle cubes, cylinders and other three-dimensional as well as two-dimensional objects but adults do not always name these in activities and games in the way they draw attention to properties of number in games, for example.
26. Occasional visits to places of interest are well planned to enrich the curriculum. A whole school autumn walk goes to the local wood and visits are made to local shops, library and post office. These visits extend children's learning experiences, adding considerably to the quality and quantity of opportunities for educational and personal development. The school stresses personal, social and health aspects of curricular provision. All the children are confident learners because staff foster such confidence, while maintaining very high expectations of behaviour and respect for each other. Usually, a very good balance is kept between children initiating their own learning and adults intervening to extend spontaneous responses to other interesting activities.
27. There are very good links with local feeder schools and other nursery schools in the area. Students in training benefit from their visits to the school. The school caters for a wide range of student teachers and Nursery Nurses, including an annual visit from Dutch students.
28. Provision for children's personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection.
29. Provision for children's spiritual development is very good. Children have a strong sense of personal worth through the support they get in how to make choices and take responsibility for their own learning. They soon know how to work with and alongside others, sharing their talents. Meeting physical and emotional challenges deepens their spiritual resources. For example, the obstacle course in the garden challenges their ability to develop and extend their physical competence, giving them confidence in ways they are observed to find deeply satisfying. They have many opportunities to experience awe and wonder at the world around them, showing excitement and delight when handling and observing snails and stick insects. They come to respect each other and living things because adults are very good role models. Whether it is in drawing a snail, washing baby-clothes or cutting fruit for a fruit salad, children show concern for the needs of others. Their work is appreciated and valued and displayed prominently. Current examples are the weaving and artwork around the school. They develop self-esteem through well-planned activities, as when they share books and games in small groups with an adult who listens respectfully to their ideas.
30. The provision for children's moral development is very good. Practice not only ensures their environment is orderly, where children are not hindered by others' inappropriate behaviour, but is also geared to helping them tell right from wrong and learn why some actions are acceptable and others are not. The excellent positive environment where adults set high standards themselves and expectations clearly contributes to pupils' very good moral development. Guidelines about 'right' and 'wrong' are shared with children and they make notices and posters themselves to explain Nursery rules. For example, handprints and the accompanying writing remind children to wash their hands after visiting the toilet. Any child not taking turns during an activity gets skilful guidance and firm messages about the expected way to behave and reasons for this.
31. Provision for social development is very good. As noted, children are helped to develop independence, choosing what to do and to work alongside others amicably. There are very good opportunities for children to co-operate with each other, as when they push each other around in carts outside or work together on a seesaw. Children develop a very good sense of responsibility because procedures are so well established. They all help with tidying up at the end of sessions. Levels of co-operation are high for such young children at these times. For example, two children co-operated very well washing and drying all the paint pots in a sink at the end of a morning session and then washed the table. Children are keen to do jobs, and enjoyment of these is evident. They know that after tidying up they sit quietly with a book on the carpet. Children have learnt to take turns and be aware of each other. This was

evident in the parachute game where all children were sensible and well behaved. They could take turns and were very aware of each other in the 'bear with the honey' game. The 'Buddy' system whereby older children are encouraged to be aware of others and look after a younger peer is effective at promoting social development.

32. Provision for cultural development is very good. The school prepares children well for life in a culturally diverse society, not least in the way it celebrates the diversity within its own walls. For example, a large world map in the entrance shows where children's families originate and the languages they are familiar with. The richness of the school community is well illustrated here, with photographs and information about individuals, touching all continents. Children become aware of a range of cultures, including their own. They dance to music from Africa and India, and learn about May Day customs, dancing, again, to appropriate music. The school is well supplied with dual language books and tapes. Parents with bilingual skills help write signs in their first language/s and these are clearly visible around the school. Christmas, Chinese New Year, Divali and Eid are celebrated and parents help with cooking foods from different traditions at such times. There are visits from the local dentist and police officer as well as visits to places of interest, as outlined above.

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

33. The care and welfare of all children in all aspects of the school's work are very good, which represents an improvement since the last inspection.
34. The school's comprehensive policy for child protection is very good, although it is not referred to in other documents such as the staff handbook. The policy's requirements are clarified for all staff by regular briefings, so that procedures and practice are up to date. Practices and procedures for ensuring the health and safety of the children, and other aspects of their welfare such as their medical needs, are also very good. Regular risk assessments, checks of structures and testing of equipment and systems, including fire drills, are organised. The school sees it must carry out a scheduled review of the health and safety policy. Sensibly, this review is set to follow the headteacher's forthcoming training.
35. Excellent procedures are used to monitor and promote good behaviour and eliminate oppressive behaviour and are diligently applied by all staff. The behaviour policy was recently revised following staff training and copies issued to all families. A wide range of appropriate rewards and sanctions is available. For example, a child may be asked to 'sit out' quietly for a brief period and helped to reflect on why her or his behaviour is not appropriate. Such strategies rarely need to be called on, however.
36. The care and welfare of children with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need, are of high quality. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop provision for these pupils. For example, record keeping has improved. The school now keeps detailed records of all children with special educational needs. From an early stage, assessments effectively identify levels of achievement, progress and targets (or 'next steps') for further development. Records give a good picture of progress over time in all areas as well as giving other pertinent information. All information is shared across staff, making everyone aware of difficulties individual children might encounter. Correspondingly, such children receive support and guidance relevant to their needs. All get very good pastoral care, an important matter with special needs. Both within the class bases and outside, staff arrange a secure environment where children's self-esteem and general confidence can grow. A class review of children with special educational needs is held each term by all relevant staff members. Individual education plans are revised in draft form by class teachers and Nursery Nurses through discussion with the co-ordinator for special needs. She then takes responsibility for writing these in their final form. Regular meetings, when reports are updated, are also held with specialist staff (such as speech therapists and educational psychologists). Careful records of all meetings are kept. Parental permission for a review to occur is always sought prior to meetings with specialists, and parents themselves are suitably involved in the review process.
37. Records on individual children are begun during home visits by staff before children start school. Information parents and carers feel is relevant to their child is recorded on an "About Me" sheet, together with details needed for school purposes. Carefully structured assessment procedures involving all children are well understood by all staff. These procedures begin at the start of schooling. A small group of children in each class base is picked out for study each week across all areas. All staff share the task of formally recording how these children respond to chosen activities. More informal 'jottings' are used to register significant events (perhaps a leap forward in learning). Such jottings are also kept

on children who are not in the week's 'focus' group but who achieve something that merits being put on record. Staff members also take special note of children 'targeted' relative to specific stepping stones for learning. Prior observation will have led to judgements about these children's capacity to move forward, resulting in adults encouraging further developments when opportunities for doing so arise. Systematic observations and informal notes are brought to discussions in each base at the end of morning and afternoon sessions. These reveal adults' thorough knowledge of individuals and secure grasp of how best to take learning forward. They form the basis of class teachers' evaluations of learning against planned goals. While the quality of teachers' written evaluations of outcomes varies, practice in the use of these to inform planning is consistently very good. Information gathered from closely observing children also informs whole-staff meetings for longer-term planning. It helps build up each child's record, with formal notes and significant 'jottings' put on file. Records give a very good account of children from the start of Nursery schooling. They are well illustrated by examples of work showing what children can achieve in each area and include photographs where appropriate (perhaps showing a child climbing and jumping from apparatus for physical development, for example). They are used to very good effect by teachers to compile a full profile on each child before transfer to a Reception class. Children are very well understood as individuals.

38. Procedures and practices for monitoring and supporting children's personal development are both varied and of excellent quality. Abundant evidence shows that the school's success centres on the way it consistently identifies and satisfies each individual child's needs. A nice example of this was seen when the school arranged for a child to visit the local postal sorting office to see where letters come from before being delivered through a letterbox. This had the very practical benefit of stopping the child tearing up the family post each morning! Headteachers of two schools who take most children into their respective Reception classes state children transfer with very good levels of understanding about classroom activities. They are keen to learn and have high levels of independence. Arrangements for visits between the Nursery and Reception classes and the really good information in children's profiles means receiving teachers have a good picture of new pupils before the Autumn term starts.
39. The school effectively monitors attendance and punctuality and takes subsequent action where appropriate. Parents are fully aware of the school's expectations. Reasons for absence are discovered and followed up if necessary. This procedure marks a real improvement on the situation at the last inspection, when the matter was a key issue.

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

40. Parents, in pre-inspection questionnaires and at the parents' meeting, were overwhelmingly positive about the school and what it achieves. They feel the school makes a partnership with them, greatly assisting children's learning and personal development.
41. A few parents, however, were concerned, at the meeting prior to inspection and in written comments, about the school's induction procedures, believing either that they were poorly informed about these or the procedures were not suitably tailored to individual children's and their parents' needs. Inspectors found no evidence to support these criticisms. Rather, they found the school consistently makes sure parents are informed about all aspects of its work, as explained below. The importance placed on meeting the needs of each child is paramount and is the reason why some parents may be asked to spend more days than they think necessary making sure a child is settled at the start of schooling. During the inspection, very good evidence was seen of the careful way judgements of such matters are made.
42. The school has very good and effective links with parents. Information is provided through excellent and diverse publications and events, including newsletters, advice booklets on reading and settling in, curriculum evenings and discussion groups. The school is part of a national initiative in testing out this latter approach to sharing information. Learning intentions are also displayed for parents in the form of teachers' medium-term curricular planning. Translations of a number of documents and the services of interpreters at meetings help parents who need them. The school has produced very attractive information books about its work in three of the most common languages present in the parent community. A fourth book is well on the way and a fifth is at an early stage of production. They are high quality, giving a good insight into what children do and why, and how play is crucially important to successful learning.
43. All parents with children on the Code of Practice list of special needs are kept fully informed about all

aspects of their children's education. They have an appropriate role in review procedures and work closely with staff. They are invited to attend meetings to discuss the achievement and progress of their children regularly. Home visits are often made.

44. Parents have formal opportunities at parents' evenings, usually held once a term and at times to suit the parents, and review meetings held during children's 'settling in' periods, to meet staff and discuss their child's progress and areas for further development. Questionnaires are completed by parents prior to these meetings, and records of discussions are signed by those attending, all of which provides excellent opportunities for parents to feel fully involved in their children's education and gain insights into their progress. At the meeting prior to the inspection, parents were extremely appreciative of home visits made by staff before their children start school. Some who had previously had a child in the Nursery also said they found the reports on children's achievements at the end of Nursery schooling very informative about progress over time. These reports gave a recognisable account of their children, with helpful information about 'next steps' in learning. Parents and carers were appreciative of the way they gain much valuable information about their child's progress at the end of daily sessions, when teachers and Nursery Nurses commonly share what has been done and describe particular achievements.
45. A recent initiative aims at extending work with families to improve provision and widen support given to children. A 'drop in' service for parents and carers is being established together with a focus on families with two-year-olds. The latter provides separate play provision from the rest of the Nursery and is open to toddlers with an accompanying adult twice a week, as a precursor to Nursery schooling when they are three. Some parents at the meeting prior to inspection felt this was an improvement since the previous inspection and should add positively to the school's work. As yet, the initiative is in the very early stages of development.
46. Although not a statutory requirement, as governors lack overall control of the school, an informative and 'user friendly' governors' annual report to parents is provided. Parents are also given extensive information on governors' activities through items in newsletters and minutes of meetings displayed on a notice board. Photographs of all members of the Governing Body are displayed alongside those of staff members in the school's entrance.
47. Parents are encouraged to read regularly with their children at home, and help them learn words to songs. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents expressed their approval of such involvement and the efforts made by the school to make sure children change their library books. Parents can also volunteer to assist in classrooms and with other activities. A number regularly help with library activities and those who come into school at the start of the day help their children to settle happily to their tasks. Parents also come into school to demonstrate crafts from different cultural traditions and to participate in celebrations such as Eid and Hannukah. All parents accompany their children on the Autumn Walk. Taken together, these activities illustrate that parents are able to make a good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.
48. The school has continued to build on the good partnership with parents noted in the previous report and good improvements in this aspect of its work are evident, such as in the way it is reaching out to work more closely with families.

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

49. The leadership of the school is very good. The headteacher works in close partnership with her deputy in pursuit of common goals. They are well supported by teachers, Nursery Nurses and support staff. Goals are founded on principles of equality of opportunity, in that valuing the diversity within the school and wider community underpins all aspects of school life. Aims and values are built on statements in documents on the rights of the child. What is believed to matter is that children feel valued and secure, becoming confident in their capacity to succeed as learners, whatever their ability. The headteacher's excellent leadership skills are key to this. Her very high expectations of what individuals (child and adult) are capable of and can achieve underwrite principles informing practice. Governors, too, are committed to the school and its values, working hard on its behalf within the limitations of their responsibilities. The Chair of governors gives sterling support to the headteacher and her staff. Issues raised at the last inspection have been dealt with successfully. The school's commitment to improve further and its capacity to succeed are judged excellent.
50. The headteacher's vision for the school is well articulated and realistic within constraints imposed by the

building (for example, in relation to extending indoor play). Her leadership ensures all members of staff help make decisions about educational goals. Nursery Nurses are proud of their part in formulating these, believing they contribute equally with class teaching colleagues to team and whole-staff discussions. The headteacher regularly monitors teaching and learning, not least during her work in classrooms. She takes a central role in whole-school planning, checking teachers' planning and the evaluations of learning outcomes which inform this and whole-staff discussions. Although curriculum co-ordinators do not monitor classroom practice formally, time given to talking about practice within and across teams for planning purposes makes them knowledgeable about where adjustments to provision need to be made. Because of the nature of the building and because collaborative practice is integral to school life, they also see what is being done in each other's base. Co-ordinators attend in-service sessions relevant to their curriculum responsibilities, feeding back to colleagues. Where a need is known and outside sources cannot fulfil it, the school organises its own in-service to very good effect (for example, work on behaviour management was recently undertaken to improve practice further). The local education authority gives very good support by monitoring the school, feeding back on its strengths and where improvements can be made. Such procedures are seen as important to staff development. Also, the headteacher has worked out ideas about extending curriculum co-ordinators' roles based on a compiling of profiles for each area of learning. Such profiles would provide exemplars of good practice and levels of achievement appropriate to the stepping stones for learning for three and four-year-olds. This is seen as augmenting the professional knowledge and understanding of all members of staff involved with children.

51. The headteacher sees professional development as crucial to raising standards. Performance management is well established, so teachers' and Nursery Nurses' professional needs are known both in relation to personal priorities as well as in relation to school improvement planning. Nursery Nurses feel "very fortunate" to be working where their professional needs are taken seriously and where they get really good support in realising these. A teacher and the specialist support assistant for English as additional language learners recently attended a conference on provision for bilingual children within Early Years' settings, which has led to staff critically appraising provision in the light of discussions following this. High levels of professional discussion about practice and interest in all matters relating to Early Years education are evident. The school is used as a training ground for Nursery Nurses by a local college as well as for initial teacher education by higher education institutions. It is excellent at inducting new staff because of the care taken in keeping everyone fully informed about and involved in important matters. For example, during a preliminary visit prior to the inspection, a trainee teacher talked enthusiastically about her experiences there, at a meeting with staff. The headteacher encourages students from local high schools to pass their work experience in the Nursery, especially if they are interested in a career with young children.
52. Management by the co-ordinator, headteacher and governing body for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The governor for special educational needs supports the work of the school enthusiastically. Funds for special educational needs are well used and children's interests are foremost when planning the budget and funding allocation. The co-ordinator for special needs works well with staff in giving optimum support to all pupils on the Code of Practice list and is in turn very well aided by support staff, the headteacher and local specialist support services. All staff have attended relevant courses. As noted above, the co-ordinator (who is also the deputy head) writes children's individual education plans in consultation with colleagues. This duty imposes yet another layer of responsibility on top of those linked to special educational needs and to her role as deputy. The school recognises it must review practice by, for example, enabling class teachers to write individual education plans.
53. School management is good overall. The headteacher has a very good overview of all provision, taking a strong lead in management matters. She involves all staff members in reviewing school improvement planning in line with their responsibilities. Such planning is readily accessible, indicating what has been achieved, where further work is necessary and why it is, and where new priorities lie. Planning gives suitable priority to all aspects of the school's work over time. Where the school has control of relevant funding, or can identify a funding source, the costs of school improvement are set out alongside the person who will take charge, targets to be achieved and a time-line for these. The headteacher has a good grasp of how the standards fund and small schools' fund allocated to the school can be used for their designated purposes and to improve provision generally. For example, funding for special educational needs has been boosted, as have monies currently allocated to resources. Funding targeted at bilingual learners is also tightly monitored to ensure the maximum amount of additional support is available to them. The headteacher keeps governors up to date on all decisions affecting school life, engaging them in decision-making where feasible. Currently, the local authority controls the

school budget, which means governors do not have delegated powers. The Chair of governors is enthusiastic about taking on these responsibilities when the next financial year starts, keenly anticipating the training involved in preparing for this. To date, arrangements for training are unclear. The governing body is used to working within a committee structure, and so is well placed to develop its monitoring, reviewing and accountability roles further. At times, however, it is hampered in what it can achieve because parent governors spend limited amounts of time in their posts since their children attend school for between three and five terms only. The school works hard to address this fact, co-opting willing parents whose children leave, for example.

54. The day-to-day management of the school is very good. The school secretary works hard in the limited time she has, and is knowledgeable about those aspects of school life she is involved with. These are wide ranging. They include, for example, managing day-to-day finances. Extending secretarial hours by extra time being given to an administrative assistant has relieved the headteacher to some extent from day-to-day administrative chores. This was made possible by government funding available to support new developments, such as extending the Nursery's work with families under the direct guidance of the headteacher. Since the funding is unpredictable, however, it is not possible to plan for such administrative allocation in the long term. Consequently, the headteacher may, again, find she is 'covering' the office for a substantial part of each week rather than being engaged directly with class teaching and learning, and in such new initiatives as that with families, looking for ways to extend and improve provision. The school makes satisfactory use of new technology. Arrangements are in hand for staff training in the use of computers to aid their work. Recently, the school secretary undertook training on entering children's details on a computer. This new system is found helpful, although, in light of the time involved, it is still early days to assess the benefits of the program fully.
55. There are sufficient teachers, Nursery Nurses and support staff to meet curricular demands. High levels of staff expertise and staff deployment serve the needs of children excellently. Resources are very good, chosen with care and well matched to planned goals. They support children's learning about the richness and diversity of the social and material world. Accommodation is adequate. However, the building was meant to provide Nursery education during the Second World War temporarily. It is well past its projected life span. Interior spaces are well maintained, attractive, and provide a stimulating environment. Structurally, however, there are problems with the building beyond the remit of the school and it is unclear how these will be resolved. Every available inch is used and, as indicated above, the headteacher wants to extend indoor play provision. The newly-opened play space for toddlers linked to the new initiative is an example of the imaginative ways in which accommodation helps towards important educational goals. Plans to redesign the cramped office spaces used by the headteacher, deputy head and secretarial staff, and provide toilet facilities for disabled children and visitors are well in hand. In all other respects, the building and outdoor spaces are accessible to wheelchair users. Attractive outside spaces are thoroughly enjoyed by children for large parts of each session.
56. Overall, this picture represents good improvements since the previous inspection. While the school does not yet control the major part of its budget it manages funding available to it to very good effect. In view of this, and the high quality educational provision that consistently promotes very good achievement relative to children's ages and differing abilities, the school gives very good value for money.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors should ensure that:

- (1) the procedure whereby the co-ordinator for special educational needs takes responsibility for writing children's individual education plans following discussions with class teachers and Nursery Nurses is reviewed in order that class teachers take more responsibility for formulating these plans.

*(Paragraphs: 36, 52)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of sessions observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	16	8	1	0	0	0
Percentage	11	57	29	4	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	61.5
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	25

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	12

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

## **Teachers and classes**

### **Qualified teachers and support staff**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.37

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	153

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.45
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	234,815
Total expenditure	234,190
Expenditure per pupil	2001
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	625

## **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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	121
Number of questionnaires returned	52

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	21	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	37	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	44	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	6	12	4	0	0
The teaching is good.	65	29	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	33	4	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	17	2	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	25	0	4	8
The school works closely with parents.	69	25	4	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	77	19	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	23	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	6	0	0	4

Note: the totals reflect the proportion of parents who responded to each question. They do not all add up to 100 per cent and some are well below this figure.

## **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**

57. Children develop very good skills, knowledge and understanding in this area of learning relative to their ages and the full range of abilities present. This conclusion applies to children with special educational needs (and with a Statement of special need) and those learning English as an additional language. Most are set to exceed the relevant Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. More able, older children already demonstrate such achievement in some aspects of their personal, social and emotional development. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good but is most frequently very good.
58. Adults are skilled at judging children's capabilities and adjusting their approaches accordingly. Such judgements are based on a secure knowledge of how individuals can best be helped to make gains in personal, social and emotional development. Close attention is paid to what children say, their perceptions of what is happening and awareness of their own needs. So, for example, the youngest children are helped to see how they might play co-operatively with others. In one instance, when a younger boy expected to be able to use the train of his choice on a table laid out with trains and track, in ways that suited him, an adult intervened and helped him patiently. While he quickly saw he must choose his own train and not take another child's, it was more difficult for him to concede that he must share the track. He overcame his resistance with support, so resources were shared equably. Interestingly, it was obvious from his reactions that his developing knowledge of English did not really hamper his understanding of adult expectations. By contrast, older children and those more mature negotiate joint play. They may not always collaborate (although many do), but they realise they must share equipment and make joint decisions about its use. This was frequently observed in an area reserved for 'big block' constructions, in role-play situations and on outdoor play-apparatus or with wheeled toys. Such play frequently lasts a long time. Children learn to take turns in small groups when with an adult and during whole class activities at the end of sessions. They like the 'parachute game', played with their class, and know they have to wait their turn to be the 'bear' and take a jar of honey round their circle, although some younger children find this hard and need support and encouragement.
59. Children across the age-range are keenly aware of personal hygiene. Adults remind them to wash their hands before cutting up fruit at snack time and after using the toilet, but children were frequently seen doing this from habit. They are diligent in tidying things away before story time at the end of sessions, and do their best to wipe tables down after a sticky activity, such as when they print using water paste and paint. Children are really co-operative at such times and able to get on without adult intervention. On different occasions, they were seen emptying a water-tray by filling jugs and emptying them into a sink, and it was remarkable how speedily and efficiently they completed the task. But the most notable aspect of children's personal development is the way they decide what to do when they come in to Nursery, and then make considered choices throughout sessions. Some children are helped to make a first choice by an accompanying adult when they arrive. Most look at what is happening in their base and then outside and opt where to go or talk about what to do with a friend. At times, a child may feel insecure but adults are to hand to help sort this out, focusing on getting a child to think things through and seek solutions to what appear to be knotty problems. For example, an older girl became upset and explained to a concerned Nursery Nurse that she didn't know where her friend had gone. The adult took her hand and went to the door: "Look, she's outside over there playing. You could get your coat and join her." The girl stopped crying but preferred to remain indoors, sometimes watching the adult-led activity nearby but not wanting to participate. After a little while a support assistant suggested she might paint a picture to help her stop feeling sad. The girl put on an apron and began to paint, occupied for a long period. She forgot her worries and was proud to show the results of her work. This positive outcome was stated to represent a big step forward in learning for her.

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

60. All children develop very good skills, knowledge and understanding in communication, language and literacy relative to their age and capabilities. A majority are judged likely to exceed the early learning goals by the time they are five. Indeed, more able children already achieve some of these goals.

Teaching ranges from good to excellent and is most frequently very good. Teachers and Nursery Nurses use considerable expertise in getting children to speak and listen, read and write, with varied and stimulating activities, inviting children to take part, both in adult-led and self-initiated tasks. Children with special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need, make good progress because of the care taken in making sure they can participate in what is on offer alongside their peers. Bilingual learners similarly make good progress and frequently achieve in line with their monolingual peers.

61. Children know their ideas will be listened to and readily initiate conversations with familiar adults. Even the youngest listen attentively to adults and think hard before answering questions. This happens in many adult-led activities, when working with clay, observing mini-beasts or talking about building a space rocket. Children expand their vocabularies as they work and watch what they do while developing ideas. A more able child says the space rocket should have a shuttle attached and later everyone joins in 'counting down' to "Blast off!" Children like to involve adults in self-initiated play at times. For example, an older girl offered a visitor a plate of 'chicken' after taking it from the oven in the home corner, saying it was "cooked now". She got a plate when the visitor said it might be a bit hot to hold and later checked whether it was "OK." Older children adopt appropriate voices when making up stories with favourite toys. This was seen when two girls played with a dolls' house and adopted high-pitched squeaky voices as they developed a theme about which room to visit next and then said "we're going out to play now" and 'danced' the dolls down the stairs and out of the house.
62. Reading is made fun as well as purposeful through the many opportunities children have to develop reading skills. Reading is central to provision. So adults place due importance on reading with individuals or small groups in 'book corners', during library sessions when children are helped to choose a new book and in the use of books to support activities such as investigating mini-beasts. Children refer to a book's content to check information. They know text explains what is happening and study pictures to make comparisons with the creatures they study. They thoroughly enjoy the story activities at the end of sessions. Before these begin and while everyone gathers in their base groups after tidying up, children can be seen selecting a book to sit and read. All turn pages starting from the front cover. Some like to share their book and talk about its pictures to a friend. Story time is the period when small groups of children listen to and talk about a story. Older children enjoy learning new words in a story about animals and soon realise when to call out "jamboree!" as the teacher pauses. They recognise all the animals except the panda, which leads to a good discussion about differences and similarities between pandas and polar bears. During writing activities with adults, older children frequently identify the first letter sound in a familiar word. Older, more able children have good levels of fluency when reading simple texts.
63. Writing is made purposeful, and children acquire a very good grasp of writing's many purposes, incorporating these into their play. They use appointment books, filo-faxes and notebooks in role-play in the baby clinic. They write their names on their work and settle to write stories alone or with an adult. They are drawn in to such activities as they hover around a table, watching and listening to what is happening. To illustrate: a younger girl standing a short distance away watched for some time as an older peer talked to a teacher and completed her storybook. Eventually, she came closer, took a piece of paper and a pen to do her own story, choosing where to sit. She concentrated hard at forming recognisable letter shapes, remembering what the teacher said to the girl she had watched. Many children write their names legibly and the youngest often manage one or two letters with fair accuracy. Adults express pleasure at children's efforts, showing how much these are valued. They model writing excellently, helping children realise how letters are formed. For example, they may write children's names more legibly on a list. Yet before doing so they will ask courteously "Can I help? Shall I do that for you?" taking care that children do not feel they have 'got it wrong'. When making storybooks, children are helped to think about a book's features. They talk with an adult about whether there should be a cover, studying published books to see how covers are designed. They discuss whether pages should be numbered and, if so, where the numbers should be placed. As noted, good use is made of computers for story-writing and situations are well organised for children to sit with adults to dictate stories. They watch and think how their ideas will develop as words come up on a screen. Because of the seriousness with which adults treat such work, children of all ages reach very good standards in their writing.

### **Mathematical development**

64. All children develop good skills, knowledge and understanding in this area relative to their ages and

capabilities, especially regarding number. Most should exceed expected levels of learning by the time they reach statutory school age. Children, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress because appropriate and interesting activities promote mathematical understanding, and children are well supported. Teaching is consistently very good.

65. Children count numbers and everyday objects competently. They know what it means to record a score. They count how many skittles are knocked down and excitedly record the number on a recording sheet. They know their numbers well. For example, a more able child was seen to identify the numbers 1-6. He understood what a line is, arranging the skittles in a line. Skilful questioning by the Nursery Nurse confirmed that he could work out which numbers he had knocked down. These more able children can match numbers on skittles to the same numbers on cards. Average children recognise numbers 1-6. The weighted bottles used in outside play are good aids for children's number and counting skills. Most can touch count successfully. Indeed, counting skills are very well developed generally. Children are asked to count the number of sunflower seeds still to be planted. An average child counts 17 seeds. All children can count the pieces of fruit they cut for the fruit salad. Records show more able children recognise and name basic shapes. Children handle three-dimensional shapes as they construct and create structures with big blocks. More able children know and draw spirals linked to studying snails. Younger children cut round spirals printed on paper. All classrooms have a number line, and every opportunity is taken to develop counting and number recognition. Children count the legs on a stick insect and one able child counts the 28 legs on a caterpillar. Many activities help children count, sort and match numbers and shapes.
66. Able children create a number strip in correct number order and draw a 'hopscotch' up to seven. They write some numbers and record their scores in a 'bottle knocking' game. They count to 13. They know butterflies are the same each side. They count backwards from 5 and know that 8 follows 7. More able children have a good grasp of mathematical language connected to direction and position, as when they go "under" or "through" or climb "on" apparatus. Average children know numbers 1 to 10 and count accurately to 15. They write and recognise numbers 1 to 10. The less able count to 7 and can count 3 objects one-to-one. They also use the language of direction and position correctly and can separate heavier from lighter objects. Children have a good sense of time through such strategies as using the sand timer, the Nursery Nurse reminding them it takes 30 seconds to empty, and that is not long.
67. Outdoor play is a time when children develop spatial awareness. Activities such as the numbered golf and hopscotch help them familiarise themselves with and use numbers in the course of their play. Photographic evidence shows they follow a number trail when they visit the local wood and playground during an 'autumn walk'. Most produce a repeating pattern using different shapes and colours, threading beads or using flat shapes. Children learn how to measure by using a steel tape-measure to check the length of their wood on the workbench and when they compare the length of bricks they build with. Number songs reinforce counting skills. Children have a good understanding of size and identify the larger mummy snail and the smaller baby snail. They learn about capacity by filling up watering cans at the tub and jugs in the water tray, although opportunities to suggest vessels might be half filled, for example, were missed when such activities were observed.

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

68. Children develop very good skills in this area, reaching well above what might be expected for their age and capabilities. At times, excellent features are seen in what they do. All should exceed expected levels of learning by the time they reach statutory school age. Strengths in this area are the interesting and stimulating activities organised, motivating all to participate in some aspects of what are on offer. They investigate objects and living things with their senses and are guided expertly to see individual features and record what they see with care and attention to detail. Teaching ranges from good to excellent and is most frequently very good.
69. Children come to appreciate their world through studying living things. The use of real materials also enhances their growing awareness of their environment. For example, as a more able child sawed wood at a workbench he explained that wood comes from trees. Children examine real animals such as snails, stick insects, tadpoles, worms, and woodlice with curiosity and joy. They shriek delightedly as they allow the stick insect to climb up an arm. All respect and care for living things because teachers and Nursery Nurses encourage gentle and careful handling of the small creatures, as when they count an insect's legs. Children of average ability know that stick insects sleep and eat privet leaves. Teaching

is of a high quality when children learn the difference between stick insects and tadpoles, realising that tadpoles have tails. A more able child explains that one tadpole is about to grow a back leg. The teacher guides the children's attention to water fleas. Able children know tadpoles eat water fleas. Magnifying glasses and binoculars are used very well to encourage children to observe the detail of these creatures. A strength in teaching is the skilled use of questions that extend vocabulary and develop observation skills. Children consolidate learning by studying creatures in non-fiction books and talking about their shape and colour. They draw stick insects and tadpoles. They pick out characteristic features, and more able and average children can tell similarities and differences. They ask questions about the insect such as "where does it sleep?" Adults reinforce learning well, as when children look at a picture of a snail in a non-fiction book and compare it to live snails. Teachers, Nursery Nurses and teaching assistants are skilled at teaching children to observe and record details they see. Children know some creatures like to live in cold, dark places because the Nursery Nurse talks about this. They are totally absorbed as they watch a snail crawl from finger to finger. Children have a very good understanding of what living things need because they are encouraged to dig soil and plant sunflower seeds. They know plants need water to grow. The teacher stresses that plants need food to grow and the soil provides the food.

70. Children develop very good knowledge about features of their world. They learn what happens to clothes immersed in water. A Nursery Nurse skilfully guides them to observe how the weight of the clothes changes when wet. Children of average ability know the sun will dry clothes more quickly and the Nursery Nurse reminds them that wind will also dry clothes. A boy decides to put on a coat to go out to play and explains "It's cold now. The sun's gone in 'asn't it?" Regular use of the dry and wet sand augments children's knowledge of how wet sand can be shaped more easily and dry sand can be poured into a wheel to make it turn.
71. There are very good opportunities to build and construct using a wide range of objects and resources. Children have access to a wide range of materials and tools. They use the construction materials to build a train track, small plastic bricks to build a house and wooden bricks to build structures. They join two pieces of paper, tearing masking tape to join them together. Children make their own stick insects with pipe cleaners. All children have very good opportunities to join materials together.
72. Knowledge of information and communication technology is good. Most children can operate a mouse on a computer. All make good progress with skills using the mouse. They make a picture using different coloured paintbrushes to fill the screen. More able children can select a colour and use the mouse to draw shapes. They can instruct the computer to print their finished work.
73. Children have very good knowledge of events in their own and their families' lives. They learn very well about growth through activities such as those in the 'baby clinic.' They compare photographs of themselves as babies with how they look now. Parents visit with their babies and children develop an understanding of the babies' needs through watching and asking questions. Children have very good opportunities to learn about their own culture and that of others. Multilingual signs and labels and photographs reflect a multi-cultural society all around the school. Children's various languages are celebrated and staff members with bilingual skills use children's home languages to promote learning at times.

### **Physical development**

74. Children develop good skills, knowledge and understanding in this area. All achieve well relative to their age and differing capabilities, including those with special educational needs. Most are judged likely to reach expected levels by statutory school age. More able children are already managing some aspects of the Early Learning Goals. Teaching is very good overall, because planning frequently clarifies learning intentions, and activities are well organised. However, opportunities to develop children's understanding of the possibilities of extending their movements are missed. For example, adults generally do not use vocabulary to suggest how children might experiment with movements to go beyond their own spontaneous response to music. They might do this during May Day dancing, for example. Provision for outdoor play is very good, contributing significantly to the good standards seen in physical development. There is no hall or large space for movement and dance indoors, which hampers planning. But good use is made of a small area in one of the classrooms and of outside spaces when weather permits.
75. Children move around safely with confidence and imagination. Strength, co-ordination and control are

developed as they use scooters and tricycles around the garden path. Most manoeuvre trikes to the right and left, pedalling forwards and backwards. More able children pedal at speed and skilfully turn a corner to mount a slope. They enjoy riding tricycles, scooters and carts around a path, even creating their own pathways in, out and around the trees and grass area. Many activities help children develop skills of pulling and pushing, as when they play with carts and take passengers around the garden. Motor skills and co-ordination are improved as children kick balls to each other. Able children have well developed aiming skills and can send a ball accurately to their partner from a distance of about 20 metres. Aiming skills are developed as children play skittle games, rolling, kicking or throwing a ball at the numbered bottles, depending on whether the activity is inside or out of doors.

76. Children's co-ordination is well developed and they reveal very good control for their age as they travel around, under, over, through, into and out of equipment. Obstacle courses are carefully planned, with excellent opportunities for children to acquire confidence and competence when climbing up and over the top of steps, or sliding down the slide. All are encouraged to travel over, through, under and along, into and out of the equipment. All children learn very good jumping and landing skills as they leap from steps, bending their knees with control. They become aware of their own differing physical skills and achievement with many photographs encouraging them to talk about what they and others are doing.
77. There are very good opportunities for children to develop balancing and climbing skills using equipment. Their range of skills includes balancing and jumping and landing. Able children balance along the sides of a horizontal ladder as they progress around the obstacle course. One very able child skilfully travelled on his hands across a wooden plank in a cartwheel action.
78. Spatial awareness and health and body awareness are not as well developed as other areas of physical development. Spatial awareness develops well in the outdoor play activities but is not encouraged as much in the indoor area (although it is recognised space for this is very limited). Health and body awareness are satisfactory. For example, children learn about the importance of protecting themselves from the sun and exercising themselves daily. Awareness of the changes that occur to their bodies when they are active is satisfactory but less well developed.
79. There are excellent opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills and these are extremely well developed. Children handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with very good control for their age. They enjoy pressing, rolling and cutting the play dough. They position, stick and join objects, handling sticky tape skilfully. They acquire manipulative skills and strength using saws, hammers and nails at the workbench. Aiming and estimation skills develop as they hammer nails into wood to make frames and saw pieces of wood using the vice to make it secure. Cutting skills are well developed through children's daily use of scissors, cutting out spiral shapes for example. They use knives to cut fruit. Hand eye co-ordination develops well when children match and position shapes, decorating and sticking. They place and fix a railway track thoughtfully, realising how curved pieces join together. They place jigsaw pieces into the appropriate place to make a picture, experimenting with how the pieces fit at times.
80. Children are encouraged to develop a rhythmic response to music, inside and outside. They celebrate May Day, moving to music with streamers and percussion instruments. The more able skip with a mature, refined skipping action. Skipping is less well developed in average and less able children.

### **Creative development**

81. Children acquire good skills, knowledge and understanding in this area, although opportunities for music-making and singing together in class or small groups during the inspection were limited. More generally, a number of imaginative activities are organised, some changing over the week to attract as many children as possible to explore different materials and their possibilities. Consequently, good standards are achieved across the age range relative to children's capabilities. Most are judged likely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they are of statutory school age, with more able children exceeding these. Children with special educational needs make good progress and achieve at least in line with their prior attainment. At times, they do better than this. Similarly, bilingual learners make good progress and achieve in line with their peers. Teaching ranges from good to very good and is most frequently very good.
82. Children take full advantage of the varied settings available for role-play. They enjoy home-related play in the outdoor play-house in the garden as well as in an indoor home corner and 'baby clinic'. A boy

worked out a meal in the home corner before deciding to play in the baby clinic. He worked at dressing a doll, persisting in spite of problems deciding how arms went into sleeves. A girl watched, uncertain whether to help or give advice. Finally, she fetched a baby bottle and suggested he might like to feed the doll when he had finished. Although he was proud of the dressed doll (back-to-front, in fact!) and admired it for some time, he clearly felt this was enough and ignored the offer. Children like to dress up, choosing clothes from a rack in keeping with a story they will act out. Two older girls finished their story about princesses in order to dance to taped music playing in the dressing-up area. For a time, they matched their dance to their 'flouncy' dresses, holding them and swaying to the music. On another occasion, a boy revealed his insight into 'pop music'-style singing and dancing as he moved energetically before an adult audience, to accompany the words he sang and the jingly sounds made by his shaker. Groups of children enjoyed may-pole dancing outside and moving in time to the music. Few instances of children learning songs and singing or making music through adult-led activities were seen, although parents talked about such learning at the meeting prior to the inspection. Children have suitable opportunities to learn familiar songs but, as noted above, limited work in this area was observed.

83. As well as painting their own compositions, children paint and draw objects from life (as when some drew stick insects) and try out different media to create images they then print. They mix water paste and paint or cornflour and paint on a table top, spreading it out before placing paper over their image to take a print. Children enjoy drawing on the smoothed out surface and are amazed at the results, wanting to repeat the effect to see what happens next time. They have many opportunities to make things from materials such as boxes, cylinders, straws and fabric and to stick these together with glue and sticky tape. A younger boy who made a "ship" explained that the straw poking out of the fabric was where "the smoke comes out and fire." Earlier, when asked what he was making he replied "I don't know", and later "I'll know it when it's finished", which he certainly did!