

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **STONEYHOLME NURSERY SCHOOL**

Burnley

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119074

Headteacher: Mrs M Nearney

Reporting inspector: Michael Hewlett  
1569

Dates of inspection: 20th - 21<sup>st</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 252156

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 4 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	March Street Burnley Lancashire
Postcode:	BB12 0BU
Telephone number:	01282 454473
Fax number:	n/a
Appropriate authority:	Lancashire Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mohammed Sher Ali Miah
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1569	Michael Hewlett	Registered inspector	Mathematical development Knowledge and understanding of the world Creative development English as an additional language	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school Leadership and management Key issues for action
11084	Jane Hughes	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
30773	Judith Whitehead	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Communication, language and literacy Physical development Special educational needs Educational inclusion	Teaching and learning Quality and range of opportunities for learning

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Stoneyholme is an averaged-sized nursery school situated near the centre of Burnley. There are 79 children on roll, aged between three and four years old, of whom 38 are girls and 41 are boys. They all attend part-time. The majority of children live in the immediate area where there are high levels of deprivation within the local community. The children are taught by two teachers, including the headteacher, and two nursery nurses. They all work full-time. In addition, there are two full-time bilingual assistants and a part-time teacher. These are funded through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) . A small number of children, 3 per cent, have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN). A similar number was found when the school was last inspected. The school population reflects the multi-racial nature of the community that it serves. All the children are learning English as an additional language and most are at an early stage of language acquisition. Most of the children come from homes where Bengali or Pushto is the first language. Children's skills when they enter nursery are well below those for children of a similar age.

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

This is an effective school. Children are on course to reach the expected standards in most areas by the time they leave, except in communication, language and literacy where they are still below. They make good progress during their time in nursery; they are well cared for and relationships are good. They achieve well because the teaching is generally good and the school is well led. Children have positive attitudes and are keen to learn, and this provides them with a good basis for their future learning. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Children make good progress and achieve well;
- Teaching is good;
- It makes good provision for children who have SEN and those learning English as an additional language;
- Relationships and behaviour are good and the school takes very good care of the children;
- Staff help children to develop positive attitudes;
- Links with the community are good.

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

- The way staff check on children's progress;
- Observations of teaching and learning by the headteacher and how the information is used.

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

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

The school was last inspected in November 1998. It has made good progress since then and has worked hard to address the key issues identified. Standards have been maintained and children are now able to experience the full curriculum range. The headteacher monitors teaching and learning more formally than before but there are still some gaps that need to be addressed so that learning opportunities are not missed. Systems of management within the school are better organised, planning of lessons is more consistent and provision for children with SEN is good. As a result, children make good progress in all the areas of learning. The school is suitably placed to build on the good progress it has made so far.

## STANDARDS

When they enter the nursery, the children's ability to communicate and their personal and social development skills are well below what would be expected for children of this age. By the time children leave the nursery, the majority have made good progress towards achieving national standards, known as the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). They are expected to reach these by the end of the Foundation Stage (their reception year in primary school). Children's best achievement is in their personal, social and emotional development where they are on course to meet the expected standard. This represents very good progress. The majority make good progress in their mathematical, physical and creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, where they are also likely to reach the expected standard. They make similarly good progress in communication, language and literacy but, because their language skills are so limited and they are all learning English as an additional language when they arrive in school, most are unlikely to reach the expected standard by the end of the Foundation Stage. Only a small number of children are identified as having special educational needs and these make good progress when their achievements are compared to what they managed previously. A similar number of higher attaining children are all on course to meet the expected standards because their needs are identified and catered for early on.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Children settle well and enjoy school.
Behaviour	Good. Children understand the high expectations of staff and do their best to meet these.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Positive relationships ensure that children's experiences are happy and worthwhile. Children's levels of independence are developing well.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school makes strenuous efforts to encourage regular attendance. Most children arrive on time for sessions.

Parents report that children really like school. Children try hard to please the staff and there is a cheerful atmosphere throughout. They trust the adults and respond well to their encouragement within this harmonious, multi-cultural school community.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Quality of teaching	Good

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

Teaching standards are better than those found at the time of the last inspection. About six out of ten lessons were judged to be good or better with the rest satisfactory. Teaching of personal and social development is effective because staff plan an interesting range of learning activities. As a result, children begin to grow in confidence and establish good relationships with adults and other pupils. Teaching of language skills is a priority for all the staff. Work in this area is successful because adults combine well together as a team, complementing each other's work. Bilingual assistants make a valuable contribution to some of the most successful teaching through their dual language work, helping to ensure that all children can successfully experience the full curriculum. Teaching in mathematical development is of a similarly good standard, with effective links made with other areas of the curriculum.

Staff encourage children to apply their calculating skills in practical situations, such as counting how many of their classmates should be allowed to play in the home corner.

In knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, teaching is also good overall. The best examples of teaching occur where adults challenge children to improve on their work, not settling for their first attempt. Teaching of physical development is satisfactory overall with staff are particularly successful in encouraging children to use tools and equipment independently.

Where lessons are less successful, there are some missed opportunities for developing children's language skills. On these occasions, adults do not give children enough time to reflect on and practice the words and phrases they share with them. Information on individual children's progress is not always used to plan the next stage of their work.

The small teaching groups and the way in which the nursery is organised, help staff to get to know the children well. They make good use of the resources available and work hard to ensure that no individual or groups are left out. The particular needs of those with learning difficulties are well catered for.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. A broad and balanced curriculum is provided. Good links are made with the community and partner institutions.
Provision for children with special educational needs	The school makes good provision. Children's individual needs are quickly assessed and they benefit from a suitable programme of support.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Provision is good and the children make good progress. Their work is carefully planned and all staff make sure the children play a full part in activities.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There is an extremely strong emphasis on improving children's social development and good opportunities to extend their moral understanding. Provision for children's spiritual and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its children	Very good. Staff show great sensitivity to children's welfare; their transition to full time education is well organised.

The school is good at talking with parents and encourages them to play an active role in their child's learning. Staff take full account of differing cultural values as they successfully promote race equality.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher gives strong leadership and clear direction. She is well supported by the staff team but there are some gaps in the way teaching and learning are checked.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. The school is beginning to check on how effective it has been and where improvement is needed.

The strategic use of resources	Good overall. The funds available to the school are used wisely.
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Staffing levels, resources and accommodation are good. The school consults widely with parents and is beginning to apply the principles of best value.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school</li> <li>• Staff take a close interest in children</li> <li>• Children's manners and language skills are getting better</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents</li> <li>• The school is improving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very small number felt there was an insufficient range of activities outside of lessons and that they did not always know how their children were getting on</li> </ul>

Inspection findings agree with the parents' overwhelmingly positive views. Parents are welcome in school at any time. The school provides good opportunities for regular feedback about how children are getting on. Bearing in mind the age of the children, a sufficient range of activities outside of lessons is provided for them.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. When children start in nursery they have limited skills in most areas of learning. In their ability to communicate in English and in their personal, social and emotional development they are well below those expected of children the same age.
2. During their time in nursery they make good progress along the 'stepping stones' towards the standards they should reach by the end of their reception year, when they complete the Foundation Stage. Most are likely to reach the expected standard in all areas except in communication, language and literacy despite the good progress they make. This shows that children achieve well overall. Standards are similar to those found when the school was last inspected.
3. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. This area is regarded as a key priority by staff who place a great deal of emphasis on improving children's confidence and independence. As a result, children settle quickly and are eager to learn. Behaviour throughout the nursery is good and children have a positive attitude to their work.
4. Children make good progress overall in their literacy development. Nevertheless, many still find it difficult to express themselves in English and some lack fluency in their mother tongue. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories but few can retell what they have heard or initiate conversation
5. Children's progress in developing their mathematical skills is good. Counting skills are regularly practised using counting games and rhymes. Their understanding of shape, space and measure is improving well because of the practical activities they are encouraged to complete. Some can spot patterns they have seen around the nursery but their ability to use mathematical language is still weak.
6. Similarly good progress is made in developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They achieve particularly well in their use of information and communications technology and the way they use construction materials. This is because they get a chance to try things out for themselves and to practise new skills.
7. In physical development, children are on course to reach the expected standards and, once again, this represents good progress. They show good control and most are confident when they use tools, showing good levels of skill.
8. Children make good progress in creative development. They join in enthusiastically with action songs and handle different media confidently. Children are particularly successful at using gestures and facial expressions to show how they feel.
9. All groups of children make good gains in their learning. The small number of children who have special educational needs are picked up early. Staff produce detailed individual education plans (IEPs) and this means everyone knows what targets they are working toward.

10. A similar number of higher attainers are also identified early on. Staff work alongside them to ensure tasks are challenging enough. For example, a group of more confident girls were encouraged to act out family situations in the home corner and they were starting to use suitable dialogue.
11. Boys and girls make similar rates of progress and there are no significant differences between children from different backgrounds.

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

12. Children have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy their time in school. Most are eager to get into the classroom at the start of sessions and happily say 'goodbye' to their parents. They immediately move to an area of particular interest and are soon engrossed in the activities. Children are keen to be involved in or, in a few cases, merely observe different tasks and they waste very little time during the sessions. Some children were found to spend a long time playing at the water table, investigating the properties of ice and counting the penguins. They stayed there for a considerable period of time, listened carefully to the adult with them and deepening their knowledge and understanding.
13. Behaviour is good throughout the school and children respond well to the consistent approach to discipline offered by all the adults. Children are aware of the daily routines. For example, they are very willing to help tidy away in preparation for snack time. No unacceptable behaviour was seen during the inspection. Children are very accepting of their peers and work alongside them well. They are polite and well mannered and usually stop and listen carefully when someone speaks to them. Some of the more confident children take pleasure in showing others what they are doing. Children who choose to spend time alone with an activity are left undisturbed by their peers. There have been no exclusions from school in the past year.
14. Good relationships exist in the school, largely because of the good example set by adults. Children respond well to the quiet but firm manner used by staff and there is obvious trust and respect for the adults. Many of the children are still very young and relationships between peers are not yet well developed, although there are some examples where budding friendships are evident. For instance, two girls dressed up for an 'outing into town'. They could explain where they were going and giggled together as they balanced on their high heels and made their way, with their babies, to the bus stop.
15. Children's personal development is good and they are becoming more independent. Many hang their aprons up after a messy activity although staff need to remind them. Most children can go to the toilet and wash their hands by themselves and they cope well with pouring milk from the large jugs at snack time. They are gradually becoming more self-sufficient and they respond well to the consistent efforts made by staff to improve their self-confidence. Parents offer support to those children who find it difficult to self register on arrival, using the photographs.
16. Levels of attendance are satisfactory overall, although better for the morning session. Children are happy to come to school but some have to miss significant periods of time due to religious observance and family trips abroad. The school has worked very hard to improve attendance and punctuality. The vast majority of children arrive on time.

## HOW WELL ARE THE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is good overall. This is an improvement on the standards found when the school was last inspected. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and most of the weaknesses identified last time have been remedied. Improved planning of work has helped staff plan activities more thoroughly. As a result, a well planned range of activities support children's learning in all areas of the curriculum.
18. A lot of emphasis is placed on children's personal and social development. Teaching in this area is good. The strengths lie in staff commitment to offering children a suitable range of activities, which will build their confidence, and self esteem. Because they know them so well, no one is left out when, for example, children play in the construction area. Adults working with them guide the play so that each member of the group becomes fully involved, even those who find difficulty articulating ideas. This helps children feel valued and successful.
19. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is good overall, with staff providing an interesting range of activities for children to experience. These engage children's interests but, on occasions, they are not given enough time to answer questions or think about a response before activities are moved on at a brisk pace. For example, during a story session opportunities were missed to recap on what they had heard or talk about the characters. This meant they did not get enough practice in using words they knew or engaging in conversation. Teaching of children in the early stages of English language acquisition is very good and children develop good understanding. The planned strategies for modelling good language for children to reflect back are good. However, the time given for children to respond is not consistent throughout the nursery. At times children are allowed to respond through gesture and expression when they are capable of using the language they have learnt.
20. Mathematical development is well taught with staff offering practical opportunities to reinforce children's mathematical language in other curriculum areas. A good example of this was seen in children's spontaneous play in the home corner. The adult skilfully engaged the children's interest and attention, encouraging them to think about how many plates were needed, whether there were enough forks and would there be enough room for everyone around the table? Activities such as these help to root children's mathematical development in lots of interesting and practical experiences.
21. Teaching in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development is also of a good standard. The best teaching is characterised by staff making good use of the resources to extend children's learning and giving them opportunities to improve their language skills. A good example of this was seen when children were baking. They were able to talk about what might happen to the dough when it was heated. The bilingual assistant working with them made sure each group member was able to make a contribution either in English or mother tongue. Where the teaching was more ordinary, staff gave children too much support, for example, writing their names on pieces of work rather than encouraging them to try themselves. This slowed their rate of progress.
22. Teaching in physical development is sound with strengths in the development of a good range of skills when using a range of tools and equipment within the nursery. For example, when making model Gingerbread men out of clay children successfully

rolled and modelled the clay. They used cutters to shape their models and created textures using different tools.

23. All staff, including support staff, contribute to the good quality. Good examples of their work were seen across the school, particularly when supporting small groups of children and targeted one to one work.
24. Only a small number of children are identified as having special educational needs and they are given suitable programmes of work that give them realistic targets to achieve. Records of children's progress are kept on a half termly basis. Staff members' informal observations ensure any learning needs are identified early on. However this information is not always recorded and opportunities to ensure individual children make better progress are missed. Although planning systems have improved, the evaluation of children's progress on a day-to-day basis is inconsistent and the information collected is not used to plan the next stage of work. Consequently, short-term plans do not always show how the needs of individual children or groups of children will be met through the planned activities.

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

25. The school's curriculum makes good provision to meet the children's learning needs. The strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development threads its way through many activities and most children achieve very well in this area in relation to their earlier attainment. Planning for the areas of the curriculum is good and most children make good progress.
26. Curriculum provision has improved since the last inspection. Planning has improved in all six areas of learning. The headteacher, teacher and support staff work closely together. They hold regular meetings to discuss what has been achieved during the week and what needs to be planned for the following week. This provides a clear overview of what is happening in the nursery. Each week, teaching staff take responsibility for different areas of learning and this offers good opportunities for them to develop knowledge of how well children are doing in all areas of learning.
27. Currently, three children have individual learning plans for special educational needs. As a result of improved individual education plans the learning for these children is good. All staff know the children well and are fully aware of the specific learning needs of individuals and this enables those with any special learning needs to make similar progress to other children. The school's commitment to providing a curriculum where children can be actively involved through a wide range of 'hands on' activities ensures that provision is good.
28. Activities, such as the 'home corner' role-play area, different coloured water and clay model making, interest the children and they often remain engaged for a good length of time. The children are given many opportunities to select what they want to do and this helps them to develop the skill of making choices. Adults provide the level of support during most activities and, as a result, children are helped to develop their skills of independent thinking and action.
29. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra learning opportunities, such as visits to school by an artist working with children in clay. Strong links with the Sure Start Project actively involve children with the adjacent allotment in growing, harvesting and cooking their own vegetables. Such links with the local community

helps to extend the curriculum. Links with other schools are also good. The children are able to make several visits to their primary schools before transfer and this helps them to feel confident and secure.

30. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This reflects the judgement made at the time of the last inspection.
31. The school's aims and values promote a good awareness of self and others in a range of activities and situations. For example, children learn to take turns and listen carefully to each other in story times. Children are highly valued and encouraged to learn how their actions affect others. They are helped to develop their own ideas and thoughts.
32. The school offers a secure environment where children learn to relate well to each other and behaviour is very good. The school's behaviour code promotes self-confidence and a positive attitude to learning in all of the children. Opportunities for visits offer the children a wider understanding of the world outside of the school. Adults have a very good understanding the children's home culture and this helps promote children's moral and social development across all areas of learning.
33. Throughout the year, planned opportunities for the children to find out about the world around them and exploration of the local area, helps them to develop an understanding of their own heritage. The school makes good use of a range of music. This reflects the children's home culture as well as introducing them to the traditional rhymes and songs of the wider community. Books in library areas and small play construction models such as the mosque reflect the wider world community.

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

34. The nursery offers a very secure and welcoming environment to children. Adults are highly sensitive to individual children's needs and extend a cheerful welcome at the start of sessions.
35. Staff promote children's health, safety and welfare very well. The building is secure and clean. Staff work closely with local health professionals to promote positive health messages among families. Currently, the school is pursuing a 'Healthy School' award and offers children the choice of nutritious foods at snack time. During the inspection, children eagerly tucked into inviting sandwiches and large pieces of fresh, juicy melon washed down with milk.
36. Arrangements for child protection are secure. The headteacher is responsible for this area and ensures that staff are well informed and receive the required training. Appropriate links are maintained with the local support agencies.
37. All adults show consistently high expectations concerning children's behaviour. They are quick to praise good intentions and draw parents into this positive reinforcement whenever possible. For example, as children arrived at one afternoon session, a little girl accidentally dropped another child's photograph on the floor when self-registering. Her father called her back and told her to stick it back on the board and the teacher stood alongside and thanked the parent for taking the time to do this. During snack time, children are encouraged to be well mannered and not to lean all over the tables. As a result of this attention to detail, children are very clear about how they should behave and the nursery is a very happy and orderly community.

38. There are satisfactory procedures to assess children's academic progress. Staff make an initial assessment of children's achievement once they have settled into the school. All the areas of learning are assessed and individual children are tracked each half term. Their achievements are recorded against checklists, which cover broad stages of development. As yet achievements are not recorded against the single 'stepping stones' that make up the curriculum for children of this age. The recording of children's progress needs to be improved to provide a better foundation upon which staff can identify when knowledge, skills and understanding have been acquired by individuals or groups of children.
39. Some use is made of the information adults obtain from tracking children's progress. Staff discuss what children can do but do not always keep records of these discussions. As a result, this information is not available to be used when planning the next activities. Useful personal achievement folders are kept for the children and these are given to parents at the end of the child's time in nursery.
40. Assessment and monitoring for children with special educational needs is good. This is an improvement from the last inspection when individual education plans were not provided. Record keeping is good. Clearly written targets in individual education plans are systematically followed through each day and careful records are kept by support staff clearly showing how children progress. Their individual education plans are regularly reviewed, discussed with parents and up-dated as children make progress.
41. The school's procedures for monitoring children's personal development are satisfactory. The 'key pastoral worker' arrangement works well and ensures that each child is well known by at least one adult in the school. Parents report that their children receive strong support from staff and inspection findings confirm their views. There is a very strong focus on children's personal, social and emotional development and staff make sure that individual needs are effectively met.
42. Staff are very good at highlighting the importance of regular attendance to parents and give regular consideration to this difficult issue. They have a clear understanding of the reasons why children are sometimes absent from school for extended periods of time and ask parents to keep these absences as brief as possible.

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

43. Parents who answered the questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting were very positive about the provision the school makes for their children. They feel that the teaching is good, the school works closely with parents and that they can ask staff about any concerns.
44. The headteacher and staff provide good quality information for parents about school routines and what their children will learn. During the induction period, staff encourage parents to stay with their children for as long as they feel necessary; they are under no pressure to leave the children too soon. Parts of the prospectus and many of the notices in the reception area are published in dual languages and there are always bilingual members of the teaching staff available to interpret for parents. This helps parents to feel more at ease in a school setting.
45. Parents receive a good amount of information on how well their children are doing. Although there are no written progress reports for parents at the end of the school year, staff compile detailed written profiles for the receiving primary schools. Parents can access regular verbal feedback from the school during the course of the year. A

more formal meeting between teachers and parents is available in the summer term and parents are given a collection of their children's work, made into a book, for them to keep.

46. Parents make a sound contribution to their children's learning and help to reinforce the messages they learn in school. They bring their children to sessions on time and try to ensure children attend as often as possible. They are supportive of school events and are eager to attend productions, celebrations and presentations. Some parents make use of the links with Sure Start and local colleges and attend adult education courses. These help them to understand more about what their children are learning and the culture in which they live. They bring in a selection of resources when asked by staff. A notable example of this generosity is when mothers donate unwanted saris to the school. These are all knotted together and hung in an area of the classroom to form a brilliantly coloured tent in which the children can sit and read.
47. Most parents make good use of the toy and book library services available and these help them to support their children's learning at home. They also offer their opinions to staff about what resources should be bought for the school.

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

48. Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher leads the school successfully and she has worked hard to establish the school as a focal point within the local community. The family groups that meet in the adjoining room are a good example of this. She provides a clear direction for the work of the school and has the confidence of the parents who speak very positively about how responsive everyone is. The headteacher works hard to ensure that everyone is able to make a contribution to decisions that are made. Parents are given every opportunity to comment on what happens and their views and opinions are valued. The school's priorities are well chosen and are set out in the school development plan. For example, an emphasis on improving early language skills involved working out how best staff might be used to have maximum impact. The careful use of bilingual assistants had a positive effect on children's progress in this area.
49. The school's aims and values can be seen in its life and work. Good examples of these aims, seen in practice, are the way in which staff and children show respect and consideration for one another. For example, children are beginning to recognize that what they do has an impact on others. Much of what they do and say is modelled on the mannerisms and actions that they copy from the adults they are working with. There is a positive ethos within the school that is geared towards providing good educational opportunities for the children and offering them a safe and secure environment.
50. When the school was last inspected, the inspection team found that the headteacher's ability to monitor teaching and learning was inhibited by her full time teaching commitment. Good progress has been made to remedy this weakness and regular observations are made of teacher colleagues with both verbal and written feedback supplied. More work still needs to be done so that other practitioners are similarly supported and weaknesses in the teaching, such as missed learning opportunities and some inconsistencies of approach, are spotted early and remedied.
51. The management of SEN was also described as a weakness in the school's previous inspection report. Once again, good progress has been made in improving provision. Children's needs are met well because systems are more secure, ensuring all staff

have access to detailed plans, and they use them well when they are planning children's work.

52. On a day-to-day basis, the school operates smoothly, with responsibility for the administration shared between the school secretary and the headteacher. The school does not have a delegated budget and most financial resources are allocated by the local authority. Nevertheless, all funds are carefully accounted for and reports indicate the systems are secure.
53. The school has a committed and hardworking governing body which discharges its duties well. It meets regularly and has a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Individual members visit regularly and many use their knowledge and influence within the local community to establish strong links with a wide range of community groups. Because most children only spend one year in nursery, the school still finds it difficult to attract parent representatives on the governing body. However, parents told inspectors, both at their meeting with them and through their returned questionnaires, that they felt their views were well represented. The Local Education Authority (LEA) has overall responsibility for the school and the LEA link officer offers valuable support.
54. The school is well staffed by suitably qualified practitioners. The current numbers of children and the high level of additional support staff mean that the ratio of staff to children remains generous. The school has successfully attracted funding for a number of projects through the local Surestart initiative. For example, it has developed an allotment where children plant and then cultivate vegetables. This gives them practical opportunities to see how food grows and to recognize similarities and difference in the environment around them. Initiatives such as this have a positive impact on the quality of education that is provided for the children.
55. Resources for learning are good and they are well used. Staff make good use of the accommodation available and they provide an attractive learning environment where children feel comfortable and secure.

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

56. In order to improve further, the school should now:
  - (a) Improve the evaluation of lessons and the assessment of children's progress so that:
    - information gained can then be used to plan future work;
    - individual pupil progress can be tracked more accurately.

(paragraphs 24,38,39,65,75 )
  - (b) Monitor the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously and use the outcomes so that:
    - Learning opportunities are not missed

- There is a consistency of approach about the way activities are organized
- Children are given more time to answer questions and contribute to discussions

(paragraphs 19,21,50,66,74,83,90 )

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of sessions observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	17	11	0	0	0
Percentage	0	10	55	35	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 approximately 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)	39
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	2

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	79

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	185

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total	86416
Total expenditure	84507
Expenditure per pupil	2113
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

*The school does not have a delegated budget. These figures represent expenditure on supplies, equipment and standards funds which the school controls.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	76
Number of questionnaires returned	28

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	93	7	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	36	0	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	29	0	0	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	25	7	7	32
The teaching is good.	68	32	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	71	25	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	25	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	21	4	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	68	18	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	64	32	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	25	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	29	4	0	18

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.

## **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**

#### **Provision For Children With English As An Additional Language**

57. The provision for children who are learning English as an additional language is good. Currently, all the children are benefiting from this provision with the majority at an early stage of understanding English.
58. Most children have Bengali and Pushto as the home language and, as well as being new to English, many of the children also lack fluency in their mother tongue. During their time in nursery, they make good progress. This is because of the skilled teaching they receive from all the adults who work with them and their keenness to learn.
59. Two bilingual assistants, another assistant and a part time teacher are employed through the EMAG programme to work with the children. They are successful in harnessing children's interests and supporting their developing language skills. The school has been successful in removing many of the barriers to learning for children in its care because it enables them to experience all the subjects of the Foundation Stage. Staff build children's confidence and carefully identify what stage they have reached in speaking and listening to English, before they plan for future work.
60. Children progress so well because staff work very closely together to promote language development. They offer children an interesting range of suitable activities, often targeting small groups or individuals where necessary. These arrangements are flexible and meet the needs of the children well. For example, during a baking session, a bilingual assistant was telling the story of the Ginger Bread man. She told the story in both English and their home language, making sure that each child was able to understand her questions. It was clear that she knew the children very well and offered the individual support needed if they were going to benefit from the activity. They all listened very well and, as the story progressed, more joined in with the responses. Some had a go at answering the questions they had been set, often using mother tongue although the original question was asked in English. The teaching was successful because the adult maintained a good balance between storytelling, using well chosen resources to underpin the vocabulary and the meaning, and skilful questioning. Occasions when the teaching is less successful usually occur when adults do not give children enough time to answer questions they have set for them. An example of this was seen during a story session. The adult shared a book with a group of children who had limited skills in English. They enjoyed the activity and were able to use picture clues from the book to show they understood much of what was being said. However, they were not given enough chance to practise some of the words they had heard because the adult answered some of the questions for them.
61. Accurate assessments are made of children's stage of language development soon after they start school and this checklist is regularly updated in the light of observations made. This information is used well to plan tasks and good links are maintained with the school's coordinator for special educational needs. This helps to ensure that children with limited English who have needs in other areas are not missed. Assessment and monitoring children's progress are better organised and more carefully recorded here than in other subject areas. The school has a good

range of resources to support the teaching including books in dual languages. Staff make good use of games and equipment to engage children's interest and this helps their learning.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

62. Children make very good progress from first admission to the school and are likely to achieve the expected learning targets by the end of the reception year. Behaviour, relationships and attitudes are good. Children are developing the independent learning skills expected of children of this age. This is an improvement from the last inspection.
63. The school is strongly committed to the promotion of personal, social and emotional development and teaching is good. Routines are well established and the children understand what is expected of them. Children register themselves through finding their named picture. They are confident when they leave their parents and carers, quickly becoming absorbed in the range of activities available. Staff listen to the parents' views and respond positively to any concerns they might have about their children. Many opportunities are provided for the children to work and play together and as a result they are beginning to learn about the importance of friendships and relationships. They are particularly good at staying on task when they are not being directly supervised and they frequently concentrate for significant amounts of time. Children with special educational needs are well integrated and they are helped to respond positively to school routines and to follow simple instructions
64. Adults interact positively with the children allowing them to explore and learn alongside each other. Activities are planned to catch the children's interest. Coloured water and ice cubes were used to encourage the children to investigate what happened as the ice cubes melt. 'Home corner' role-play, carefully linked to what is familiar, engaged the interest of boys and girls alike. Children are taught to share and take turns. During a biscuit making activity children successfully took turns, adding ingredients and mixing them in. The range of activities offers many opportunities for the children to make choices about which activity to join. They are provided with a varied range of tools, materials and play equipment, which offer good opportunities to make choices and develop independence. Children enjoy 'Snack time'. They share in small groups, pouring their own milk and peeling their own fruit.
65. Staff are encouraging and the children achieve high levels of concentration. They work hard in what they are doing. Adults observe how well the children are achieving on an informal level but these observations are not recorded. This leads to some missed opportunities for the children to develop their skills, particularly in children's self-confidence in their own ability and enthusiasm for learning. More opportunities could be taken to celebrate individual children's achievement, helping them to understand how well they are achieving.

### **Communication, Language and Literacy**

66. The majority of children are not on course to achieve the expected learning targets by the end of the reception year in speaking, reading or writing. However, they listen well and are likely to achieve this learning target by the end of the reception year. Most children achieve well, including those with special learning needs, and make good progress. Although the quality of teaching is good overall, some opportunities for encouraging children to speak are not used. Children are not always encouraged to repeat or practice words and phrases that they have heard as well as they might be.

Nods and gestures are accepted too frequently. This limits the opportunities for children to make best progress in speaking and using language to support their learning. Nevertheless, very good support is given to children in the early stages of developing English language skills through well-planned small language groups. This very effective use of bilingual staff builds children's confidence in understanding and communicating both in their mother tongue and in English. Teaching staff provide an interesting range of activities and are positive in their support of individual children, for example, sharing dual language books with them.

67. Listening is promoted well during story time when small groups of children gather with an adult to share stories and talk about the characters. These activities are carefully planned and provide good opportunities for the children to take turns, listen to others and develop confidence to talk in front of each other. Role-play is integrated well into the range of activities provided and is linked closely to experiences that are familiar to the children. Adult involvement is positive and provides good opportunities to extend children's language. This was observed when a group of children playing in the home corner 'baked' chapattis and shared them with their classmates. However, these opportunities are not always used well. In some activities, not enough space is allowed for the children to respond and use their developing language. As a result, they do not get enough practice in the use of language to communicate their ideas and to help them organise their thinking.
68. Reading skills are satisfactorily promoted through stories and the provision of a range of books in the reading areas. The children are keen to listen but as yet do not readily join in some of the familiar phrases. For example, during the story of 'The Gingerbread man' children were not helped to learn and use the repeated rhyme 'Run, run as fast as you can, you can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man'. Although stories are a regular feature of each session, insufficient time is given for the children to talk about the characters, recall the main parts in a story or ask questions. Children enjoy sitting in the library areas and 'reading' the stories by looking at the pictures.
69. Most children are in the very early stages of developing writing skills. Most make marks using pencils, crayons or paint to communicate their thoughts. Writing is promoted through a range of activities and adults provide satisfactory basic skills support. For example, children draw pictures of the characters in the 'Gingerbread Man' story. They 'write' a shopping list before shopping for ingredients to make gingerbread men biscuits. Children make marks when asked to write their name but staff are not consistent in expecting children to write their name when the opportunity arises. Teaching staff do not keep detailed records of children's achievements and the present system needs improving to provide up-to-date information on what the children have learned.

## **Mathematical Development**

70. Children make good progress in their mathematical development during their time in nursery and most are likely to reach the expected standard by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage in many aspects of mathematical development. These include counting, calculating and using shape, space and measure but their ability to use mathematical language is less well developed and lower than would normally be expected. This is because they arrive in school with such limited abilities to express themselves in English. The standards they achieve are similar to those found when the school was last inspected. A feature of the mathematical curriculum is the way that staff include regular opportunities for children to practise and consolidate their counting and calculating skills. Imaginative play is used well because it gives children

a chance to apply what they have learned in practical situations such as 'playing shop'. Children make progress because they are keen to learn and stick at tasks once they have started them.

71. Counting rhymes and songs feature regularly in the mathematical curriculum. Children are starting to learn a good range of songs which help them to remember numbers and sequences. A few are able to use their knowledge of counting games and rhymes to reinforce this learning by trying to work out simple number problems. During a singing activity children were recalling the song that described how 'Five little ducks went swimming one day'. They enjoyed acting out the song and many were able to predict the number of ducks that were due to return as they completed each verse.
72. Although the majority of children find it hard to express themselves in English, it is clear through many of the activities they complete that they are improving their understanding of shape, space and measures. They successfully complete jigsaws which require them to spot recurring patterns and shapes. Some higher attainers are beginning to match similar shapes and patterns in the classroom around them, such as noticing how the tables they sit on are bigger versions of the jigsaw pieces they are playing with.
73. The majority of the teaching in mathematics is good overall with the rest satisfactory. Staff are successful in making sure that mathematics thinking is evident in other areas of learning. This allows children opportunities to apply what they have learnt in practical situations. Some good examples of this were seen during snack time. Each group worked out how many were present and how many cups they would need for their milk and how many they had to spare. This required the children to carry out simple calculations. Most got the right answer because what they were asked to do was so practically based. The best teaching occurred during sessions such as these because the tasks grabbed children's interest.
74. In the more ordinary lessons, adults missed some learning opportunities because they did not give children enough time to reflect on what they had asked them to do, counting out the numbers for them. Such teaching limits what children are able to achieve and makes the work too easy for some of the higher attainers.
75. Staff make good use of the resources available including computer software which helps children to consolidate their learning in a practical way. The overall quality of teachers' planning is better than when the school was last inspected but there is still not enough detail in the weekly plans to guarantee that all aspects of the curriculum are covered regularly.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

76. Children make good progress overall in this area of learning and they are on course to reach the standards expected at the end of the Foundation Stage. This represents good achievement because they arrive in nursery with attainment levels lower than might be expected for their age.
77. Through practically based activities, children learn about objects around them and begin to predict what might happen when they use them. A good example of this was seen when children played in the water tray. Many correctly predicted which containers would be the most efficient for gathering water and how the one with holes

in the bottom would be the least efficient. Some higher attainers were able to work out how the problem of losing water could be solved by covering the holes.

78. When they get the chance, most children use tools well and select the right ones for the task in hand. For example, several groups worked with clay, rolling and moulding it in the shape of a 'Gingerbread Man'. They selected the tools sensibly, making sure they used the rolling pin first to flatten the clay and then a spatula to shape it in the way they wanted to. Children took great care to make sure the 'finished product' was exactly what they wanted.
79. Children are successful in improving their computer skills during their time in nursery. Staff select a suitable range of software which children really enjoy using and make good links with other curriculum areas. For example, colour matching and sorting activities are reinforced and consolidated and staff organize ICT very effectively. This is because the machines are sensibly grouped together and children are encouraged to do things for themselves. They are expected to use the mouse to make things happen and use a 'touch screen' as they try to match animal shapes.
80. Children's knowledge of their own and other cultures is good. They celebrate festivals such as Christmas, Eid and Chinese New Year, learning about the similarities and differences in people's lives and how they prepare for these great events. Many become excited as they try to explain how they are planning to celebrate.
81. Children's understanding of events in their own lives is improving because staff introduce 'family situations' into children's role play. This helps them to increase their confidence as they recreate their 'family' in the home corner, organizing mealtimes and putting their dolls to bed.
82. Most of the teaching in this area is good. This is because the activities are well organized and carefully planned. Whilst recognizing that children have very limited English language skills, staff encourage them to observe what they see around them. In the best lessons, adults provide opportunities for children to learn from direct experience. For example, one group spent a long time constructing a tower using plastic shapes. Through skilful questioning, the adult working with them helped the group to talk about why 'bigger' blocks needed to be at the bottom and how they might improve their structure still further. All the children got a chance to contribute and their answers were valued. This helped to build their confidence.
83. The more ordinary teaching did not give children long enough to reflect on what they had been asked to do. An example of this was seen when an adult was asking questions of a group playing in the water. Children were interested and enjoyed what they were doing but some group members were quite happy to allow the adult to describe to them what was happening rather than try out some words for themselves.

### **Physical development**

84. Teaching is sound in this area of learning and children achieve well in activities which require the use of tools such as cutters, scissors and rolling pins. The large majority of children are likely to reach most of the early learning goals in this area. Sufficient space is provided in the classrooms and also in the outdoor learning area to offer appropriate physical development opportunities. Although the poor weather meant the outdoor play area was not used during the inspection, planning shows that this is now well used. This is better than during the last inspection when provision was judged to be in need of improvement. Large equipment, such as climbing apparatus and

wheeled toys, are provided and planning ensures that children experience safe and appropriate physical challenges. Further opportunities are created for the children to develop social skills, such as taking care of others' safety and waiting until it is their turn.

85. Indoor activities allow children to climb and gain confidence on smaller climbing apparatus. The provision of steps, slide and planks effectively supports special needs children in developing confidence and control in movement. A good range of activities is provided to help the children develop skills in handling smaller objects such as rolling pins, glue spreaders and mark making tools. They confidently handle a wide range of materials, working independently as they make models from junk. They demonstrate good control as they explore measurement in the water tray, carefully pouring as they fill and empty a range of containers. Children are provided with good skills support and usually have good opportunities to use their newly learned skills independently. Occasionally, some activities fail to recognise this. For example, when making pictures of 'Gingerbread men' all the pieces were pre cut although the children were able to cut successfully for themselves.

### **Creative Development**

86. Although most children arrive in nursery with limited experiences in this area, the majority are on course to reach the early learning goals. This is because of the good progress they make. At first much of their imaginative play is solitary but some older, more mature children become very successful at using their imagination. They take full advantage of the well equipped home corner to recreate scenes from their family life, using 'household' props to good effect as they sustain their role play for long periods.
87. The school offers a good range of learning opportunities for the children as they help them experience different colours and textures. One group used small cardboard boxes and rolls successfully to 'print' pictures and patterns that they created for themselves. Children take a pride in their work and show good levels of interest and motivation, often reluctant to leave unless they are happy with what they have completed.
88. Children enjoy singing. Most are able to join in with a good range of rhymes and songs although some find it hard to keep up and join in with the actions. This is because of their limited language skills and because some of the commercial tapes move at too fast a pace for them.
89. A positive feature of children's work in this area is the way that they are able to use body language and gestures to explain how they feel and what they trying to express. This allows them to express themselves creatively even though the have difficulty in selecting the right word. A good example of this was seen in the way children's craft activities allowed them to indicate through gesture how they planned to assemble their model. The adult working with them skilfully used a combination of gestures and words to lead them through the project. She knew what each child could do and, as a result, either asked questions at just the right level or communicated with them non-verbally, offering suggestions on how their work might be improved. This gave them confidence to try things for themselves.
90. The best teaching came when children were given such positive opportunities as these. For example, the adult working with them talked about the colours each group member was using, saying 'look at this colour, can you find it somewhere else in the

nursery so we can match it?' Through a mixture of word and gesture each group member was able to express themselves. Occasionally, the teaching was less successful than this because the task set was too easy or the children were given too much support. An example of this was seen when children were making a picture. The adult working with them wrote their names on each piece of work without encouraging children to try this for themselves as they had done successfully in other activities.