

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DOUGLAS VALLEY EARLY YEARS CENTRE**

Wigan

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106398

Head of Centre: Mrs A Kendrick

Lead inspector: Ms S Billington

Dates of inspection: 9 – 10 March 2004

Inspection number: 255985

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:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	3 – 4 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	104 (mostly part-time)
School address:	Turner Street Off Greenough Street Wigan Lancashire
Postcode:	WN1 3SU
Telephone number:	01942 322473
Fax number:	01942 777982
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Coun. A J Bullen
Date of previous inspection:	1 June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This early excellence centre provides care and education for children aged 0 – 4. Around 18 children are cared for in baby and toddler units and 104 three and four year olds attend nursery sessions, mostly on a part-time basis. The centre offers a breakfast and after school club and a holiday club. Some nursery-aged children attend these as well as pupils from local primary schools aged three to eleven.

The vast majority of children attending the nursery are of White British heritage with a small number from minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost all children speak English as their first language. A small proportion of children (six per cent) has special educational needs including two with statements of special need.

The centre has gained several awards including the local authority's quality standard and the Eco-schools green flag. It is currently working towards the 'Aiming High'<sup>1</sup> award and the healthy schools standard.

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<sup>1</sup> Aiming High is a national accreditation for out of school care.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4343	Ms S Billington	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage English as an additional language
8943	Ms M Manning	Lay inspector	
4341	Mr D Clegg	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

The centre provides a **good** education and has several very good features. Children achieve well overall and very well in some areas. The centre meets the needs of a wide cross-section of the community. The comprehensive range of services it provides is effective in enabling children to have access to good quality education. Teaching is good and the curriculum is enriched by a very good range of exciting activities. Leadership is very good and the head of centre has a clear vision for its current and future development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children get a very good start in their learning
- The curriculum is very good and children get involved in a range of exciting activities
- Leadership is very good; the centre has been very successful in expanding the range of services offered
- There are not enough checks on the quality of the educational provision
- Provision for children with learning difficulties is very good
- Children's attitudes and behaviour are very good
- Provision for personal development is very good
- Parents get very good information about how to help their children learn
- Teaching time could be used more flexibly

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection, overall improvement has been good and very good in terms of meeting the needs of a wider group of people. After a long period of uncertainty, what was formerly a nursery has been successfully established as an early excellence centre (EEC). The range of services of care and education services has expanded and the quality of these is demonstrated by national and local accreditation and awards.

The centre has successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Systems for planning have improved and there is now a comprehensive programme for supporting students on placement. The needs of the lower attaining children are generally met and provision for children with special educational needs is now very good. There is more awareness of the needs of higher attaining children but still scope to extend some activities to raise the level of challenge at times. Some systems are in place to check on the quality of teaching but these do not yet include all staff.

Children continue to make good progress and achieve very well in many areas. Teaching is now good overall.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

Overall children achieve **well**. They make particularly good progress in their personal and social development and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Their skills in speaking and listening are also extended well. They gain good knowledge and understanding of the world through a range of exciting activities and they are learning to observe closely and investigate the world around. Children also have a good base of skills in early literacy and numeracy and are well on course to achieve expected levels at the end of their reception year in primary school.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is **good**. Teaching is **good** overall and very good in some areas of learning. All staff pay good attention to boosting children's confidence and interest in learning through a range of well planned and exciting activities. Resources are used well and there is a good balance between directed activities and those that children choose and organise independently. Teaching time is not wasted, but occasionally could be managed more effectively to meet the diverse needs of children in group sessions and in particular to extend the thinking of higher attaining children.

The curriculum is very good. It is well planned and enriched by a good range of activities such as visits and work associated with the Eco-schools initiative and healthy schools project. Very good attention is paid to children's care and welfare. The centre is flexible in responding to children's or parents' needs. Facilities such as the breakfast club and the provision of lunchtime or after school care enable children to benefit from the educational opportunities provided in the nursery sessions. Parents are given every opportunity to become involved in supporting their children's learning.

Provision for children's personal development is **very good** and they develop a very good awareness of their role in the centre's community and the wider world.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The head of centre has a very clear sense of direction and has been very active in successfully managing the expansion of the range of services provided. She is well supported by senior staff who have clear roles and responsibilities. The deputy head has taken a clear lead in planning the programme of learning for children in the nursery setting; this is very thorough but now needs to be evaluated more closely to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching in all the centre's activities.

The governing body has only recently been established but is well organised to take on its delegated responsibilities.

## PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about the opportunities that the centre offers. They are particularly pleased with the provision of flexible care arrangements that fit in with work patterns and mean that their children can benefit from the educational sessions. They feel that their children enjoy coming to the centre and make good progress in their learning. Children clearly enjoy participating in all that the centre offers and are keen and interested learners.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Put systems in place to check on the quality of provision
- Make more flexible use of teaching time

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning**

Children achieve well in all areas of learning and are attaining good standards in relation to expectations for their age.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement in personal, social and emotional development is particularly good
- Children's language skills are extended well and they have a good base of skills in number
- Children gain a good understanding of the local environment and the wider world
- Higher attaining children could occasionally be challenged more in some adult-led activities
- Children with learning difficulties make very good progress

#### **Commentary**

1. Good teaching and a well planned range of activities ensure that children achieve well. The centre places a strong emphasis on boosting their self-confidence and self-esteem and all children develop very positive attitudes to learning. They are encouraged to become independent in organising activities and taking responsibility for tidying up. Many successfully learn to cooperate and to appreciate the feelings and needs of others.
2. Good planning and carefully structured activities ensure that children extend their understanding and use of language. Many are attentive listeners in group discussions and when listening to stories and their responses show good understanding. Frequent opportunities to count and to calculate help children to gain a good understanding of the number system. Some are already showing understanding of addition in everyday situations. Just occasionally, in group sessions, some higher attaining children could be introduced to more challenging activities. For example, some show good understanding of the number system to 10 but do not go beyond this. Some have a good base of skills in the early stages of writing through mark-making, but are not introduced to ways of recording simple phrases and sentences.
3. Activities linked to the Eco-schools project, local walks, and visits and visitors help children to appreciate the world around. They are gaining good skills in early aspects of science, for example, by talking about features and observing changes in the environment. Work on important festivals such as Christmas and Chinese New Year helps children to appreciate similarities and differences in cultures and beliefs.
4. Carefully targeted support is successful in enabling children with a variety of learning difficulties to make very good progress. Their needs are carefully identified and there is good planning to target areas for development and to record their progress. Staff are well deployed to support individual children where necessary and are very successful in enabling them to access and benefit from the range of activities on offer.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Children's attitudes and behaviour are very good and they are supported very well in their personal development.

#### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are keen to come to the centre and very much enjoy taking part in its activities
- Staff have very high expectations for children's behaviour and they respond well

- A range of activities help to instil positive values in the children

### Commentary

5. Children settle down very quickly at the beginning of sessions and soon become involved in everything that is provided for them. Because of the orderly routines and pleasant manner of the staff, children know what is expected of them and they respond very well. They work together very well for their age and are capable of doing this without adult direction. They engage well with purposeful activities, sometimes for much longer than would normally be expected. It is rare for children to show unacceptable behaviour and none was seen during the inspection. In fact, they are very tolerant of each other and play very well together.
6. The centre involves the children in its work as an Eco school. This is giving them very clear guidance on moral and social issues related to looking after the environment. Litter picking in the community is a regular event and practical activities such as this help children to understand the part that they play in the community. Children are helped to become independent through registering their arrival at the beginning of sessions and displaying their names on a board when they have had their snack. The children are made well aware of the customs and faiths of other people in the world through learning about celebrations such as Chinese New Year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

### Teaching and learning

Overall teaching and learning are good. Assessment arrangements are very good and this contributes to effective planning, particularly for children with special educational needs.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistent routines and clear expectations support children’s personal and social development very well
- Good use is made of resources to engage children’s interest and support learning
- There is a good emphasis on teaching key skills, but children’s involvement is too limited in some activities
- There are some very good strategies to encourage children’s independence
- Very good targeted support for children with special educational needs supports their participation in activities
- Teaching time is not always used in the most effective way

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 12 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	5	7	0	0	0

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

7. Although teaching seen during the inspection was mostly satisfactory, records of children’s progress and observation of incidental activities shows that the overall quality of teaching is good. Relationships between adults and children are very good and the clear routines for each session help children to feel secure in the setting. These factors are key elements in children’s success as learners.
8. In many direct group teaching sessions, resources are used very effectively to engage children’s interest and to extend their understanding. Number lines, for example, draw their attention to the order of numbers as they count a group of objects and work out what would be ‘one more’. As

adults read from a 'big book' they point to the print to demonstrate that this tells the story while drawing children's attention to the pictures to help them to understand what is happening. These sorts of activities are used well to teach early elements of literacy and numeracy. However, in some activities involvement of the children is limited to the individuals that respond or offer to answer a question. More use needs to be made of strategies to encourage all the children to demonstrate their understanding, for example, through using number cards or simple signals to indicate their answers.

9. The environment is very well organised to support learning. A wide range of practical activities is always on offer, some with adult support and others that allow children to explore and investigate independently or with a friend. Children are excited by learning; this was evident, for example, by the group that was placing play people in a 'house' and animatedly discussed their size, dress and features as they decided what roles they might play in the family. A good range of materials in the art area encourages children to experiment with different media and to explore the impact of using these to represent their imaginative ideas or observations.
10. Children with special educational needs are successfully included in all activities on offer. These children are often supported individually and encouraged to respond to questions, offer their ideas and plan their activities. Very good assessment arrangements ensure that all adults working with them are aware of their learning targets and their progress is carefully tracked. Assessment is also used well to target the teaching of other children in specific activities so that they take the next steps in their learning.
11. No time is wasted during a nursery session but just occasionally time could be used more flexibly. In some group teaching sessions, for example, some children would benefit from moving on to a practical activity after a short period, rather than sitting with the whole group for around twenty minutes. Reducing the size of the group in this way would also help the adult to use more focused questions and approaches to challenge and extend the learning of the children that remain.

## **The curriculum**

The overall curriculum provision is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good planning meets the needs of the great majority of children
- There are some imaginative and innovative opportunities for learning
- The curriculum benefits from a great deal of enrichment
- All children are encouraged to participate in all activities

### **Commentary**

12. The nursery takes full account of national guidance<sup>2</sup> when planning learning opportunities. This results in all children having a very carefully balanced range of opportunities to learn in many different ways. Throughout each nursery session there is a very careful and judicious balance between activities that are directed by the teachers and those that the children are free to choose. Because of the importance given to using the national guidance, children are very well prepared for the next stage in education.
13. The centre also adds enormously to the quality of the curriculum through using imaginative and innovative ways of presenting activities, for instance providing shaving foam to encourage children to make marks and create patterns on a desk. To this is added the way the centre takes advantage of a range of schemes and initiatives to support children's learning. These include:

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<sup>2</sup> Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage provides guidance on planning for and teaching children in the early years of their education

- The Eco-school initiative to promote children's awareness of environmental issues
- The healthy schools' work which is making an impact on the curriculum and on the provision of snacks and lunches. This is particularly important given that the centre provides meals as part of the full day care.
- The RSPB<sup>3</sup> bird watch scheme was used to encourage pupils to think about the birds that visit their grounds.

14. A further strong feature of the curriculum is the consistent and relentless attention given to children's personal development. This aspect underpins almost all the work of the nursery sessions. All the staff are very conscious of the need to give children a firm basis of moral behaviour. Through their own example, staff provide constant reinforcement about how to treat others with respect. They encourage cooperation and provide plenty of activities where children learn to play together, taking turns and generally learning to live in a community.
15. The centre is a very inclusive community. All children are made to feel welcome and encouraged to take part in all the activities. Those children with special educational needs are given the right opportunities to help them to reach their learning targets and are supported very well. Individual members of staff give special help to integrate children making sure that all benefit from what the centre offers. If they need particular help to do a specific activity, this is given. Very careful records are maintained so that children's progress can be assessed regularly and parents are kept fully informed about how well their children are doing.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The centre pays very good attention to making sure children are cared for well. Staff support children very well as a result of the very good assessments that are made on their progress. The centre has very good strategies for getting children's views on different aspects of its work.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are very safe and happy in this calm and orderly centre
- There are good arrangements for introducing children to the nursery sessions
- Staff have very good records of children's development and know them well
- Children's views are used well to support the centre's projects

### **Commentary**

16. Arrangements for looking after children are very good. From the start to the end of sessions, staff supervise them closely but unobtrusively. The calm and very well organised start sets the tone for the sessions. There is proper attention to health and safety and to children's medical needs. Babies are well monitored and daily records are passed on to parents for their information.
17. There is a very good induction programme for children who join the nursery in September. This includes a home visit to meet children in a familiar environment; parents are very positive about the value of this in helping their children to be confident about starting nursery. However, because of lack of time, the induction programme is not as comprehensive for children who start nursery later in the academic year. Staff are looking actively at ways of offering the same good opportunities to these later entrants without affecting the education of those already attending the sessions.
18. Children's progress files show very good use of assessment so that staff know how they need to support them in all stages of their development. Records of achievement are kept with examples of what each individual child can do; these are also very accessible to parents. Each session,

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<sup>3</sup> Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

the key worker<sup>4</sup> gives a different 'special child' the chance to wear a sash and sit in a big chair. This has the aim of raising children's self-esteem within the group and makes sure that all have a turn at being 'special'.

19. Through its work as an Eco school, the centre has involved the children well in finding out their views about their environment. The whole project is made meaningful to them because they are encouraged to reflect on what they can do to make a difference. Children have also been asked about their ideas for improvements to the outdoor play area. Parents are sometimes asked to talk things through with their children, for example, what activities they like and whether they have any worries, and to feed the information back to the centre. Children in the out of school clubs are consulted about the range of activities and invited to suggest the sorts of things that they would like to do.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The links with parents are very strong. Those with the community and with other schools and colleges are very good. The extended services which the centre provides are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very strong and well maintained links with parents
- The centre seeks the views of parents very well
- Very good 'wraparound' and full day care is provided as a service for local families
- The very good links with other schools and colleges help the centre to promote excellence and support a wider group of children

### **Commentary**

20. Parents are very happy and positive about the centre. The arrangements for them to come in at the beginnings and ends of sessions are very well organised so that there is always the chance for a word with the key worker. The quantity and quality of information available to parents is very impressive and very accessible. Parents speak particularly highly about the 'diaries'<sup>5</sup> and the fact that their children are happy in school.
21. The centre regularly surveys parents to find out what they think about the provision and the value of its services. This confirms that there is a very high level of satisfaction. Parents' views are acted on; for example, an interim progress report on their children has been introduced for the mid-year meetings with staff as a result of parental feedback.
22. A very good range of support services is offered by the centre to local families. These are flexible and very well planned so that parents can choose the level of care that suits their needs. Parents can also take part in courses that familiarise them with aspects of their children's education. Most recently, these have concentrated on what children will be learning at primary school. The centre's surveys show that parents and grandparents value these highly. Visits from representatives of local services, for example, the police and health visitors, enhance the curriculum. Children's learning is also extended through visitors who share their experiences and expertise, for instance to celebrate various festivals or to demonstrate their skills in areas such as dance.
23. The centre's links with the main local primary schools are effective in supporting arrangements for before and after school care for a group of school-aged children. Arrangements for transferring children to reception classes in primary schools throughout the area are very

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<sup>4</sup> The key worker is the member of staff who has special responsibility for supporting and monitoring a specific group of children in the centre

<sup>5</sup> These are weekly bulletins outlining what will be going on in the nursery during the next week and suggesting how parents can help at home

thorough. Extensive links with local colleges support the family learning projects and joint arrangements for teacher and student training.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The centre is very well led and effectively managed. The governing body has only been established since September 2003 and it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The head of centre provides a very sharp sense of purpose and direction
  - Senior managers make a significant contribution to the centre's success
  - The provision for special educational needs is very well managed
  - Good use is made of information about children's progress
  - There is not enough monitoring of teaching
  - The governing body is well placed to begin making a contribution to the centre's work
24. There is a strong vision of success that drives the work of the centre. It has expanded significantly in the last few years and now encompasses a wide range of childcare and educational opportunities. This expansion has been led and managed in a measured and thoughtful manner, underpinned by a determination to provide the very best service for the community. This is evident not only in the quality of the provision, but also through the very close working partnership with parents. A key to the centre's success is its flexibility in catering for very different levels of need. This commitment to providing high quality services is shared by all staff; a strong sense of team work pervades the centre despite the diverse nature of its activities.
25. As the centre has grown, the senior managers have played an increasingly important role in how it is managed. The curriculum is now managed in a coherent and consistent manner that gives particular purpose to the work of the nursery staff. Curriculum priorities are identified through the use of information about how well children are progressing in particular areas of learning. This is making a difference to what activities are planned and clarifying the focus of the learning. The development of particular initiatives, such as the resource base<sup>6</sup>, and the responses to national initiatives are successfully co-ordinated by the centre development worker.
26. The provision for special educational needs is very well managed. There is regular updating of learning targets on children's individual education plans (IEPs). The updates are based on assessments to which all staff who work with the child contribute. This ensures that assessments provide a rounded view of how well the children are doing across a range of activities. The way the records are managed is also very effective in ensuring that all staff are fully aware of each child's learning targets.
27. The procedures for managing the performance of qualified teachers are fully in place but there are currently no similar procedures for other staff. Given the nature of the centre and the extent of the involvement of different staff in supporting teaching, this is a weakness. It is resulting in too limited observation of teaching and checking on the quality of activities in the nursery setting. Senior staff have recognised the need for this and more time is planned for evaluation in the next academic year.
28. The governing body has only been in place since September 2003. It is well organised and representative of a good cross section of the community. However, it is too soon to evaluate the effectiveness of its work, although some governors have previously given good support to the centre through sitting on the management committee (the organisation that preceded the setting up of the governing body). The centre is not yet responsible for managing its own budget; this will happen in April 2004.

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<sup>6</sup> This is a loans service that provides books, materials and equipment to all local providers of early years education

# **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

## **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are confident and interested in learning
- Children learn to work as part of a group and to take responsibility
- Many children develop a good awareness of the needs and feelings of others

#### **Commentary**

29. Teaching in this area is very good. All staff work hard to form good relationships with the children and to ensure that they feel secure and happy in the nursery setting. They are very aware of the needs of individuals and provide sensitive support where necessary to help children to benefit from the learning opportunities on offer. Very good routines are established to help children to settle at the start of each session. The selection of a 'special person' gives each child the opportunity to take responsibility, for example, to count the number present. Children are involved in discussing the name of the day and choosing relevant words and symbols for the weather board; almost all listen attentively during these sessions and are keen to respond. Children are excited by the wide range of activities available in each session and almost all make independent choices about where they will work. Many work for sustained periods at a chosen activity, showing remarkable concentration and inventiveness as they extend their learning through imaginative play.
30. Children are given good opportunities to work as part of a group in planned sessions and self-chosen activities. Many are confident in offering their ideas in group discussion, for example in suggesting which songs to sing to finish the session. Some older children share equipment amicably and understand the need to take turns when they play a game. The majority readily takes on responsibility, organising their own drinks and snacks and displaying their name cards to show that they have had them. All children have designated areas to tidy at the end of each session and they respond quickly to the music that signals 'tidy up time'. Many work well without direction from adults, for example, sweeping up the sand and wiping tables.
31. Many well-organised activities encourage children to express their views and feelings and to develop awareness of others. When discussing the feelings of Goldilocks, for example, some children were able to suggest that she might feel sad and another that she might feel happy 'cos she's eaten all the porridge'. Many children show a sensitive awareness of those with special educational needs. In one group, for example, children are very tolerant of a child who finds it very difficult to wait for his turn in any activity.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children learn to use language to express their ideas and understanding in a variety of situations
- Children develop interest in books and begin to understand some of the conventions of print
- Children have opportunities to write for a variety of purposes, but these could be extended further

## Commentary

32. Teaching in this area is good. Planning shows a clear focus on extending children's understanding and use of language through introducing and emphasising key vocabulary. Most children are confident in speaking to adults in small group situations, such as 'snack time' and when playing outside. Almost all children listen attentively to stories and instructions and show understanding by their responses. Some higher attaining children speak in complex sentences and are beginning to use talk to organise their thinking and ideas. This was evident, for example, in the role play area, when two girls negotiated what they were going to do to prepare a 'meal' and then acted out the scenario that they had planned.
33. Stories are used well to engage children's interest in books and to teach early reading skills. An adult will ask, for example, "where am I going to start reading?" and encourage children to appreciate that the print tells the story. The use of resources such as finger puppets encourages children to re-tell stories that they have heard. As a teacher introduced the story of Goldilocks, she encouraged children to practise their 'daddy bear' and 'baby bear' voices. They were thus prepared to join in the relevant parts of the story and started to gain an understanding of character and events. Many children recognise their names and some higher attainers attempt to copy them or write them independently.
34. Children have opportunities to practise early writing skills through using a range of materials in the mark-making area or through adult-led activities. Overall, however, skills in writing are not promoted to the same extent as those in reading; opportunities are missed to demonstrate how writing might be used, for example, by writing a caption for a model. During the inspection, children were writing invitations to their teddies in preparation for a teddy bears picnic. Discussion and the use of an illustration of a picnic gave them a view of the purpose of the task but the teacher missed the opportunity to demonstrate the process of writing an invitation. The task was also prescribed in terms of the format to be used and this limited, to some extent, children's abilities to demonstrate what they knew about writing.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well planned practical activities help children to develop a good understanding of number
- Children are encouraged to explore mathematical ideas through play activities

## Commentary

35. Teaching of this area is good and some aspects are very good. Routine activities are very effective in helping children to understand how the number system works. Each day, for example, staff involve children in checking the names of those who are absent and finding the matching number on the number line. In the outside area, numbers on vehicles encourage children to line them up in the right order.
36. Planned activities introduce a good variety of tasks to practise counting skills and to begin to understand the value of number. In counting a group of objects, a teacher encouraged all the children to 'show me' a matching number of fingers. This gave her a good view of those who had limited understanding of the number system and those that were ready for more challenge in their thinking. For these children, she introduced questions such as 'tell me one more' as she added another object to the group.
37. Carefully chosen provision in areas such as role play and sand help to extend children's understanding of mathematical ideas. In the 'house' for example, different sized bowls and

spoons encouraged children to name and match 'big', 'little' and 'middle' sized. A group of children playing with wooden blocks created the right sized beds for the three bears. In the snack area, children learn to use terms such as 'full' as they pour their drinks from a jug into a beaker.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are encouraged to be curious and interested in the world around
- Good use is made of stories and themes to help children to appreciate change, customs and beliefs
- Limited use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning

### **Commentary**

38. Only a limited amount of direct teaching was seen in this area but the quality of activities indicates that it is good and some aspects are very good. Involvement in the Eco-schools project has been used well to raise children's awareness of the environment. Activities such as exploring the movement of light from a torch and changing the effect by using coloured discs engage children's interest and form a good basis of understanding of scientific phenomena. Discussion of the features of three teddy bears encouraged children to use descriptive terms such as 'fluffy' and 'soft'. The adult supporting the activity introduced magnifying glasses to enable close observation of features such as the triangular nose before children made drawings of their bears.

39. Discussion each day about the weather helps children to appreciate the process of change. Work on a winter theme involved children in considering 'cold colours' as they painted and made collages to depict winter scenes. The story of 'The Bear Hunt' was used well to explore a journey across differing terrain and to reinforce positional language. After a coach trip, children made very good pictorial maps showing key features and buildings that they had observed on their journey.

40. Children successfully learn to use a variety of tools and construction equipment. They use scissors, for example, to cut and shape paper for a collage. However, use of information and communication technology (ICT) is limited and the centre has identified the need for improvement in the range of equipment available and the skills of staff in using it.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a strong focus on making children aware of how they might keep healthy
- Regular use of the outside area helps children to develop confidence and control in their movements

### **Commentary**

41. Very limited direct teaching was seen but planning and incidental observations indicate that it is good. Work on the healthy schools project is proving successful in raising children's awareness of the importance of eating the right foods. Activities such as identifying different sorts of vegetables and making soup are used well to promote the idea of healthy eating. The centre provides healthy snacks during each session so that children are introduced, for example, to the idea of eating different fruits.

42. In using the outside area, most children move with a reasonable degree of control and increasing confidence in steering and pedaling wheeled vehicles around a marked route. Many of the older ones show good awareness of space and of each other. Children are learning to stop and to start moving again to a specific signal, again showing good control. Regular use of pencils, crayons, paint and playdough helps to develop children's skills in finer movements. Many learn to draw and paint with recognisable form, evident, for example, in their family 'portraits' based on the study of artists such as Hockney and Degas.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have good opportunities to represent their ideas in a variety of ways
- Well structured activities encourage the children to use their imagination
- Children enjoy singing but opportunities for other types of music making are limited

### **Commentary**

43. The only direct teaching seen was in music and this was satisfactory. The range of activities to support other aspects of creative development is good. There are particularly good opportunities for children to learn a range of techniques and to use a variety of media in art. A good range of displays includes work based on discussion of famous artists such as Klimt. Children learn to make bold use of colour and techniques such as printing, collage and painting to represent their ideas and observations. A collaborative project involved children in weaving using long strips of cloth and pieces of wool, creating a subtle but colourful impact.
44. Small scale play equipment and the role play area encourage children to plan and act out scenes from everyday life and stories. After listening to 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' two children successfully took on roles in the house, adopting the voices of the bears and interacting well as they organised equipment to re-enact the story. Two children making cakes with playdough put them into the 'oven' to bake and decorated them with candles before singing 'Happy Birthday'.
45. Children know a good range of songs and participate enthusiastically in singing, particularly if actions are needed! They listen attentively to music and many were fascinated when introduced to the xylophone and listening to the notes changing as the beater moved along the blocks. However, opportunities for them to try out the instrument for themselves were restricted because of limited time and resources. Structured teaching of music often takes place at the end of the session when there is not enough time to provide good 'hands on' experience for the children. The centre has rightly identified the need for some training in the teaching of music because staff are not entirely secure in their knowledge in this area.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	N/A
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	N/A
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	0
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*

