

# INSPECTION REPORT

## HAREWOOD CENTRE NURSERY SCHOOL

Pontefract

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108134

Headteacher: Mrs D. M. James

Lead inspector: Mrs M. R. Shepherd

Dates of inspection: 3 – 6 November 2003

Inspection number: 256335

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 children:	3 – 4 years
Gender of children:	Mixed
Number on roll;	52
School address:	Harewood Avenue Pontefract
Postcode:	WF8 2ER
Telephone number:	01977 722835
Fax number:	01977 722835
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor J. Kershaw
Date of previous inspection:	9 <sup>th</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Harewood Centre Nursery School is situated in the middle of rented accommodation and serves six different schools with a range of different social circumstances. There are 104 places for children who attend on a part-time basis. Children join the school in the term that they become three years old. Once children have joined the school there is little movement in or out of the school during the year. There are three teachers, including the headteacher and two nursery nurses. Children are organised around a key worker who is responsible for monitoring their progress. One per cent of children are on the special educational needs register with statements of special educational needs. There are no children with English as an additional language at present, which is below average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is at the expected level. The school provides a playgroup every morning with a nursery nurse and two classroom assistants. There are also parents and toddlers sessions for four afternoons and a PEEP<sup>1</sup> group to support parents and young children. At the time of the inspection the governing body was in a state of transition. The previous governing body had completed its work and the new governing body had not yet been convened. Only two governors from outside the school were transferring between the old and the new bodies.

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<sup>1</sup> PEEP stands for Peers Early Education Project and aims to raise educational attainment by supporting parents and carers in their role as first educators.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11328	Mrs M. R. Shepherd	Lead inspector	Personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world
9986	Mr W. Twiss	Lay inspector	
22657	Mr M. Madeley	Team inspector	Mathematical, physical and creative development Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education Limited  
102 Bath Road  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL53 7JX

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **satisfactory** school. Children's achievement is satisfactory. Children have very good attitudes towards school and their behaviour is good. The additional support for parents and young children is good quality. Teaching is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are satisfactory. There have been major changes in the governing body and the new governing body has not yet been constituted. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children's physical and personal, social and emotional development are above the expected level and children have very positive attitudes towards school and behave well.
- The playgroup, parents and toddler groups and the PEEP<sup>2</sup> projects prepare children well for their nursery education and support parents effectively.
- The school's old and new governing bodies are in transition and the new one is not yet working effectively. The school has begun preparations for handling the school budget but these are not advanced enough.
- The headteacher manages the pre-nursery provision well but does not monitor the organisation of the nursery effectively enough to ensure that it always runs efficiently.
- Teachers support independent activities effectively in the outdoor play and wet areas but not as effectively in the indoor role-play, reading or mathematics areas.
- The school takes good care of its children and assessment systems are good.
- Links with parents and the community are good.
- Accommodation for the pre-nursery provision is excellent but the space for some group activities in the nursery is unsuitable for children.

There has been **satisfactory** improvement since the previous inspection. The school has improved all of the previous key issues apart from developing the governors' role. Although the school worked to extend governors' involvement, the recent changes in the membership of the governing body have reduced the effectiveness of these efforts. All of the good quality initiatives for parents and young children have been introduced since the previous inspection. Links with the community have been extended.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Standards and achievement overall are **satisfactory**. Standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world are at the expected level. The school provides regular individual support for children in art and computer skills and their achievement in these aspects is good. Standards in physical development are above the expected level because the school provides regular opportunities to develop skills with both large apparatus and with handling tools. Standards in personal, social and emotional development are above the expected level because the school sets a priority on this aspect of children's learning. Children have very good attitudes towards school and very good relationships with each other. Children's behaviour and their cultural development are good. Children's moral and social development is very good. Attendance is **satisfactory**.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**.

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. Teachers and support staff have a good understanding of each other's work. Teachers provide a good choice of activities for independent learning and children respond well. However, staff do not support independent activities systematically enough across all areas. There are good quality opportunities for children to work

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<sup>2</sup> PEEP stands for Peers Early Education Project and is designed to support parents and children from birth to five years old to help raise standards, particularly in literacy.

individually with staff. However, some groups are too big and children do not get enough chances to talk, and other groups are too small with children missing opportunities to benefit from teachers' direct support. The time spent at snack time is too long and the story time is too short. There is some inefficient use of teachers' time, when they tidy up after activities rather than working with children. Assessment systems are good quality and well organised. The playgroup team provides a good balance of activities across their sessions.

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. The use of visits out of school and visitors into school enriches the curriculum. The school organises very good quality individual support for children with special educational needs and these children make good progress in relation to their targets. The quality of the accommodation is satisfactory overall but the spaces for the group work at the beginning and end of each morning and afternoon are not all suitable for the children's needs. Accommodation and resources for the pre-nursery projects is outstanding.

The school takes **good** care of its children. It establishes trusting relationships between children and staff through the use of the key worker systems. Procedures for child protection are good. There are good links with external support agencies.

Links with parents and the community are **good**. Links with the community and other schools are good. The quality of the playgroup, parent and toddler group and PEEP projects is good.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are **satisfactory**. The headteacher leads and manages the pre-nursery provision effectively. Her leadership of the nursery is satisfactory but she does not monitor some aspects of the nursery routines effectively enough. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The chair of governors has a long term commitment to the school. The governing body is currently in a state of transition due to changes in government legislation and new roles and responsibilities are not yet in place. The school's preparation for handling the delegated budget next year is unsatisfactory.

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

Parents have very positive views about the school. They appreciate that their children like school and value the good range of activities that are available. They believe that the teaching is good and that there are effective arrangements for children to settle into the school. They would like more help in understanding how they can help their children at home. Children enjoy the range of different activities in the school.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- establish a new governing body, create committees and familiarise governors with their new roles;
- organise the new financial systems, and roles and responsibilities for handling the full school budget;
- improve the monitoring role of the headteacher to ensure that the organisation in the nursery always runs efficiently;
- improve the effectiveness of the support for children in independent play in the indoor role-play, reading and mathematics areas;
- improve the accommodation for the group work at the beginning and end of the morning and afternoon sessions.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN**

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

Standards overall are at the expected level and children's achievement is **satisfactory**. Achievement of the playgroup children is **good**.

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

- Standards in personal, social and emotional and physical development are above the expected level.
- Standards of art in creative development and computer skills in knowledge and understanding are above the expected level.
- Children achieve well in the playgroup.
- Children who attend the playgroup and then move through to the nursery in the afternoon achieve well.
- Children with special educational needs achieve well because the school provides them with very good support.

#### **Commentary**

1. The higher than expected standards in personal, social and emotional development reflect the school's priority in this Area of Learning<sup>3</sup>. Children make the transfer between their parent or carer and school staff at the beginning of morning or afternoon sessions because the school responds sensitively to both children's and parents' or carers' needs. Throughout the morning or afternoon sessions, staff ensure that children are given good quality opportunities to develop the skills in this Area of Learning. Children achieve better physical development than expected because there is a very good range of resources to extend these skills. Children move in different ways on the large apparatus and vehicles as well as using tools carefully because staff plan independent activities carefully to develop these skills.
2. Standards in art within creative development are better than expected because staff provide interesting activities in this aspect of the curriculum. There is a good level of adult support in the wet area where painting takes place and children benefit from the suggestions and support that these adults provide. In addition, staff work regularly on three-dimensional models with children which extends their use of materials and children develop a good level of skill in combining different colours and shapes. Children achieve better than expected in computer skills because there are interesting resources and a high level of adult support.
3. The playgroup is planned in conjunction with the nursery. This ensures that children receive a well-balanced programme of work, which supports their good achievement across the nursery curriculum. Resources are excellent and stimulating, and make it possible for children to extend their learning across all the Areas of Learning.
4. The school monitors the progress of the children who benefit from the additional provision of the playgroup in the mornings. Every child who has attended the playgroup since the beginning of term has made better progress than expected due to this additional provision. These children gain confidence from similar working routines in the playgroup and nursery, which extends their learning across other areas of the curriculum.

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<sup>3</sup> The Areas of Learning cover the six areas of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.



5. Children with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their capabilities because they receive very good quality support from their support assistants across all aspects of the curriculum. These children sustain their concentration well because staff provide a careful balance across different activities. Staff plan carefully for these children's needs in group work and this allows these children to take a part in shared activities. For example, in the Together Sessions<sup>4</sup> these children use signs to show whether they want milk or water.

### **Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Children's attitudes are **very positive** and their behaviour is **good**. Moral and social development is **very good**. Cultural development is **good** and spiritual development is **satisfactory**. Attendance levels are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are keen to come to school and play well with each other.
  - The school develops children's understanding of right and wrong very well.
  - The school successfully promotes very good relationships between children.
  - Children experience a good range of celebrations and festivals.
  - Punctuality is good.
6. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection because the school has maintained its strengths and improved some of them. Children's attitudes are more positive, partly because high quality resources are enticing for young children, and the school works even harder to promote positive relationships, through strategies such as their use of key workers. Children's moral and social development are now very good because the school has focused on these aspects.
  7. Most children come to school willingly. They know that they are safe and that a good range of quality resources is available to play with. They are excited and keen to play, for instance towards the end of a together session children asked, 'Can we play now?'. They concentrate well after choosing an activity, working at them for a good period of time before moving on. For example, children played 'firefighters' outside for more than ten minutes.
  8. The school develops children's sense of right and wrong and how to play in a community very well. Children behave well because staff have high expectations of how they will conduct themselves and consistently reward those who behave sensibly. Children move around the areas sensibly. Only a few run around and they are quickly stopped. Children sit calmly at together time and snack times. They eat and drink well, making very little mess. Children mostly treat the resources carefully, though a few squabbles were observed, for instance over cups in the sand tray. Children need reminding by an adult about putting things back after using them. Whilst children conscientiously cleaned palettes and brushes after art activities, tidying up at the end of a session is a weakness because staff do not identify clearly when this should begin. Children who continue to play are not told to stop and start packing away.
  9. Staff are friendly and caring towards all children. This positive example is taken up and followed by the children. They are friendly towards each other and greet each other warmly at the beginning of sessions. Staff organise groups with great care and forethought, so children who will go to the same infant school attend the same morning or afternoon session and will get to know each other well before they leave. Children play well alongside each other at independent activities as well as activities led by the staff.
  10. The school promotes children's cultural develop well. Topic work focuses on a good range of celebrations from the major world faiths and other cultures as well as encouraging local

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<sup>4</sup> Together Sessions occur at the beginning of the mornings and afternoons. Children meet with their key workers to register and discuss some aspects of the work to follow.

visitors, like grandparents and the firefighter. Children enjoyed the work on Diwali and handle the good resources with care. Christian festivals are celebrated regularly as are events like 'Mother's Day' and 'Guy Fawkes Night'. Other events, like Chinese New Year, are skilfully woven into the nursery's work.

11. Rates of attendance are satisfactory. Parents appreciate the importance of punctuality and the warm welcome they receive at the beginning of sessions. This ensures that children begin sessions on time.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	10.00

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	<sup>5</sup>

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Asian

No of pupils on roll
51.5
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and the curriculum are **satisfactory**. Care and welfare are good and links with parents and the community are **good**.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. Assessment is **good**.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff have a good understanding of each other's work.
- Key workers create good relationships with their designated children.
- Staff work well with children on an individual basis but some groups are too large to ensure children all participate fully in the activities.
- Teachers organise a good range of independent activities but do not organise adult support systematically enough across all of the different areas.
- Teachers do not provide an effective balance across the different types of activities in the morning or afternoon sessions.
- There is some inefficient use of teachers' time.
- Assessment systems are good.

<sup>5</sup> Not applicable.

## Commentary

12. Teachers plan carefully across the different Areas of Learning and share this planning effectively with support staff and other adults. This ensures that staff understand their role in the team and what they are expected to be teaching. Teachers also provide clear guidance for additional visitors such as parents and students. Children benefit from this extra support because they receive individual guidance at their own level.
13. The first morning session where key workers teach their own designated children works well. Children gain confidence from this organisation and build special relationships with these adults. This results in children making a positive start to the morning or afternoon's work due to the creation of a secure context for learning. This system makes a good contribution to children's good achievement in personal, social and emotional development. The organisation of the key workers to assess their own children across the different activities also works well and ensures that there is one adult who has a good understanding of each child's development. Staff use this knowledge well to identify children who need additional support in specific areas of learning or who need to be challenged.
14. Teachers organise individual tasks well during the main teaching sessions and children benefit from these activities. However, the organisation of group work is not consistent. Although some groups allow each child to benefit from the teaching, other groups are too large. In these large groups some children do not have enough opportunities to respond to the adult directly because they lack the confidence to contribute and adults do not have enough time to give them special attention. Conversely, some groups are too small. In these groups opportunities are missed for children to take part in activities where there is stimulating teaching.
15. Teachers organise good quality independent activities for children, with very good quality resources. For example, in the outdoor role-play based on a hospital, children thoroughly enjoyed using doctors' equipment, the dressing-up clothes and the little beds. Teachers organise themselves well to support children in the outdoor play area and the wet area. This organisation contributes well to the children's good achievement in physical development and art. However, this support is not as effective in the main inside role-play area and opportunities are missed to support children informally in the reading and mathematics areas. This reduces the amount of time children spend on these activities because they quickly lose interest.
16. There is a good mixture of group work and independent play in the morning and afternoon sessions. However, the balance between these different types of activities does not make the best use of the children's time. The snack time is too long, with some children not involved in active learning. The story time at the end of morning and afternoon sessions is too short. Adults often have to rush this session and children do not benefit from developing literacy skills for a long enough period.
17. Most of teachers' time is used effectively for working directly with children. However, there are times when teachers are involved in low-level activities without children. This is not an efficient use of their time or expertise.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	0	6	18	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; there are no figures to show percentages because there were fewer than 30 lessons seen.

18. Assessment systems are good. There are effective systems on entry to the school because staff make home visits to talk to parents or carers and the children. Staff identify what children

can do at the start of nursery and this ensures that activities are pitched at the right level for each child. Adults use a good combination of recording formats. Each key worker records children's achievement in a detailed and comprehensive computerised system, which covers each of the Areas of Learning. This is complemented by very good quality 'special books'<sup>6</sup> where teachers record children's achievement and include digital photographs of children across a range of contexts. For example, teachers took a photograph of the children who dressed up in the special child-sized fire fighter clothes. Parents greatly appreciate these books as a record of their children's progress.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. The **good** enrichment activities enhance the curriculum. Staffing levels are **good** and resources are **very good**. The accommodation is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has effectively adapted what it teaches to the recommended national guidelines and has improved provision for physical development.
  - The school's provision for children with special educational needs is very good.
  - High quality resources are used well to stimulate children.
  - Visits and visitors extend children's understanding of the world around them.
  - There are plenty of staff and volunteers to support children's learning.
  - Accommodation and resources for the playgroup are outstanding but accommodation for some nursery groups is not appropriate for young children.
19. The school's curriculum is closely matched to the government's guidelines for this age group and is balanced across the six areas of learning. Topics are thoughtfully planned, though they do not sufficiently take into account the learning of children who stay in the nursery for more than a year and thus repeat topics. Themes are changed on a regular basis and this stimulates children's interest. Planning for physical development is now of a similar standard to other areas of learning, which is a major improvement.
20. The provision for children with special educational needs is very good and significantly helps these children reach their individual targets. Individual education plans are well written and easy to follow, detailing the small steps that children need to go through in order to move forward. Staff are familiar with the needs of these children, support their learning well and fully integrate them into every activity. Because provision is high quality, children make good progress towards their targets. The playgroup makes a good contribution to the provision because staff there identify children at a very early stage and help parents get in touch with agencies which may be able to help their children.
21. Resources and accommodation in the playgroup are of outstanding quality and make it a welcoming and stimulating place for young children and their parents to learn in. Resources in the nursery are very good. They are used well to stimulate children's interest in activities. Purchases are well thought out in that they reflect the community in which children live, for instance the outdoor large toys include a wheel chair, and the magnetic families are representative of a multi-cultural Britain. There is sufficient accommodation for the nursery but groups meeting with their key worker do not all have an appropriate space. For example, a group use the staff room, which has potential safety concerns and does not have the same child-based resources available for the other groups. The outdoor learning area has improved considerably since the last inspection. Its markings, like roadways, now make it very inviting.
22. A good range of visits enhances children's learning. For example, children walk around the local community to identify mathematical shapes and have an excursion to an adventure park.

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<sup>6</sup> Adults use 'special books' to record children's achievement in detail through individual discussions.

Visitors, like the firefighter, extend children's understanding of the world around them. The school lending library, where parents and children choose books to take home, is also a positive provision.

23. All staff are trained for this age range. This training helps them interact well with the children, plan suitable activities and topics for them and assess their progress well. The school is successful in encouraging many students and volunteers to help in the nursery. The very high ratio of adults to children is a great aid to children's progress. The staff in the playgroup and other community projects are high quality. They are skilled in supporting the learning of both children and parents and of identifying children who may have special educational needs. They benefit from strong links with the nursery such as the support for the planning of sessions.

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

This is a caring school with **good** procedures in place for health and safety and child protection. The school provides **good** support and guidance.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Induction to the school is good and ensures that the children settle into their learning well
- The key worker systems work well and ensure that staff know the needs of the children very well and provide sensitive and individual support.
- Procedures for child protection are good and the school has good working relationships with the professional support agencies.

### **Commentary**

24. Staff visit the children and their families at home as they approach the time to start at the nursery. This is effective in giving them a comprehensive picture of the background of each child. Consequently, they are able to offer good advice and support from the very start and the children feel welcome and secure whilst at the school. The school has developed a thriving playgroup and one for parents and toddlers. These facilities help the children to get to know the school and to build up trusting relationships with their peers and the staff. They give the children a seamless transition into the nursery classes.
25. The staff pride themselves on being alert to the individual needs of the children. They care very much about the children's personal development and monitor it carefully as the children spend their first crucial year in formal education. For a short time each day, staff work individually with children to help them develop and progress. They record achievements in a special book, which is highly valued by the parents. There are very effective systems to support children and parents or carers in coming to a school for the first time. Staff offer the parents the opportunity to stay with their youngsters until they are settled and if children become tired or upset the staff are always on hand to comfort them.
26. Child protection procedures are robust and the headteacher takes personal responsibility for this important but rarely used aspect of the school's work. The school has trained its entire staff in child protection and they are all aware of the procedures that must be followed if there are any concerns. The school values its links with the professional support agencies who provide extra help for the children and families that need it. It keeps in regular contact with the agencies. This is particularly good for children with special educational needs.
27. The previous inspection noted satisfactory child protection and health and safety procedures together with some strengths in support and personal development. The overall picture has improved and is now good.

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

The school has **good** relationships with the parents and the community. There are **good** systems to ensure transition is smooth with the feeder schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents respond well to the school's efforts to involve them in their children's learning.
- The quality and range of information provided for the parents are good, particularly the school website, but parents would like to know more about their children's curriculum.
- The school's links with the community are good and enrich the children's learning.
- Links with other schools are effective and allow a smooth transfer for children to the next stage of their education.

### **Commentary**

28. Parents contribute well to all aspects of the school's work. They visit the school to help the children with their learning about computers and through play activities, for example. Parents support the school's efforts to build up good partnerships. These links begin early through the relationships that are built up through the significant number of parents that join the playgroup, parent and toddler group and the PEEP projects. These links ensure that children make a positive start to their nursery education.
29. The school provides a good range of information for the parents. It offers high quality progress reports and the majority of the parents respond with written comments saying how they feel about their children's progress. The school provides a good quality website which extends communication to parents effectively. It monitors attendance effectively by the parents at consultation sessions and offers individual appointments to those who find it difficult to attend. The parents appreciate the approachability of the staff and like being able to talk to them each day as they drop off or collect their children. Parents would like to know more about the content of their children's learning and the school is working towards providing parents with good quality additional leaflets to explain their work more effectively.
30. The school values its local community and sees this as a helpful resource to add interest to the children's learning and to help them achieve more. Visitors come to the school to talk about their jobs and their work on behalf of the public such as a firefighter. The school uses its locality well to introduce the children to the role of facilities like shops.
31. The children move on to six different schools after they leave the nursery. Effective arrangements ensure that there is a smooth transition. The nursery organises the children effectively into groups, which closely match the schools that they will go to. Friendships are readily formed and the children feel confident about their move onwards.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher effectively leads and manages the provision of pre-nursery facilities.
- The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory in the nursery and she ensures that there is a positive ethos for learning.
- The headteacher does not manage the organisation of the nursery efficiently.
- The governing body is in a state of transition but the chair of governors is providing continuity through his long-term commitment to the school.
- The school is not prepared enough for the delegation of their budget.

### **Commentary**

32. The headteacher values the importance of supporting parents and children before they attend the nursery. She has been successful in using the increased funding opportunities to extend the work of the school in these aspects. She spends grants effectively, buying high quality resources, and ensures that new staff are clear about their roles. She ensures that there are good quality opportunities for young children to gain a flying start to their education and for parents to receive practical guidance in their role as first educators. The headteacher has a clear understanding that these initiatives must become self-financing and is working towards this goal.
33. The positive ethos across the school and the importance given to inclusion are due to the headteacher's priorities in this aspect of the school's work. She encourages students and parents to join in the work of the school, which ensures that there is a good level of individual support for children that matches their needs well. The headteacher works well in ensuring that staff feel that they are valued members of the school team. This is evident in her organisation of the weekly staff meetings where all members of staff are included and a clear agenda produced for the year's meetings. This gives staff a long-term view of developments and is a good opportunity for them to share the different aspects of their work. The headteacher sets up effective systems for co-ordinators to monitor children's experiences across the different Areas of Learning, but she does not monitor the balance of time over the morning or afternoon sessions effectively enough. This results in some sessions being too long and others too short to maximise children's learning. She organises the use of facilities such as the outdoor play well, with the parents and toddlers time dovetailing with the nursery use. However, she does not ensure that teachers use their time efficiently, with some time spent in tidying up after children rather than working with them directly. This reduces opportunities for extending children's learning.
34. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The chair of governors has a long-term commitment to the school and has a very good understanding of the role of the school in the community. However, due to changes in government legislation, the governing body is in transition. The chair of governors has clear plans for recruiting new members, but the changes will mean a reallocation of roles and responsibilities. These changes are currently reducing the effectiveness of the work of the governing body. Scrutiny of the governors' minutes shows that the previous governing body worked systematically through issues related to the school and the local education authority. The headteacher's reports are thorough and give governors an understanding of the key developments of the school's life.
35. The school is due to take over the responsibility for its own budget in the next financial year. The headteacher does not yet have a clear view of all of the full implications of this change, although she has handled school budgets in the past. There has not been a finance committee on the governing body and this has implications for the need for training to ensure that governors are able to fulfil their monitoring role.

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **Playgroup, parent and toddler provision and PEEP projects**

This provision is **good**. It meets the needs of parents and prepares children well for their life in the nursery.

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

- The accommodation and resources are excellent; the headteacher manages the projects well.
- All three projects prepare children well for the nursery and meet the needs of both children and parents well.
- The identification and support for children with special educational needs are very good.
- Parents and carers greatly appreciate the provision.
- Staff work well together and provide a welcoming context for both parents and children's development.

#### **Commentary**

36. The new accommodation and resources for these projects are very high quality and feature special areas for children of different ages. They provide a rich variety of opportunities for children to extend their learning across all the areas that they will be covering when they join the nursery. A particular feature is the large climbing apparatus in the centre of the room, which children thoroughly enjoy using. The school organises the use of the outdoor play areas well, with the younger children having a special time when they can use this area and equipment. The new facilities also offer excellent accommodation and resources for the parents, which they appreciate. The headteacher organises staff carefully and they work harmoniously in a well-organised team. Several support assistants work both in the nursery and the additional projects. This provides effective communication and extends children's confidence when they move to the nursery.

#### **Playgroup project**

37. The playgroup project has been successfully extended this term and now runs every morning. Staff work very effectively with parents and carers at the beginning of the day to ensure that there is a smooth transfer between home and school. This has a significant impact on the learning at the start of the sessions because children are keen to begin their activities. The quality of planning is very good and dovetails carefully with the nursery planning. This ensures that children moving from the playgroup to the nursery in the afternoon do not repeat the same activities. It also ensures that children are working on the same themes, which are reinforced in the afternoon. Children make good progress in all the Areas of Learning because they are given systematic opportunities to develop their skills across a wide range of activities over time. The nursery staff monitor these children's progress and identify improvements that are faster than those of the children who do not benefit from the additional time in the school.

#### **Parents and toddlers**

38. Staff provide a welcoming context for parents, carers and toddlers at the beginning of sessions and support parents sensitively in using all the different resources. The school's strategy of encouraging pregnant mothers to join the group as a source of expertise and advice works well. Parents and carers encourage their children to try different activities both in the school and in the outdoor area. Staff provide a well-balanced programme during the afternoon, with opportunities for toddlers to work independently and in a whole group. The final session is particularly effective when parents, carers and toddlers join in a singing and dancing session, which they all thoroughly enjoy.



## **PEEP Project**

39. This project provides valuable opportunities for parents to extend their understanding of how to support their young children to give them a flying start to school. Staff, parents and carers use high quality folders that identify a wide range of activities that can be used at home to extend children's learning. Parents and carers find this resource particularly valuable. The sessions are carefully structured to provide whole group activities and individual work. Children, parents and carers thoroughly enjoy saying nursery rhymes together and singing simple songs accompanied by different actions. Parents and carers particularly appreciate the opportunities to share their experiences and concerns with other adults in order to resolve different issues at home.
40. Staff use all these projects very effectively to identify children with special educational needs. They discuss any issues very early with the parents and bring in external expertise. This ensures that children's particular needs are analysed and sensitive support is put in place to increase these children's achievement.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING**

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

41. Provision is satisfactory overall. It is good in personal, social and emotional development because the school sets a high priority on this Area of Learning and standards have risen since the previous inspection. Staff work hard to ensure that there are opportunities for children to extend their skills in this area across all of their activities. Provision is good in physical development because there are very good resources of both large apparatus and tools to extend children's learning. Staff use them well to develop children's physical skills. The work of the school in acting on the key issue in the previous inspection in outdoor play has contributed well to the improvement in this Area of Learning.

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

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

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

- Children achieve at a higher level than expected because the school values this aspect of development.
- The school manages the transfer between parents or carers and schools at the beginning of school sessions sensitively.
- Staff provide a range of different social circumstances that children respond to flexibly.
- Children are confident to ask for help and to work alongside other children.
- Children show care and concern for each other and for living things.
- Staff offer good opportunities for children to develop an awareness of their place in the school community.

#### **Commentary**

42. Teaching and learning are good in this Area of Learning. All staff work hard to support children's development in this area. As a result, children are achieving higher levels than expected across each of the strands in this Area of Learning after only a few weeks in the nursery. The children from the playgroup experience similar routines and facilities as the nursery. This extends their confidence and sets a good example for the rest of the children.
43. The school identifies the importance of children settling into school positively at the beginning of the mornings or afternoons. Staff are sensitive to the needs of each child and parent or carer. Children respond well to this welcome. They leave their parents or carers confidently and settle quickly into their together groups, ready to listen to the staff. Children expect to carry out simple tasks individually such as answering the register or indicating whether they want milk or water at snack time because staff carry out these routines every day. This extends their confidence because they know what to expect.
44. Even though the children have only been in the school a few weeks, most of them move between the different social contexts organised over the morning or afternoon with confidence. They understand that each morning will begin in a group and that this is followed by either independent tasks or work with an adult. They move smoothly between different sessions and respond well when adults ask them to change to a different activity. They show flexibility when there are changes to the routines, such as when the firefighter came to talk to them all. This confidence is due to the sensitivity of the staff to children's different needs. So a child who responded very nervously to the firefighter was reassured by encouragement and individual discussion throughout his visit.

45. Children enjoy choosing tasks from the range of activities in all the different areas of the nursery. They understand that there are limitations to the number of children allowed in each area and are willing to move on to another task if an area is full. They co-operate well with other children on the same tasks both in independent tasks and in group work. They share each other's successes, such as sharing each other's finished shapes in the play dough or showing how they got water to flow down a tube. Staff emphasise the importance of caring for each other and living things. Children are developing effective skills in these areas. For example, they understood the importance of putting a caterpillar into a safe place in a nest of leaves so that it wouldn't get hurt.
46. Staff provide a good range of activities for children to develop their awareness of their place in the school community. They organise small groups of children each morning and afternoon to prepare snacks for the rest of the nursery. Children enjoy carrying out this task and understand that their work will benefit the rest of the children.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children develop their language well in individual and small group work with adults but staff miss some opportunities to extend these skills.
- Children develop pre-reading skills effectively, but story time is too short and there is not enough consistent adult support in the reading area.
- The school provides a good quality home library facility twice a week.
- Children enjoy developing pre-writing skills in independent activities.

### **Commentary**

47. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in this Area of Learning. Children develop their communication skills well in the together time. All children respond well when interacting individually with adults, whether by words or gestures, because staff ask them direct simple questions in turn. Children develop language for thinking well when they work individually with adults. The interesting tasks ensure that children are fully engaged in the activities. Adults are well aware of each child's level of understanding and support every one effectively in responding to the task. This is particularly good when staff spend time in discussing children's work that goes into their special books. However, some of the groups, such as for snack time and story time, are too large and do not allow all children the opportunity to respond fully to each other or to the adult. Some of the groups are too small. This results in an inefficient use of the adult's time, with only a few children taking part in the task when a larger group would have allowed more children to benefit from the adult's teaching. The school provides very good quality resources in the role-play area outside. When adults join in this play, children develop language skills well. For example, in a hospital context a child using a stethoscope volunteered, "I am using this thing to hear her heart". However, staff do not join in the play in the inside role-play area effectively enough, which reduces opportunities for children's language development.
48. Staff ensure that good quality books are used across a range of activities and children enjoy looking at the pictures. Children handle books carefully, but many do not realise that there is a difference between illustrations and print because staff miss opportunities to teach this consistently enough. Staff also provide good quality books across many of the different independent activities. They change these books regularly to link in with the theme, which extends children's understanding of the different types of books. For example, a child was delighted to find a book about bonfires that linked to his experience of Bonfire Night on the previous evening. However, story time at the end of each day is too short and the groups are

too large. Children do not get enough time to consider different aspects of a story. Staff do not use Big Books consistently enough, which reduces children's opportunities to understand the differences between illustrations and text. There is not enough support from adults in the book area during independent play, which reduces the amount of time children spend on this activity. The school organises parents well to lead the library sessions twice a week, where there are good quality books and tapes for children to use at home. Opportunities are missed for staff to support parents or carers and children during this activity.

49. Children have a simple understanding that letters represent their name because they register at the beginning of sessions by picking up their name card. Staff ensure that they write children's names on the work they produce in independent play or small group work and this effectively extends children's understanding of the purposes of writing. More able children make simple marks that are similar to the letters in their names, but most children are only just beginning to make straight or curved lines and standards overall are at the expected level. When adults support them in the independent writing area, children persevere with the task, but few children concentrate for long without support.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for children's mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources are used well to help children learn.
- Children are becoming more aware of numbers.
- Questioning during sorting activities is good.
- There is not enough adult support in the mathematics area to stimulate the children to play there.

### **Commentary**

50. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in this Area of Learning. Children reach the expected standard and their achievement is satisfactory. Many of the activities in the nursery have a mathematical element built in. Staff encourage children to count at every opportunity. They challenge them with high numbers like 26, which is the number of snacks that need to be prepared for the group. Resources are good in the area devoted to mathematics activities and children use them mostly when there is an adult to play with.
51. Children are interested in numbers and count each other with support at registration time under the direction of the key worker. They are taught to match straws to milk cartons when preparing snacks and to carefully count out two biscuits into each child's bowl with little help from an adult. Children are encouraged to use the 'families display' to touch and count four boys or five girls, which they can carry out with support. Because each tricycle has a 'garage' children are beginning to recognise the number symbol on the front of their tricycle and match it to the number on the 'garage'.
52. Children use some shape names with growing confidence. Many of them recognise a square, triangle and circle, for instance, when choosing a shape for a wheel in a craft activity. They match the shapes and the colours accurately to a picture of a clown in a game with the support of an adult.
53. Children use the 'families display' effectively to sort things into groups and the questioning by staff at this activity is high quality. It gently probes children's understanding of groups and of family relationships as well as the vocabulary that goes with it. Children also sort in free play activities. They sort beads into colours before threading them and organise large blocks before using them to build a 'bus'.

54. In free play children used some language of position, for instance 'go upstairs' in the large indoor apparatus and 'put the tricycle next to mine' in the outdoor learning area. However, opportunities are missed to extend children's learning in the mathematics area. This aspect of teaching was not as good as it was during the previous inspection because it was not included in teachers' planning for the week of the inspection.

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

Provision in knowledge and understanding is **satisfactory**.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Children develop computer skills well because they are given good levels of support from adults.
- The school provides good quality opportunities for home technology but the groups are too small and reduce the amount of times children experience this work.
- Children develop an interest in their world through the use of visitors and through different activities in their independent work.
- Children realise that tools have a purpose and enjoy using construction apparatus.

### **Commentary**

55. Children develop skills on computers faster than expected because staff ensure that there are interesting programs for them to use that match their needs. These programs are changed regularly to provide a variety of different experiences. There is a high level of adult support for these tasks and children sustain their concentration well because when they encounter practical difficulties the adults intervene well. The school provides good quality interactive devices that fit over keyboards to extend children's skills. Children thoroughly enjoy using these tools and have a simple understanding that their movements affect the actions on the screen. Children's mouse control when using other programs is good. They use both the adult-sized mouse and the smaller version with almost equal ease and accuracy.
56. Teaching and learning in other aspects of this Area of Learning are satisfactory. Children's achievement is satisfactory and standards are at the expected level. Staff use the home technology area effectively to provide opportunities for children to make simple products such as buns. Staff discuss the different ingredients thoroughly and review children's learning as they are waiting for the products to cook. However, the groups for this activity are too small and children do not experience this work as often as they could if each group was larger.
57. The school provides regular opportunities for children to understand the world around them. These include visitors coming into school to talk about issues such as being careful about the use of matches and fireworks over the bonfire night period. This gives children a simple awareness of both this special time of year and of simple safety implications. Staff also use children's own observations to extend their learning. For example, when children noticed the leaves in the outdoor play area, the teacher encouraged the children to look at them carefully and handle them gently.
58. Children understand that tools have different purposes because staff ensure that they use them regularly in different activities. Children develop construction skills effectively through the use of the good quality large and small construction apparatus. Some children benefit from working with this apparatus and develop a good understanding of how to use it to build different constructions. However, not all children choose to work in these areas.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are very good and used well to improve children's control.
- Children are keen on all the activities.
- A good range of independent activities promotes children's physical skills.
- Hygiene and safety are given a high priority.

### Commentary

59. Teaching and learning are good in this Area of Learning. Standards are above the expected level and children achieve well. The well-planned independent activities provide children with good opportunities to use their physical skills and increase their control over their body movements. Staff sensitively encourage children to experiment and explore when moving around large apparatus or using the large tricycles and children make good progress on this apparatus. Staff assess children's progress regularly and well. The information is used to plan the next stage of their learning. Children with special educational needs receive very good support and gain confidence in this work. The teaching of specific co-ordination tasks for these children is good.
60. Staff raise children's awareness of health and hygiene well so that before snack time children carefully wash their hands using a gel. Staff promote issues of healthy eating well and children are beginning to understand issues such as the eating of fruit is good for them.
61. Children enjoy using the large blocks and climbing apparatus regularly and this helps them to learn to control their movements. They move planks and blocks confidently to make buses and other vehicles and develop climbing skills well when they use equipment such as the slide and frame. Children develop a good level of skill in riding tricycles and enjoy using the road way marked out in the outdoor play area. Children carefully avoid each other and the pedestrians on the crossing.
62. Children use small tools with improving accuracy and are starting to establish which hand they prefer to use. They are keen to use the malleable materials and the cutters and plastic knives are used to shape the material with improving accuracy. Children using the computer 'cake making' program quickly understand how to operate the delightful 'touch sensitive' keyboard extension shaped like kitchen utensils. This leads to much improved rolling with the rolling pin, tilting of the mixer and squeezing of the icing bag. They concentrate really well at this activity because it challenges their skills and is fun to do. Children are adept at handling a needle safely and sewing quite accurately because parents support them regularly and encourage them to develop these skills. Children like the activity. During the inspection one boy came back repeatedly to continue his work. Small equipment, like beads for threading and construction pieces, is handled safely and carefully. Children imaginatively use the small world toys, standing each piece upright in the bedroom or lounge.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's art work is above the expected level.
- Role-play in the outdoor area is good.
- Children enjoy all the activities.

- There is not enough adult intervention in indoor role-play and music.

## Commentary

63. Children reach the standard expected level and their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers' planning is satisfactory overall because whilst they always offer good quality art activities, insufficient emphasis is placed on adult intervention in role-play and music. Assessment is good. Detailed records are made, including contributions in the child's special book, which goes home to parents at the end of the year. The information gathered is used well to plan future work for each child. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
64. Children's work in art is above that expected for their age. There are consistently good levels of adult support for these activities and children benefit from guidance in using different techniques. Children develop skills above the expected level in mixing powder paint to create the colour they want and in the different forms that they use in their paintings. For instance, in many paintings people have arms and legs in the correct places. As part of the Diwali celebrations, children develop a simple understanding of pattern through their experiments with lines of swirls as hand decoration. They develop skills in making choices experimenting with designs during free play. Staff provide a good range of bright papers and materials and children enjoy deciding what they will use to decorate their models. For example, children make imaginative things like vehicles and snakes from boxes and a good range of corks, tissue and collage materials. This helps children understand that art is not just pictures. Children and parents enjoy taking their artwork home each day.
65. Outside, staff support children's play well. For example, children dressed themselves in firefighter gear and played collaboratively together sharing the hose. The climbing frame becomes a 'home on fire' and the children sustain their play for longer than 10 minutes because the adult is involved, injecting ideas and language. There are missed opportunities for adults to support children in the indoor role-play area and children's imaginative play is weaker for this lack of support. For instance, children play in the kitchen or bedroom but don't stay long. Because stories are usually read at the end of the day children do not have the stimulus to re-enact scenes in their role-play.
66. Songs are sung regularly after snack time. Children listen attentively and are starting to join in with actions and some words. Musical instruments are available for the children to experiment with, which is an improvement on the last inspection, but there are missed opportunities for adults to support children in this independent play.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Children's achievement	4
<b>Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well children learn	4
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets children's needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Children's care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for children	3
How well the school seeks and acts on children's views	0
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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



