

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST STEPHEN'S NURSERY
EDUCATION CENTRE**

London

LEA area: Newham

Unique reference number: 102704

Headteacher: Ms Lorraine Dodge

Reporting inspector: Mrs Penny Parrish
22380

Dates of inspection: 12 – 14 February 2002

Inspection number: 198184

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 5 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: St Stephen's Road
London

Postcode: E6 1AS

Telephone number: 0208 471 1366

Fax number: 0208 470 9351

Appropriate authority: London Borough of Newham

Name of chair of governors: Ms Ellivate Oazuwa

Date of previous inspection: 21 October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22380	Mrs Penny Parrish	Registered inspector	<p>Communication, language and literacy</p> <p>Physical development</p> <p>Creative development</p> <p>Special educational needs</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are the pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
11450	Mr Lee Kuraishi	Lay inspector		<p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
12394	Mrs Carole May	Team inspector	<p>Personal, social and emotional development</p> <p>Mathematical development</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of the world</p> <p>Equal opportunities</p>	<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 1BB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	23
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	25
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	27
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	28
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Stephen's Nursery Education Centre admits children between the ages of three and five years. Most of the 125 children on roll attend for either the morning or the afternoon session; 22 children attend full-time. The children are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds; most are of Asian heritage. A high proportion, 84 per cent, have English as an additional language; 74 per cent of children are in the very early stages of learning English. A small proportion, four per cent, are identified as having special educational needs; none has a statement of special need. The attainments of the children vary widely on entry but as the majority do not communicate in English at the time of admission, their attainment overall is low. A higher proportion of families than usual have some measure of social and economic hardship. The school offers care facilities for children before and after school hours and also during school holidays through the extended day centre on the school site.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with many excellent features. The nursery centre has a distinctive multicultural character and establishes very strong links with the families of the children within its care. The staff understand the needs of the children extremely well, provide teaching of a consistently very high quality and consequently the children achieve very well. Most children make much more rapid progress than is usual, particularly those learning English as an additional language. Despite the added challenge that most children have of learning English on admission, standards are higher than average for the age group by the time the children transfer to primary education. The headteacher provides excellent educational direction for the school and is supported by a wholly dedicated and united team of teachers, support staff and governors. Parents hold the nursery in very high regard and the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The teaching is of very high quality and the children make rapid progress.
- By the end of nursery, standards are higher than usual.
- An excellent range of work excites the children's interest and helps them to concentrate for long periods.
- There is a strong sense of community within the school. Parents trust the staff and relationships are excellent. The children feel very confident and this helps them to become independent.
- The children learn to behave very well and to treat others with respect. They learn a lot about the different cultures of other children in the nursery.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher is inspirational, driving the school forward and keeping standards high.

What could be improved

- Documents requiring approval by the governing body are not always kept on schedule.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school's last inspection report in October 1997 indicated a good school. Despite a high number of staff changes, the school has moved forward and improved very well. Issues identified for development in the last inspection report have been tackled well, resulting in improved planning systems, greater involvement of the governors and better provision for children to learn about information and communication technology. Although already good, the quality of teaching has improved significantly and standards of achievement for the children are now higher. This has been largely due to the persistence of the headteacher in setting high expectations for both staff and children, and inspiring a

talented staff team to work closely with each other, other adults and, most importantly, the parents to continuously improve the opportunities for the children. In addition, the increased delegation of funds by the local education authority and specific national grants made available to schools have greatly increased the school's ability to finance improvements.

STANDARDS

Due to the high quality of provision in the nursery, the children achieve very well and make very good progress. Standards are high and the children meet the goals set nationally for the age group within communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. This is a considerable achievement for the large number of children who start the nursery with very little understanding of English. The children's personal, social and emotional development is well above average, and their knowledge and understanding of the world, and their physical and creative development reaches above average standards. The staff understand the needs of the children exceptionally well, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, who make very good and sometimes excellent progress.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The children thoroughly enjoy school and show a very keen interest in learning from the wide variety of activities available each day.
Behaviour	Excellent. The children understand what is expected of them and show respect and thoughtfulness for others. They learn to co-operate very well. The nursery is a calm, friendly and well-organised community.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent. The staff understand the needs of the children extremely well and know when to support them and when to help them to develop their independence. As a result, the children grow in confidence and self-assurance. They make sensible choices and respect differences in the views of others.
Attendance	Similar to most other nursery schools locally. Most children attend regularly, although some have significant absences due to extended family visits abroad. Procedures for encouraging regular attendance are good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Quality of teaching	Very good

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

The quality of teaching is exceptionally good. This consistently strong teaching is seen in all areas of the curriculum and results in very successful learning for all children. The greatest strength is the excellent understanding that the staff have of the needs of the age group and of individual children. A very high priority is given to the promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development and to the development of their spoken English skills. These establish a very firm foundation for the teaching of all other skills, such as literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. The children benefit from very good teaching in physical and creative development. They are confident and self-assured. They learn very well and reach high standards. Extra support is provided for

the children with special educational needs and they extend their learning very successfully.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	An excellent range of activities is provided. Work in the nursery is exciting and well-organised. The children are inspired by it. It meets their needs very well.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Excellent. Special needs are recognised very early. The deputy headteacher is very experienced in teaching children with special educational needs and makes very effective arrangements for them. Procedures meet the requirements of the new national code of practice.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	The exceptionally good provision for these children is a significant feature of the nursery and results in their very good progress. Support staff speak about seven of the range of about 15 community languages used by families. This gives the children confidence and promotes their learning very well. English speaking children also benefit and progress very well as a result of the nursery's high focus on language development.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent and an outstanding feature of the school. The school is a very successful multi-cultural community. It provides extremely well for the children and their families to learn to value the great variety of cultural customs, dress and ways of life chosen or inherited by others.
How well the school cares for its children	The school provides a very high standard of care for its children. Their progress and learning needs are checked thoroughly. The school is extremely well organised and places a strong emphasis on the children's health, safety and comfort.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school works in close and successful partnership with parents. The staff keep parents up to date on their children's progress and provide good support for parents who need help with English. The extended day care offered by the school is very much appreciated by the parents of the children who take part.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher is inspirational and sets very high standards. The dedicated staff team is conscientious in carrying out its responsibilities. The deputy brings extensive experience to the school of working with children who find difficulty in learning. The school is very well organised.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are well aware of the strengths of the school and work in partnership with the headteacher and staff to maintain the exceptionally good provision. All statutory duties for nurseries are met.

The school's evaluation of its performance	The school checks its provision very well and senior staff take effective action promptly where necessary. The staff review the success of teaching and learning daily. The headteacher and deputy check the planning and the children's progress, and are closely involved in the organisation of the nursery. A suitable performance management system for teachers is in place.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use is made of all financial resources made available to the school. Spending is closely linked to appropriate educational priorities identified within the school improvement plan.

The school is staffed by suitably qualified teachers and support staff and there is a strong commitment to professional development. The accommodation provides good facilities for the organisation of a suitable curriculum for very young children and is enhanced by a very well laid out garden play area. Learning resources are abundant and of very good quality. The school applies the principles of best value very well when it decides how to spend the money it is given.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is very good. • The children enjoy school, make good progress and parents are kept well informed about their children's work. • Behaviour in the school is very good and the school expects the children to work hard. • The school is very well led and managed. • Parents are very appreciative of the extended day care which is made available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although most parents agree that the school provides a suitable amount of work for the children to take home, some would like to see more support from the school for learning at home.

The inspectors are in full agreement with the parents' strong support for the school and feel that they are justly proud of this exceptionally good school. Inspectors find that the school works very hard to involve the families of the children in their learning and to provide advice and support to help the children to extend their learning at home. The children take library books home and families are able to borrow from the toy library. The school has plans in hand to extend these opportunities by providing mathematical activities for the children to take home.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the nursery, over three-quarters of the children are in the very earliest stages of learning to speak English, and this means that, despite a range of achievement evident within their home languages, the attainment of most children is low compared to that of most three-year-olds nationally. The excellent quality of the curriculum and the very good teaching provided means that learning is rapid and the children achieve very well. After three terms in the nursery, the children's attainment is above average with regard to their knowledge and understanding of the world, their physical and their creative development, and well above average in their personal, social and emotional development. Attainment is average overall for communication, language and literacy development and mathematical development. This is a significant achievement following a low starting point. For the group of children who attend full-time and the many children who are in the nursery for more than three terms, attainment is generally noticeably higher. These judgements were evident during the inspection and confirmed by a review of the children's records of progress.
2. On admission, the staff place great importance on settling the children successfully and helping them to extend their personal, social and emotional skills. This begins with the school's very close involvement of the child's parents or carers in the early days or weeks at nursery. For some children, this builds on the child's experience of attending the toddler group sessions organised at the school. The staff get to know the children and their families very well and support them both effectively as the children gain in confidence. The children find the imaginative activities made available each day irresistible and, with the staff's excellent understanding of the needs of the age group, soon begin to make very good progress. The children work and play together co-operatively, concentrating for long periods of time. They learn to share and to take turns with others, and to negotiate arrangements for doing so. They look after their own personal needs well, and for the children who start nursery wearing nappies, this represents exceptionally good development. The staff are consistently sensitive to the needs of the children and this promotes the children's sense of security and trust in adults. Their self-esteem is secure; they are willing to take part in new ventures and to play their part increasingly within discussions.
3. Communication, language and literacy skills develop very well, particularly for the children learning English as an additional language. Despite the very early starting point for most children, the majority are at least on line to meet the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1 in the primary school. The priority given to the development of language is a key factor in the success of the school. A range of community languages is spoken by support staff and this means that most children are able to communicate in their home language to support their developing English skills. The older children, whatever their home language, generally achieve an adequate vocabulary and a suitable fluency, sometimes speaking in quite complex sentences. Those who attend the nursery for longer than three terms make excellent progress. A child new to English on admission to nursery but now in her fifth term was observed involved in re-enacting the story of the Gingerbread Man. She was heard switching between colloquial English and the style used in the story as she both took part and tried to manage the action in the play.
4. The children thoroughly enjoy hearing stories and their interest in books is well

developed. They find their own name cards and by the time they leave the nursery, most are writing their names with little help, although still working on correct formation of some of the letters. The children are aware of the conventions of print and attempt to write, some using conventional letter shapes. Some of the higher attaining children learn the sounds that are linked to familiar letters.

5. Mathematical skills develop to an appropriate level and are on track to at least meet the targets set for the age group. The staff are keenly aware that most children not only need to spend a great deal of time discussing and comparing quantity, size and shape, but also to develop a mathematical vocabulary in English. This is achieved to a suitable level and is a considerable accomplishment. The older children count, both in English and their home language, at least to ten and many count to 20 or beyond by the time they leave the nursery. One child was heard counting to 63. All the older children recognise at least some of the numerals between one and five. Some can identify numerals easily to ten and are enjoying the challenge of higher numbers. The older children successfully use mathematical language to make comparisons and most can name the basic shapes by the time they leave the nursery. Most know the names of colours and can devise simple colour sequences. Occasional work on problem solving, such as the addition or subtraction of one or two more or less, is enjoyed and accomplished by most children in their third term in the nursery. The children sometimes write numerals during play activities, such as when pricing books in the 'book shop'.
6. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world extend very well. They respond well to the wide range of activities planned and prepared by the staff for this element of the curriculum and most are on line to exceed the goals set nationally for this area of learning. A good variety of plants are tended carefully indoors and plants and trees flourish in the school gardens, giving the children easy access to understanding seasonal changes. Goldfish and giant snails are given a home in the nursery and the children enjoy caring for them, showing great fascination as they watch them move. The children learn from the frequent excursions into the locality, for example to buy baking ingredients from the local shops or to borrow books from the library. Journeys into central London to visit the National Gallery or the Science Museum provide a wonderful opportunity for learning. The wide variety of cultures represented by the families of the children and celebrated by the school ensures a rich understanding of the world. The nursery's close partnership with the children's families means that older and younger children and a range of adults of different ages are frequent visitors. The children learn how to care for 'babies' in imaginary play situations, such as the 'hospital', and know that they have changed since they were babies themselves. The children have suitable access to computers and enjoy controlling on-screen pictures and sounds through use of the 'mouse'.
7. The excellent range of opportunities for physical development means that the children achieve very well and are on course to exceed the early learning goals. The children's control of small equipment, such as spoons, brushes, pens and crayons of a wide range of sizes, is very good. The children move with good co-ordination for their age and show a good awareness of space and of others. They enjoy manoeuvring the wheeled vehicles along the roadway outside and enthusiastically venture forward demonstrating their skills on the climbing frames, nets and balancing bars. In small groups with an adult, they mirror movements demonstrated by staff and thoroughly enjoy practising Yoga movements. Parents and children dance together and teach staff during celebrations, such as the Gerba dancing to celebrate Diwali.

8. The children's creative development is on line to exceed the expectations set nationally for the age group. The children develop a creative use of a wide variety of art materials and demonstrate individual choices and originality in their work. The imaginary role-play areas, such as the home settings indoors and the playhouses and extensive 'hospital' area outside, foster good imaginative and creative play. Within other activities, such as the large blocks, the sand and water, children also develop imaginary themes. Music forms an important part of the curriculum and children show great interest in exploring the sounds made by a good range of instruments from different cultures. The older children successfully produced a rhythm in time to taped music or their own songs. They thoroughly enjoyed the visits from local musicians, playing instruments such as the saxophone, clarinet and flute, and took part in an imaginary 'walk through the jungle', quickly identifying the music representing the different animals and responding with imaginative movements.
9. The very good achievement of the children in all areas of learning is a result of the staff's very good understanding of the needs of the age group and the very high priority given to developing the children's confidence and their speaking and listening skills as a foundation for learning. This is a significant factor in the very good progress made by the children with English as an additional language. Daily staff meetings and weekly updating of the children's records of achievement mean that staff are closely in tune with the children's current needs and teaching closely matches their interest and their stage of development.
10. The excellent provision for the children identified as having special educational needs ensures that they make very good progress towards the targets set within their individual education plans. Most of these children benefit from the individual care provided by extra support staff, under the specific direction of the deputy headteacher in her role as special needs co-ordinator. Like the majority of the children, those with special needs make very good, and sometimes excellent, progress.
11. Since the last inspection, the children's good levels of achievement have been improved upon and are now very good, particularly within the development of personal and social skills. High standards have been maintained within physical development and improved upon within knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. These improvements in standards are due to the continuously developing skills of the staff team under the guidance of the headteacher. In addition, an expansion of available learning resources, both indoors and outside, has been made possible through the increased delegation of funds from the local education authority and specific grants made available nationally.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. All parents agree that their children very much enjoy coming to school and develop a very good attitude towards learning. The children show a great interest in the wide range of activities made available and they value their own achievements and those of others. Behaviour is excellent and the children are very respectful and considerate towards others. Relationships between all in the school community are excellent.
13. Admission procedures meet the children's specific needs and are most effective in helping newly admitted children to settle into the nursery routines very quickly. All members of staff are fully aware of the importance and significant details of each child's home, family and culture. This is evident in the great respect shown to the children and their families. The toddler groups organised mean that many of the

children are familiar with the nursery setting and some of the staff in advance of admission. When the children first start attending nursery, their main carer comes too, and is welcome to stay as long as the child needs this support. The staff of the nursery includes sufficient speakers of a variety of community languages who are able to support both the children and their carers very well during the vital first few weeks at school. This is especially important to the high number of children who understand and speak very little English.

14. The children quickly learn to select their own tasks and many concentrate for a very long time. Most children are able to persist at one activity for thirty minutes or more. They enjoy working and are often reluctant to stop when it is time to clear away. When being taught new skills, children listen attentively to the adults and try very hard to follow instructions. They are very proud of their work and keen to show it to others. For example, after working with her mother and teacher making dolls' clothes, a newly admitted child carried her doll very carefully around the nursery showing off the 'baby's' new outfit. Older children were able to do most of the work on their own and could explain to others how they made the clothes and were able to help other children.
15. The behaviour of the children and their relationships with staff and other children are extremely good. Through the consistent application by the staff of the school's supportive behaviour policy, the children quickly learn the behaviour that is expected of them. As a result they learn to take turns, to share and to resolve their differences without using physical force or angry words. When two four-year-olds wanted the same tricycle, one went to grab it first but on catching an adult's eye, said, 'You can have it now and I'll have it in a minute'.
16. From the outset the children are taught to become independent and to take responsibility. On arrival at nursery they generally take off their own coats and hang them on their pegs. They understand that they are responsible for letting the teacher know they have arrived by picking up their name card and putting it in the designated place. Children for whom English is an additional language are supported in doing this because their name is written in their family script as well as in English.
17. The very orderly storage of resources in the nursery means that the children are able to access their own equipment on many occasions, developing independent and thoughtful choices, adding to the creativity of their work. All the children learn quickly to look after the toys and equipment with care and know that everyone helps to tidy up. They do this very efficiently, ensuring that everything is returned to its proper place. The children help to set the tables for lunch, learn to serve themselves and to ask politely for other children to pass them dishes of food, and then to clear away their own plates and dishes when they have finished eating. Their independence in achieving these skills is above average for their age.
18. The older children readily take on extra responsibilities. Those who are in their third term are given the responsibility of befriending one of the new children. Each is a new child's 'buddy' and is expected to be their friend, helping him or her to understand the nursery's routines and acting as a role model for the younger child. The four-year-olds take this responsibility seriously and take care to involve the new children in their play and activities; as a result, the younger children learn a great deal from the older ones. Examples of this were seen in both musical and science activities which were planned for groups of older children. Some younger 'buddies' tagged along, and were automatically accepted as part of the group by adults and children alike. The younger children observed the others for a while then began to join in, copying the actions of the older children.

19. The nursery provides an excellent example of a harmonious multi-cultural society. The established expectation within the nursery, emanating from the headteacher and involving the whole staff team, encourages children and adults alike to acknowledge difference, individual needs and to celebrate diversity. As a result, children of different gender, ability and nationality play and work happily together, learning naturally about each other's cultures, lifestyles and points of view. Respect for one another is consistently reinforced by the excellent example set by the adults in the school.
20. Due to the dedication of the staff and their strong commitment to teaching of high quality, the children's behaviour and personal development have improved from good to very good since the last inspection and relationships within the nursery have improved from very good to excellent.
21. Attendance is similar to that in most other nursery schools locally. Although the school takes generally effective steps to ensure that most children on roll attend regularly and benefit from the education provided by the nursery, some families find it difficult to bring their children to nursery on a regular basis. The school recognises specific difficulties and takes prompt action to provide extra support for such families, for example through referral to the social services or by arranging a home visit by the education welfare officer. Some families give priority to religious festivals and customs and to family visits abroad during term time, which significantly reduces attendance levels. The school appreciates the benefits of such social contacts and ensures that children are provided with extra support to help them compensate for missed learning opportunities during visits abroad. This approach is much appreciated by parents and promotes goodwill within the school community. The majority of children arrive punctually and both morning and afternoon sessions start promptly. No children have ever been excluded from attending the nursery.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching and learning is of a very high standard. In the activities observed, teaching was never less than good, was usually very good and sometimes was excellent.
23. The team of teachers, nursery nurses and support staff has an extremely good understanding of the needs of the age group and of the specific needs of the children in their care. They prepare an excellent range of interesting learning opportunities of high quality, which motivate the children very well to engage in learning. The highest priorities are appropriately given to developing the children's personal, social and emotional skills and to extending their language skills rapidly. The dedicated team of staff has very high expectations of both themselves and the children and this outlook promotes very high standards of teaching and learning. Teaching of very high quality was observed across all six of the nationally set areas of learning.
24. The staff manage the children exceptionally well. Organisation is excellent and discipline is friendly, positive and unobtrusive, based on excellent relationships. The well-established nursery routines mean that children know what is expected of them and enjoy the security and confidence that this brings. The high number of adults, which includes students and volunteers, means that no child is left to their own devices unless their activity is proceeding well, in which case, their concentration is not interrupted nor their attention diverted. Arrangements for each session mean that learning activities can continue until they are completed and this is habitually much longer than usual for the age group.

25. A very good balance is achieved between supporting the children's learning and allowing them the necessary independence to learn through making individual decisions and choices, and by allowing them to try things for themselves. Sufficient adults are on hand to intervene to extend learning through focused discussion when necessary and they do so most proficiently. Many activities involve an adult, sometimes acting in role or joining the children's play to extend learning. This is of significant importance to the very good language teaching. The staff are vigilant and aware of activities that are persistently selected by individual children. They work to make other activities more interesting or arrange a great variety of activities outdoors in order to appeal to the children who prefer to work in the fresh air. Procedures for record keeping help staff to keep track of the range of attainment and success in the various areas of achievement of individual children. For example, specific children are targeted for certain activities, such as more advanced mathematical work or to take part more frequently in activities where the child has learning needs.
26. Planning is rigorous and has improved since the last inspection. It is now of very good quality. The teaching is characterised by very thoughtful planning in advance, from a long-term overview through to detailed daily plans which include specific and relevant learning objectives, the role of the adult and the child, and clear identification of the language to be used within discussions with the children. In addition, the success of the activities and the quality of the teaching and learning achieved are reviewed within meetings attended by all staff on a daily basis. This ensures that staff are not only kept closely in touch with the quality of their work but also that provision in the nursery is continuously improving. The 'key worker' system, whereby each member of staff oversees the needs and assessment of a group of between ten and a dozen children, helps to ensure that the needs of all children are taken into consideration. This enables specific groups of children to be targeted, for example to extend their mathematical skills to a higher level. The very good communication between the staff and the high expectations of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are key features in the very consistent, high quality of teaching and learning evident in the school. The high number of adults in the nursery, including students and voluntary workers, is effective in providing great benefit to the children because of the very successful team liaison.
27. The nursery has worked towards arranging the teaching and learning for the children within small groups or individually as often as possible to maximise their learning opportunities. This aim is effective in making sure every child is involved in direct teaching as often as possible and has many opportunities to become involved in discussions with adults who are very clear about their teaching objectives and the learning needs of the child. This does not detract from the importance given to enabling the children to carry out and complete their own chosen tasks. It is an efficient system and takes full advantage of the skills of all staff in meeting the differing needs of the children. For example, book sharing times at the end of each session are very well organised into small groups that include stories in English and home languages, groups of younger or older children and also individual children working with an adult because they are not yet ready for work in groups. Efficient routines for tidying and moving apparatus, usually involving children, mean that staff are almost always in contact with children, taking their learning forward, rather than engaged in maintenance activities or sitting on the sidelines of a group. When the larger class groups meet together, either for a brief time at the end of each session or when engaged, for example, with a visiting musician, all staff take an active role in supporting the children's learning.

28. The teaching for the children with English as an additional language is very good overall, and for those children whose home language is spoken by a member of staff, it is excellent. About fifteen languages or dialects are spoken by the families of the children in the nursery in addition to English and staff are able to provide teaching in about seven of these. Language opportunities are highlighted within every activity planned and within all verbal contact between the children and the staff. This is of great benefit to all children, including those for whom English is their only language. Staff provide very good role models for clear diction in English and for a clear, uncluttered communication style, suitably enriched when appropriate by a wide variety of well-chosen vocabulary. Those who are able to speak the children's home language when this is likely to aid learning. A good example of this was seen during play in the 'hospital' when a nursery nurse was able to add to explanations of medical terms in Gujarati to enable learning to proceed to a higher level. Similarly, children new to the nursery involved in watering plants were able to hear words describing the plants, such as longer, shorter, flowers, stems and leaves, in their own language in addition to English. This provision accelerates progress both in speaking English and in establishing confidence and understanding across the whole curriculum. Small groups of children in the early stages of English are targeted for specific work on a regular basis by bilingual assistants and these children make very good progress. Those who attend the nursery for longer than three terms make excellent progress. Staff use visual signs when necessary to aid understanding for children with limited skills in English, such as when a teacher was observed touching her eye momentarily when saying to a child, "I'll watch you," as he completed a building with blocks.
29. All staff show a keen awareness of the children with special educational needs and make very good provision to ensure their understanding and good progress. Very clear individual education plans specify precisely the learning targets for each child and the responsibilities of specified staff. They provide a very clear basis for planning and assessing the children's progress. Most children identified as having special educational needs have a support assistant employed specifically to help the school to meet the children's needs. In some cases this helps the learning of the rest of the children whilst very patient and sensitive attention is provided for individual children. Such staff are experienced and very effectively integrated into teaching plans by the school but are not always specifically qualified in the area of expertise required.
30. Teaching staff work in very close liaison with the parents to extend the children's learning. The excellent relationships between most families and the school help both staff and parents to improve their understanding of the children. Staff take every opportunity to share the child's interests or needs with parents to enable further support at home and many parents seek their advice. The children are able to choose library books with their parents each week, effectively extending the children's interest in books and helping families to support their child's learning at home. The school offers toys for loan to families as at the time of the last inspection but this is not well known by all parents and the system is not much used. Plans are laid for the sharing of activities to promote mathematical development at home, building on the very successful teaching in school. Parents are justly very proud of the school's achievements with their children and most are very pleased to support its work. Some parents join courses at the school aimed at improving their understanding of how their children learn and these prove to be very valuable for the children involved.
31. Since the last inspection, the good quality of teaching and learning has been improved further through the strong commitment of the staff to do their best for the children. The headteacher has worked tenaciously during frequent changes in staff since the last inspection to lead the quality of teaching and learning forward so successfully.

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

32. The school provides an excellent range and quality of learning opportunities that are extremely relevant to the children's needs. The six areas of learning set nationally are presented in a creative and interesting way within a rich, diverse and stimulating environment. The high standards evident in the last inspection have been extended through the provision of additional resources for information and communication technology.
33. Teachers, all teaching support staff and students are fully involved in planning and preparing daily the range of exciting activities provided both inside the classrooms and out in the garden area. These activities offer a wealth of learning opportunities that often complement one another and further reinforce the children's learning. For instance, children grow and care for plants both in the garden and in the classroom. This helps them understand the processes of growth and how to care for living things. Their indoor plants are placed in the centre of the table at lunchtimes to help foster children's social skills. Plants are also used as part of a mathematical activity when children measure how tall the plants are and compare their heights. Outside, the budding leaves and flowers are used to help children understand about seasons and the passage of time. Watering the plants provides an interesting opportunity for the children to develop their skills in speaking English. Opportunities for role-play are provided both indoors and out. The children were observed caring for dolls in the 'maternity ward' set up outside the classroom. 'Doctors' and 'nurses' were diligent in giving injections, testing blood samples and wrapping their patients in bandages. Inside the nursery children were observed carefully tending their 'babies' in the home corners, changing their nappies and tucking them up in bed.
34. The planning system is rigorous and has improved well since the last inspection when it was identified as a key area for development. Long, medium and short term planning systems set a clear agenda for the curriculum. A useful bank of daily plans for a wide range of activities successfully guides the adults as they teach the children. The clear learning objectives, the role of adults and the children and the language to be used provide a clear and universal message to all staff involved in helping the children to learn. The weekly planning meetings and daily review meetings involve all staff and students. This means that the whole staff team contributes to the curriculum and provides a united effort in supporting the children's learning. The team approach to planning and the high expectations of all staff are key features of the success of the nursery. Volunteers receive helpful guidance and very good staff role models in supporting the children's learning.
35. The provision for promoting the children's understanding of healthy living are understood by the whole school community. The school is part of a Healthy Schools' initiative and takes its responsibilities seriously. The children are well aware of the need to keep themselves clean and to wash their hands before lunch and before engaging in cookery activities. When a child helping to make gingerbread men needed to blow his nose, without any prompting, he went to wash his hands again afterwards. Parents send pieces of fruit in each day to be shared at snack time in support of the school's healthy eating policy and staff make sure that the children are aware of the benefits of eating fresh fruit.
36. The staff of the nursery take pride in providing for the differing needs of all the children in their care. The children with special educational needs are identified early. Because

links with other professionals are very good, identification often takes place before the child has joined the nursery, which allows for good preparation. Provision for the children with special needs is excellent; they are given the specific help and support they need, often through the provision of a support assistant. As a result of the well-planned and resourced provision, coupled with the support of knowledgeable adults, children with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set for them. Individual education plans are clear and specific, and follow the recently revised national code of practice. All staff members agree carefully thought out strategies that best meet individual needs and these are applied regularly and consistently.

37. For the older children nearing transfer to primary school, a system of target setting in literacy and numeracy skills helps to focus the curriculum more closely on the skills they need to ease their transfer to the reception class. Although most activities are available to all children on a basis of choice, staff keep a watchful eye on the range of activities experienced by individual children and record keeping systems alert staff to gaps in the children's learning. Some activities are focused on the needs of specific children, such as new admissions or those with more advanced needs. All children are helped to benefit equally from the curriculum.
38. Links with the community are very good. The curriculum within the nursery is very successfully supplemented by frequent visits out into the community, for example into the locality for shopping trips for ingredients for baking activities or further afield for trips on the underground into central London to visit the science museum. Members of the local community invited into school add their special skills to the excellent curriculum. Musicians perform and invite children to join them, for example, in a 'walk through the jungle'. A dramatist joins the staff team to extend the children's opportunities for role-play. Parents are invited to join celebrations of festivals, such as Christmas, Eid and Diwali, and to enjoy visits from African musicians.
39. Provision for the children's personal development is excellent, and even stronger now than at the time of the last inspection. Provision is excellent for the children's moral, social and cultural development and very good for their spiritual development.
40. The spiritual aspect of the children's development is nurtured on a daily basis through, for example, the wonder of the first celandines of spring, fascination with the beauty of giant snails, the effect of sunshine on shiny paper and the 'magic' of magnets. In addition, the school uses festivals from the variety of faiths represented in the nursery to introduce children to world religions in a way that they can easily understand.
41. The school's provision for the children's moral development is unobtrusive but very consistent. All the staff frequently find opportunities presented throughout the day to explain right from wrong in ways that the children can understand and relate to. For example, when a child banged on the glass of the aquarium, a nursery nurse explained carefully that this frightened the fish. She asked the child to remember how she felt when she was frightened and said that she was sure the child did not want the fish to feel like that. The nursery nurse then took the child gently by the hand and diverted her attention to another more constructive activity.
42. In providing for the children's social development, the school is entirely successful in meeting its stated objectives: 'to develop positive attitudes in relation to living in a community' and in fostering in the children 'a sense of responsibility for one's self and one's own actions'. This success is due to the concerted efforts of members of staff who provide consistently good role models and who treat everyone with courtesy and

good humour. Everyone looks out for ways of helping one another. The school's mentoring system means that everyone new to the school has a mentor to look after them. Experienced staff look out for newer staff, and the older children are all given responsibility of befriending a younger one. Staff befriend new parents; parent volunteers help staff and children alike. The consistent, caring community spirit permeates all that the school does and is recognised and appreciated by parents who rightly praise the way that the staff promote the good behaviour and social skills of their children.

43. Provision for the children's cultural development is a strength of the school and starts with the very wide ranging ethnic community represented by the families of the children attending the nursery. Celebrations of customs and traditions make links with many cultural backgrounds. The celebrations in Soho of the Chinese New Year are re-enacted in school with enthusiasm by the staff, children and parents alike. On Shrove Tuesday, the whole school enjoyed some excellent pancakes that the children had helped to prepare. At Diwali, Hindu staff and parents help the children to paint Mendhi patterns on their hands. These celebrations help to reinforce the way the school values and respects the community it serves and helps to involve the wider community in the education of the children, fostering and maintaining very good relationships. Visitors to, and regular outings from, school further enhance the social and cultural skills of the children. Specialists such as musicians and drama teachers are invited into school on a regular basis. For example, a role play specialist visited the school to give the teachers further ideas for extending dramatic play through well known children's stories such as *The Gingerbread Man*. She worked alongside adults and groups of children so that everyone benefited from her ideas and expertise. Visiting musicians give concerts for the children so that they become familiar with classical music, such as *Peter and the Wolf*. Groups of children are regularly taken to the shops to buy ingredients for cooking or material for use in creative work. Groups of children go to the local public library to choose books. Sometimes children are taken farther afield to places such as Canary Wharf, the City Farm at Hackney and the National Gallery.
44. The extended day care provided on the school site makes a very valuable contribution to the life of the school. Here the nursery children mix readily with children of up to eight years of age who attend nearby primary schools. The social interaction that takes place over a leisurely, well-presented breakfast enhances the children's social and language development. After breakfast, there is time for children to play with the older ones using a wide variety of carefully selected equipment. The children who attend the extended day care centre see the older children doing their homework and engaging in reading, writing and mathematics. This provides a very good role model for the nursery children.
45. The school's relationships with partner institutions are very good and constructive in meeting the needs of all concerned. Provision for preparing children for transfer to primary education is excellent. In addition to sharing information about the children's progress with their next teachers, members of the nursery staff take the children for visits to their new school during the children's last term at nursery. The nursery staff stay with them throughout the visit and, afterwards, they talk with the children about what they have done and seen at school. This helps the child to take the transfer to a new school in their stride and is much appreciated by parents. The school has profitable links with local colleges and universities, providing support for training for students on a range of courses, some of whom are parents of children attending the nursery. The Open University has used the school's facilities as training resources, filmed for students on its Early Years' courses.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS CHILDREN?

46. The care and support offered to the children whilst in the care of the school are very good. The school has a warm and caring atmosphere, where all teachers and support staff know the children well and are fully aware of their needs. As a result, the children establish happy, confident and trusting relationships with adults and with other children.
47. Parents responding to the questionnaire strongly agree that their children like to come to school and that they are happy there. All staff make it a priority to settle the children well, with an established and successful pre-school meeting between teachers and the children's carers. The school pays very good attention to the children's educational and emotional needs and provides help very successfully when necessary. Pupils from different communities, including asylum seekers and refugee children, are well integrated into the nursery and benefit from working alongside each other. The high number of children learning English as an additional language receive very good language support from the bilingual staff, who speak a range of the languages in use in the local community.
48. The school has a firm commitment to inter-agency working and has developed a very good understanding of what can be contributed by other professionals. Very effective working relationships with the education welfare officer and the local education authority's pupil support unit ensure that children with specific needs are promptly identified and effectively supported. Good use is made of support and advice from a range of sources where children have medical problems and where there are emotional, social, behavioural or learning difficulties.
49. Very good procedures are in place to deal with issues of child protection. The school works closely with the local social services and the family resources centre. Two members of staff have attended suitable training courses and the school is familiar with the procedures to follow where there are concerns about a child's welfare. All staff are made aware of these issues, including the mid-day supervisors.
50. There is excellent attention to matters of health and safety at all times. For example, members of staff were observed routinely attending to floor surfaces that posed potential dangers due to a spillage of play materials, such as sand or water. Children are made well aware of the need for hygiene and older children rarely need reminding to wash their hands before handling food. There is very good supervision while the children are engaged in practical activities, such as woodwork or construction activities using large blocks. The very good level of supervision extends to all outdoor activities, helped by the high number of adults present each day. The newly appointed site manager takes very good care to ensure that the buildings, equipment and the school grounds are clean and free from health hazards. There are very good arrangements for administering first aid and staff know what action to take in the case of an emergency or when a child becomes ill whilst at school. All parents feel confident that their children are safe and secure in the nursery.
51. The school has good procedures in place to improve attendance and punctuality. The school's administrator regularly monitors the attendance registers and contacts the families of children whose absence is unexplained. Fortnightly visits from the education welfare officer ensure a prompt follow up for persistent absence and support for families who have a record of non-attendance. The school has a very supportive relationship with families and helps them to deal with problems that may affect attendance. For example, children can be collected later than usual by arrangement or stay for lunch if this helps families to meet commitments without disturbing the

children's education.

52. The school provision for children extends to before and after-school care and care within the school holidays, and includes primary aged pupils as well as those of nursery age. This 'extended day' care is inspected annually by the local social services and the most recent report is very positive. The nursery shares staff with the 'extended day' centre and this enables very good liaison between the two systems. Care is taken to ensure that activities are dovetailed and the same high expectations apply to both situations. In the day-time, the extended day building is used as a centre for parents' training courses and toddler groups staffed by volunteer parents or governors.
53. The school has excellent procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The 'key worker' system means that the progress of each child is checked and recorded by one particular member of staff. This person not only monitors the academic progress of the children for whom she has a special responsibility, but she also monitors their behaviour and personal development. Any concerns that arise are discussed during the staff meeting held at the end of each day and shared with parents and carers. A solution is agreed upon which is applied both at home and at school so that the child is clear about the kind of behaviour that is expected. Procedures for dealing with difficult behaviour are incorporated into the school's Managing Children's Behaviour policy and these are well understood by the staff. All members of staff are very successful in promoting good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning because they are extremely skilled at on the spot assessment and effective intervention to help move children forward in both their academic and personal development. This skill is complemented and enhanced by the positive role models of social interaction that the staff consistently apply to their work throughout the day. Staff provide excellent role models for parents in the management of the children's behaviour and parents often seek guidance in handling difficulties with their own children.
54. The procedures for monitoring the children's academic progress are very good. All members of staff get to know the children's individual needs very well. The 'key worker' keeps detailed and precise records of the children's progress. The records include information on the progress of each child through the nationally devised stepping stones towards the Early Learning Goals set for the end of the reception class. These provide useful guidance for teaching plans. In addition, a 'special book' is kept for each child, containing carefully annotated photographs of activities the child has taken part in and examples of the child's drawings and early writing. The children are rightly proud of their achievements and the older children especially are able to explain what they did and why, when sharing their special books with staff and parents. These discussions are also useful for staff to assess the level of interest and motivation of each child within each area of learning. Where necessary, strategies to increase interest and motivation are devised and consistently used by all members of staff.
55. For the children with English as an additional language, records are kept of their progress in acquiring skills in spoken English. For the children with special educational needs, there are individual education plans with extremely well thought out targets set for the children. These very specific plans identify which adult will help the child achieve these targets and they provide a very effective guide to successful teaching, learning and assessment activities. For children for whom English is an additional language and for those with special educational needs, help from appropriate outside professionals is sought whenever any child's need cannot be met from within the school's own resources.
56. In the term before the children transfer to primary education, the school has recently

begun to set individual targets for each child within literacy and numeracy. These targets are shared with the children and their parents and their progress is assessed at the end of the term. The results form part of a very informative written report which is shared with the child's parents and the school to which the child is transferring, providing very useful information for future plans for teaching and learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. Parents and carers are extremely pleased with the quality of education provided for their children and with the standards achieved by the school. Without exception, parents who responded to the questionnaire were unanimous in agreeing that their children like school and that they are kept well informed about how their child is getting on. Ninety-seven per cent of parents agreed that the school works closely with parents. They are pleased that their children develop such positive attitudes to learning and that they make very good progress. The inspection findings confirm that parents are right to hold these very positive views.
58. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting confirmed that arrangements for settling their children into school are flexible and supportive. The pre-admission interviews with parents focus on promoting the partnership between home and school so that the school gets to know the new children quickly and a supportive partnership continues throughout the child's stay in the nursery. Parents or carers are encouraged to stay until their children feel secure and confident in their new environment. Parents feel comfortable in approaching the school to enquire about their children's welfare and progress. They feel that the school values them as partners in their children's education. They are made to feel very welcome and enjoy the opportunities for joining celebrations, such as for Eid, Diwali and Easter. Inspectors observed many parents and carers talking with staff and helping their children to settle happily into the nursery each day. Parents provide voluntary help in school and the staff value their support.
59. The school ensures that the very good quality of information provided to parents is accessible. Bilingual staff are available to explain or translate school documents and parents who speak English as an additional language report that they are very happy with this provision. The parents are confident that there is always someone present in school to assist with the interpretation of school correspondence into their mother tongue. Indeed the school often acts as a support for parents in conducting family affairs in English. Parents say how well the school helps to promote very good relationships between the many ethnic communities represented in the school. There is a strategically placed notice board, which displays information of interest to parents and carers. Many school displays of the children's work include notes in more languages than English, explaining the learning opportunities made available to the children within the work shown.
60. In addition to regular day-to-day contact with staff and the freedom to share their children's records and 'special books', parents are invited to termly meetings to discuss their children's progress. Occasional curriculum evenings are held as well as introductory meetings for new parents. The teachers and bilingual staff make every effort to be available to support parents who do not have English as a first language. Newsletters keep parents well informed about forthcoming events in the school and about the current focus of the curriculum. This means that working parents and others who cannot get into school are able to support their children at home. The children take home books to share with their families and a toy library is available. The school has plans to provide additional ways for parents to help their children to continue their learning at home, through the provision of mathematical games and activities.

61. The school consults with parents at every opportunity. For example, through discussions about the use of English and home languages in the school, the children's dress code, books shared with families and any changes in the curriculum. The school, in co-operation with the Basic Skills Agency, provides courses of good quality for parents on numeracy, literacy and how to develop the children's learning at home. A pleasing reception foyer with comfortable seating arrangements provides a welcome to visitors and contains useful information about school life.
62. Many parents speak in praise of the high quality facilities provided for working parents through the 'extended day' centre. The centre is well supervised by two trained nursery nurses, who are ably supported by support assistants and parent helpers. A good, healthy breakfast is provided, with a choice of cereals, toasts and eggs. The children who attend the twilight session receive a light evening meal cooked on the premises. The centre operates an 'open door' policy for parents and carers to come in at any time and work with their children. During the inspection, many parents were seen in the centre talking to their own and to other children. Parents feel that their children are valued as individuals, adults show respect for cultural diversity and support all children's learning in a relaxed atmosphere.
63. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning by working in partnership with the school to support the children's learning, by making resources and artefacts of good quality to extend the learning opportunities for the children and by contributing fruit for snack times. They attend social functions to raise extra money for the school funds. The governing body is fully supported by a complement of parent governors.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and inspiration to the school. She has established very clear educational direction for its work and very high expectations for its success. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, who brings to the school a wide experience of helping children with challenging needs to learn successfully. The strong staff team offers a good range of skills to the children and is fully committed to achieving high standards of provision in all areas of the curriculum. Though the school experiences considerable difficulties in achieving stability of staffing, the headteacher has built on the high standards evident at the time of the last inspection and led the school towards exceptionally high standards of provision for the children in its care.
65. The aims of the school provide a firm foundation for its work and are very successfully achieved. Very effective management systems and routines are established. The senior management team, including the headteacher, the deputy, the three teachers and the manager of the extended day care centre, meet weekly and minutes of the meeting keep the staff team fully informed on items discussed. Responsibilities for the management of the six areas of learning are shared between the teachers but due to the recent appointment of the two full-time teachers, the headteacher and the deputy maintain a watchful overview to ensure that standards are maintained.
66. The deputy headteacher manages the provision for the children with special educational needs extremely well. Her wide experience with children with special educational needs brings specialist knowledge to her work and ensures the high standard of provision for these pupils. The headteacher has recently taken over as co-ordinator for the school's provision for the high number of children with English as an additional language. This was formerly the responsibility of a specialist teacher but changes in provision by the local education authority have led to the post being

withdrawn. The very good practice evident in providing for these children is testimony to her success.

67. The role of the governing body is non-statutory but, as was required by the last inspection, governors have become more involved within the management structures of the school. The headteacher has established a close working relationship with governors and seeks to involve them within management decisions. However, most governors are parents of the school and tend to have a short term of office due to the relatively short time that the children attend the school. Nevertheless, training is organised on a regular basis to help new governors to understand their role. Many of the governors, like most parents of the school and members of the local community, need help with accessing formal documents in English. This requires further support and training, which governors willingly undertake. The governors are extremely supportive of the school, value its strengths and feel protective of the need to maintain the high standards achieved for the children. They are pleased to be able to offer extended day and holiday care to parents in addition to education within school hours. Governors fulfil their duties well and are active in communicating with parents as well as staff to ensure that the school continues to meet the needs of the community it serves. They are pleased to support the headteacher's application for the school to become an Early Centre of Excellence. The school is seeking to refine its management systems through working towards the Investors in People Award. Statutory duties applicable to nursery schools are met.
68. The school improvement plan is an annual document, which clearly sets out the priorities for development. Staff and governors are fully involved in reviewing plans and setting new ones. Because the governing body as yet holds few committee meetings, their approval of the final draft of the school improvement plan and policy documents sometimes falls behind schedule. This has had no discernable effect as yet on the quality of the educational provision in the school but it would be prudent to accelerate these procedures.
69. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher play key roles in monitoring the provision in the nursery through conscientious overseeing of planning and the review of teaching and learning through discussion in daily staff meetings on the successes of the day and those where improvements might be made. Performance management systems are in place. Children's records of attainment and 'special' record books are monitored effectively and written feedback is provided for staff, giving guidance on teaching specific children and general supervision on curriculum matters.
70. The school makes very effective use of available financial resources. All income, including the part of the budget that is devolved by the local education authority, specific grants and funds raised by parents are suitably allocated to meet the priorities for school improvement. The school office is organised well by the secretary although recent changes to the computer system and plans for further delegation of the school budget by the local education authority have caused some temporary difficulties. The items mentioned in the last auditors' report for improvement in the management of administrative systems have received appropriate attention. The secretary's ability to converse in three languages in addition to English is of great help to parents in communicating with the school over administrative matters.
71. There is a very good match of teaching and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced to meet the needs of the children and show an excellent capacity to maintain and work to continuously improve the quality of provision. The level of staffing is well supplemented by students, parent

volunteers and visiting specialists, all of whom work very effectively as a team to sustain the high quality of education provided. The good staffing level is of particular benefit to the high number of children using English as an additional language and those with special education needs, and is an improvement since the last inspection. As is typical locally, the school faces difficulties in recruiting and maintaining permanent staff. At present, all posts are filled but one teacher is on a temporary contract and unqualified under the English system of training. The induction system is thorough and a clear and supportive handbook provides guidance for new staff. The success of the induction and support system for staff is apparent in the very cohesive team that exists despite frequent changes.

72. Improvements have been made to the accommodation since the last inspection and facilities are now good. Although some of the buildings are demountable classrooms, the school is very well used and organised to provide an excellent range of learning opportunities for the children. The classrooms have been enhanced by the removal of internal walls to allow better use of the available space. There is good access to the generous and pleasant garden area, which is equipped with hillocks, gardens, a digging area, playhouses complete with planted window boxes, swings and large climbing apparatus, a roadway and covered areas offering space for setting up a variety of activities such as extended role-play areas. All is arranged within a fenced area, providing a very good learning environment where children learn and play in complete safety. A new classroom accommodates the extended day centre, providing a valuable resource both for the school, parents and the local community. The site manager ensures that the building and the grounds are kept in very clean decorative order and, with the high quality displays of the children's work, provide a stimulating and comfortable working environment for both adults and children. Building work is due to begin shortly on an extension to the main building to add to the indoor space available, including accommodation for a sensory play area and a further computer terminal.
73. Learning resources, both indoors and outside, are plentiful and of very good quality. As at the time of the last inspection, arrangements for storage are orderly and attractive, enabling the children to access and return their own materials and equipment. Resources have improved since the last inspection due to the increased finance made available to the school and support an increasingly very rich and varied curriculum.
74. In deciding how to spend the money it is given, the school employs the principles of best value very well. It compares prices when ordering goods or awarding contracts and follows the recommendations of the local education authority as regards purchases and services. The school's strong links with parents mean that consultation is routine for any changes planned. Parents report that they have no hesitation in approaching the school to discuss any queries or concerns. The school works in close partnership with the local education authority and takes every opportunity to extend the quality of its provision through training courses and reviewing the practice of other nursery centres. It works closely with training institutions and provides excellent facilities for the training of new teachers and support staff. The school has recently featured as a model of good practice on a training video compiled for an Open University course in Early Years education.
75. The last inspection indicated good leadership and management. The headteacher is now well established in post and has made substantial improvements to the effectiveness of leadership and management systems. The limited involvement of governors has been suitably addressed. The school's capacity for further improvement is excellent. The headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other members of staff are

suitably trained, very experienced and totally committed to high standards for the nursery and its children.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. In order to further extend the exceptionally good quality of education provided, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) Seek to ensure that the documents requiring approval by the governing body are kept on schedule. [*paragraph 68*]

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	27	4	0	0	0	0
Percentage	16	73	11	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	74
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	103

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.74

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.87

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff	
Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	33

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	384

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7
--------------------------------	---

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

The school does not have a fully delegated budget and precise information on the costs of the school is not available from the local education authority.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	125
Number of questionnaires returned	64

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	95	5	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	28	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	30	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	38	8	0	17
The teaching is good.	84	14	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	83	17	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	19	2	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	14	3	0	8
The school works closely with parents.	77	20	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	78	20	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	80	19	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	66	25	2	0	8

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal, social and emotional development

77. The children achieve very well and reach well above average standards in this area of learning because they are highly motivated to learn and readily engage in the wide variety of exciting and stimulating activities that are provided each day. The older children are able to concentrate for extremely long periods of time when engrossed in a self-chosen activity, with many working persistently at the same task for thirty minutes or more because the activities planned for them are so interesting. For example, when children are engaged in making dolls' clothes, building with large blocks, engaging in role-play in the hospital or home corners, or using the variety of sand-play areas made available.
78. From the moment they arrive at the nursery, the children are taught to do things for themselves. The adults ensure that the parents understand the importance of this area of learning and enlist the parents' help and support in developing their children's independence. As a result children quickly learn that they must remove their own coats and hang them on their own peg, then put their own name card in the special place that indicates they are present. Children who are wearing nappies when they start nursery are helped towards toilet training by staff as quickly as possible, then encouraged to use the toilet independently.
79. The children make very good progress, quickly becoming self-confident and decisive. They are soon choosing and fetching what they need. This is helped initially by parents who are encouraged to begin an activity with their child. Children quickly become very interested in what they see there is to do in the nursery and are encouraged to express their likes and dislikes by both staff and parents and to make their needs known. Members of staff take special note of quiet children and appropriate action is taken to help them to express themselves, both on a one-to-one basis and when members of staff lead small groups of children in stories and discussions.
80. The quality of teaching is very good and the very good progress made by children is due to the vigilant and sensitive approach shown towards them by staff who understand well how best to help children of this age to learn and develop. The children soon learn to get out the toys and equipment they need and understand that everyone has to help tidy the nursery at the end of the session. They do this very efficiently, taking great care to ensure that things are in the right place even though this is sometimes very tricky. For instance, the large wooden hollow blocks are stored on open shelves and there is quite an art to stacking them away so that they fit the space available. When going outside, most put their coats on without being reminded. They know that they must wash their hands after using the toilet and before touching food. The children who stay to lunch show very well developed personal and social skills for their age. They are able to help themselves to vegetables from the serving dishes, ask politely for others to pass them what they need and to clear their plates away when they have finished. As the children get towards the end of their time in nursery, they become very good at helping others. They set the table for lunch, and befriend the younger children to help them to settle in.
81. The children's behaviour and the relationships between children are very good for their age. This is because of the excellent role models provided by the staff of the nursery

who treat everyone with courtesy, respect and good humour. It is the school's policy to help children to acquire the language they need to resolve their differences in a peaceful and harmonious way. The consistently pleasant way adults speak to children and the effective way they manage the children's behaviour ensure that the children quickly learn how they are expected to treat one another. From the outset, children are taught how to take turns and share. Every day, the children are encouraged to bring a piece of fruit to share with others at snack time. On their birthdays, children are allowed to bring sweets to share with the other children, who happily join in with each other's birthday celebrations.

82. The children benefit enormously from the multi-cultural nature of the nursery. They quickly develop an understanding and empathy for those from backgrounds differing from their own because the staff and the parents working voluntarily in the nursery or visiting represent a very wide range of cultures. The presence of these adults provides very positive role models for all the children who become used to seeing a variety written languages and national dress, and to hearing different languages spoken. They listen sometimes to stories told by parents and staff in the adult's own first language. Just by being in the nursery, the children have a very well developed sense of community and learn to value and respect the wide variety of people from many different cultures with whom they interact very happily.

Communication, language and literacy

83. The majority of children are learning English as an additional language and on entry to the nursery, three-quarters of the children are in the very early stages of learning to communicate in English. This means that attainment on entry is low for most children. Very good teaching ensures that the children make exceptionally good progress in understanding and speaking English. Most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals set nationally for the age group in this area of learning. This indicates exceptional achievement on the part of both the children and the staff.
84. The very good teaching of communication skills is quite rightly at the heart of all activities in the nursery. The high number of staff, volunteers and students present each day makes sure that the children are very frequently engaged in discussions with adults, both in English and in their home language. The well-orchestrated team of staff share a very good understanding of how to take the children's use of language forward. Those who are able to use the children's home language, interspersed with English, to promote effective understanding. In the earliest stages, the child's home language predominates wherever possible, enabling the youngest children to centre their new experiences around what they already know. It helps the children to learn to communicate with others outside the family and to understand what is required of them in the nursery. This provides an important starting point for further learning and establishes sufficient confidence for most children to use some English as soon as they begin to understand it.
85. The wide range of imaginative activities provided successfully captures the children's interest, making them very keen to talk or listen to others as they thoughtfully explore all the materials. Adults provide sensitive and pertinent 'running commentaries' as activities proceed and constantly seek to engage the children in thinking about what they are seeing, hearing or feeling. Bilingual staff are able to extend the children's thinking skills as far as possible through use of some of the children's home languages. The children respond well.
86. Books are a very important part of the nursery's work and they are included in many

activities, either as a starting point or to provide supplementary information. For example, the story of the Gingerbread Man came alive when a visiting teacher dressed up as the old woman in the story and proceeded to make gingerbread men with the children. This was followed by further role-play as the children acted out the story, with a range of versions of the Gingerbread Man story available to prompt their memories and allow them to re-examine the pictures in the story. The children, most of whom were new to English when they started the nursery, spoke in role, emulating the language of the text with good expression. Occasionally words or verb endings were missed but the meaning and diction were beautifully clear. The younger children listened, captivated, but gradually joined the repetitive parts of the dialogue. The teacher asked questions and added dialogue to help the children add to the story, then underlined their sense of achievement by showing real enjoyment and enthusiasm for their work.

87. The children enjoy using books and are well aware that print carries meaning. They soon learn to recognise their own names and those of others as they collect their name cards at the start of each session and later when encouraged to write it on letters, drawings and artwork. Evidence in the children's special progress books indicates that most of the children can write their name in a recognisable form as they leave the nursery and the higher attaining children write it correctly with well-formed letters. The staff encourage the children to listen for sounds in words and as they reach their final term in the nursery, most are able to hear and recognise at least the initial sound of their own names.
88. Through a range of interesting opportunities for writing, the children are encouraged to record messages and information in written form, from the earliest stages of using pictures, squiggles and other means. The children are encouraged to 'read' what they have written to attach meaning to their work, sometimes where it does not exist at first. The pride that the staff show in the efforts made by the children encourage them to develop a sense of achievement and to attempt more work. The children are helped to make their own books by compiling a series of pages into a bound book. One of the children new to the nursery was observed compiling a book about her family that gathered meaning and significance as the morning proceeded due to very good teaching. She began the session with an interest in using colourful pens to make marks on coloured paper. The nursery nurse had to work hard to engage her continued interest and concentration but she succeeded through offering the child a range of options. What paper would she like next, would she draw mummy this time, and what about her brother, he would not want to be left out of the book! You had better write their names now so that everyone knows who they are. Just one more to complete the book about her family, don't forget the baby. Put 'mummy is holding the baby' - which was soon represented in early writing. The book was bound and the child proudly shared her achievement with other adults as she carried it round the nursery. This gave her many opportunities to answer questions about her pictures and to try to read her writing, and demonstrated very good progress from when she first sat down to survey what was going on at the book table an hour and a half earlier.
89. There are many similar examples of the staff's skilful response to children which sets them on a trail of learning and provides them with a great variety of topics of conversation. Interesting activities such as the post project encourage the children to write. All the children wrote a letter home which was then put into an envelope, addressed and posted. They were very excited as they waited for the replies to arrive back at the nursery and enjoyed working out what the message said. Older and more able children were given some of the words they needed to include in their messages

home. They had to remember them so that they could be read again to parents.

90. This area of learning is co-ordinated by the headteacher and closely dovetailed with the provision for the children with English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs. Clear and sufficiently detailed policy documents guide the good practice. All staff provide very good models of clear diction, accurate pronunciation and fluent and interesting speech. Language in use is adventurous and wide-ranging. Communications are clear but not simplistic. An example was heard during play with the hollow blocks: "Don't lean back too much, I don't know how stable they are, how easily they might fall over," and "A perfect fit. That's a good idea, putting it across that way. Do you want some more cuboids?" All activities are used as opportunities to extend the children's understanding and use of language.

Mathematical development

91. The children's attainment in mathematics is in line with expectations for the age group and they make very good progress during their time in the nursery, despite the limited spoken English of most children when they are first admitted. This is due to the wide variety of activities made available and the presence of a high number of adults, seemingly always available to talk with the children and take their learning forward.
92. Most children learn to count to ten and some of the older children count to 20, or beyond, with ease. One child was heard counting to 63. The children can name triangles, squares and circles, they know the names of colours and the days of the week. Through the many practical activities provided, by the time they move on to school, most children improve their mathematical vocabulary substantially, although for most children this remains an area where fluency is less than usual for their age and ability.
93. The quality of teaching is very good and staff are adept at developing the children's number skills at every possible opportunity. For example, when playing in the bookshop, a child was pricing the books and copying numbers correctly on to price stickers. A nursery nurse supported her learning very well by checking that the child knew the numbers she was writing and understood that the price of objects was displayed in figures.
94. All members of staff are fully aware of the importance of developing the children's mathematical vocabulary. Mathematical ideas are developed across the curriculum in practical situations where children are able to match the adult's spoken language to the physical activity, sometimes in English dovetailed into the child's home language. Staff take care to ask the children to repeat any new or unfamiliar mathematical terms while performing an appropriate action. During a yoga activity, the nursery nurse leading the session ensured that the children demonstrated their understanding of prepositions by giving the children the word to describe an action and then asking the children to copy the action and repeat the appropriate word. When cooking, children learn how to weigh, measure and count out the ingredients, using terms such as *more* or *less than*. When making dolls' clothes, the children readily learn to use words such as *longer* and *shorter*, *bigger* and *smaller* correctly. When children play with the sand and water, staff introduce the children to the terms *full*, *half full* and *empty*. On Shrove Tuesday, one of the staff tossed a pancake; half of it landed in the pan and the other half hung over the edge. This caused great amusement and the nursery nurse capitalised on the situation to use the word *half* in a meaningful context. When making gingerbread men, the children carefully counted the number of currant 'buttons' they added, noting who had used five, and who had managed to squeeze in six or even seven.

95. In their free play, the children have plenty of opportunity to practise and reinforce their learning. When playing with the wooden blocks, the children experiment with tessellation and are careful to choose the block that fits exactly. They also use a variety of containers and different sized scoops when playing in the salt, the sand or the water, which helps them to develop an understanding of capacity. The children are able to use mathematical games and toys with numbers written in their first language to support their mathematical development when they first start school. Older children use complex number jigsaws that they complete by matching the shape but, when questioned, they demonstrate that they also recognise the English numbers written on the puzzle.
96. The teachers are very good at teaching the children specific mathematical concepts in interesting and varied ways. For instance, when the children water the plants, they are helped and encouraged to compare the heights of the different plants and the differing shapes of their leaves. The activity and the teacher's questions are varied to suit the age and ability of the children. For example, the youngest children were asked 'Are the daffodils taller or shorter than you?' Older children were able to say which plant was the tallest and which the shortest. The oldest children were able to build towers using mathematical apparatus to match the height of the different plants. In another activity, a nursery nurse asked a group of children to recognise written numbers and then to build towers with that number of blocks. The numbers used were adjusted to the ability of each child in the group. The older children were introduced to simple addition and subtraction by the adult asking, 'How any more shall we add?' and 'Is three more or less than five?' 'How many less?'
97. Within most activities, teaching mixed ability and mixed age groups works very well. Occasionally, however, the activities are more suited to children of one ability than another. For instance, when five children joined a teacher to play with a mathematical game, the two older children quickly became bored because the younger ones had not yet learned how to play the game and needed to be taught. Also, one of the younger children had considerable difficulty in understanding the need to take turns. As the younger children were occupying the teacher's attention, the older two drifted away from the game and found something else to do. For the oldest children, activities for teaching mathematical skills are most successful when planned for specific groups of children with similar needs, such as when specified children were helped to practise 'adding on' and 'taking away'. Usually, however, most children are very well provided for through the very wide range of practical activities and the frequent access to adults to extend their learning. Where there is an adult giving them direct attention, the children concentrate very hard and make very good progress.
98. The children are well motivated to learn and respond very well to the many, varied mathematical opportunities made available to them. They are independent in selecting the activities in which they wish to participate and, once settled into the nursery, play very well with others.
99. The teacher in charge of this area of learning is very knowledgeable about how very young children develop mathematical skills. However, she has recently returned to the school after working elsewhere and has had little time to establish leadership of the subject. She is keen to organise school based training to help all members of staff to feel equally confident about teaching mathematics. Another member of staff is developing mathematical packs for parents to use with their children at home. These contain interesting mathematical games, using familiar equipment. Many are linked to

the children's favourite stories, such as the Three Bears. The games will be of great benefit to the children's education. When they are complete, the school will offer training to parents in their use.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

100. Most children make very good progress and they are on line to exceed the early learning goals set nationally for this area of learning. The children show great interest in exploring and investigating, in designing and making things for themselves, and in using computer programs. Every day the children engage in a great many activities that help to foster and develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.
101. The very good progress made by the children is entirely due to the very good teaching in this area of learning. The resources provided for the children are exciting and stimulating, inviting exploration. Teachers and nursery nurses take a genuine interest in what the children see and do and are careful to supply the appropriate language to make the experiences of the children both meaningful and memorable. They know that experience without words melts away. For example, when cooking, the nursery nurse explained very carefully why liquid batter becomes solid when heat is applied and the mixture cooks. She helped the children to recall the actions they had used to make the batter, encouraged them to name the ingredients used and to use words to describe actions such as 'stir', 'mix' and 'spread'. She helped the children to commit the words to memory by encouraging them to say the words as they mimed the actions. A series of photographs of other baking activities, taken and put on display, helps the children to recall and discuss again their previous work, such as making chapatis.
102. A further example of children exploring materials was seen when a nursery nurse taught a group of children about the way in which magnets attract some metal objects. She used the correct word, 'ferrous', to describe the materials containing iron. The children had great fun using the magnets and made very good progress in their learning due to the well-planned activity, the range of resources used, the adult's knowledge of the children's abilities and their level of understanding, and her knowledge of the way in which young children learn. By the end of the activity, the children could recall which items are attracted to magnets and which are not. They were able to sort the items out accordingly. Sometimes, however, although the children were able to make their meaning clear, their lack of fluent spoken English meant that they could only answer questions with single words and phrases such as 'wood', or 'that one'. The adult summed up the lesson very well, supplying the names of the items and the materials they were made of to help reinforce what the children had learnt.
103. When designing and making dolls' clothes, the teacher encouraged the children to work independently and to use their own initiative to select materials and to decide on the method and approach to use. She acted in a supporting role, using praise and encouragement, and supplying the vocabulary they needed to use descriptive words, such as 'use a large piece of tape'. Her suggestions were specifically aimed at helping the children achieve what they were attempting. She made it very easy for the children to make their needs known by encouraging the use of gestures and supplying the appropriate language in a sensitive and unobtrusive manner. As a result, all the children made very good progress in using simple tools and techniques and also in extending their spoken English, the lack of which sometimes hampers pupils' achievements.
104. Even the youngest children use tools safely and children were observed sawing wood and hammering in nails quite independently of adult intervention although an adult was

nearby keeping a watchful eye 'just in case'. The provision of appropriate child-sized tools and softwood for this activity meant the children were able complete their models successfully.

105. The children learn to care for animals and plants very well. They feed the fish and giant snails that are kept as nursery pets. They know what the snails like best to eat and are fascinated by their shells and their movements. They touch them very 'gently' because they know that if they are 'rough' they might hurt or even kill the snails. The children plant and take care of flowers and vegetables and handle and water them with care. They are very excited by the new buds and flowers that appear and discuss the colours and shapes of flowers excitedly. They know that plants grow slowly and that different things grow at different times of the year and in different countries. This knowledge helps them to develop a sense of time and place.
106. To help foster the children's sense of time, they measure the growth of the plants at regular intervals, go on nature trails around the nursery grounds to spot any new flowers or plants that have appeared and note the sequence of their arrival. When asked, they know what flowers come out first, snowdrops or aconites; they point and say 'the white one'. The children's knowledge of the passage of time is also developed in their special books where children keep a historical record of the work they have done in their time in nursery. Using these books with adults helps children to recall events in their recent past.
107. Very good teaching enables the children to develop a good sense of place, or geographical awareness. Children are frequently taken on trips to the different local shops. Local landmarks are pointed out and photographed. The photographs are then used to help the children to remember and describe where they went and what they saw. As the local shopping area has a wealth of shops, selling things from all around the world, it provides a valuable resource for teaching the children about a wide variety of cultures. These visits are supplemented and enhanced through the celebration in the nursery of the festivals that many of the children enjoy at home. The school makes very good use of both the locality and of the knowledge and expertise of the diverse school community. This means that the children develop a very good understanding of their own and other people's cultures and beliefs. Sometimes the children are taken further afield to learn about farm animals or places of national interest, such as art galleries.
108. Every term, groups of children go on a journey to study the use of technology in everyday life. They travel on escalators and underground trains. They observe adults using automatic ticket machines and look at the electronic display board telling the time the next train will arrive and its destination. They watch road bridges being opened to let boats pass up the river. They observe cranes at work on building tall buildings.
109. The use information and communication technology within the curriculum has made sound improvement since the last inspection, when it was found to be inadequate. The nursery's two computers are available for use by the children every day. The older children know how to switch them on, select the program they need and use the 'mouse' effectively to play simple maths and number games, or to enjoy prompting the action in a story. Although there are only two computers available, these are in constant use and another is planned for the new building. The children are taught the skills they need and have sufficient opportunity to practise them. The programs in use are of good quality. The children would benefit from the opportunity to use other forms of technology, such as listening centres in the reading corners. Overall, however, the resources for information and communication technology are adequate, with

programmable toys loaned from the primary school next-door. The school is investing more time and money into this area of learning for the benefit of the children. For instance, the school has recently purchased five reconditioned laptop computers so that parents can be taught more about how to use computers with their children. It is planned that these will be lent out to parents who wish to help their children at home.

Physical development

110. For most children, attainment is above average and already meets many of the steps towards the early learning goals set nationally for the age group. The children achieve very well, including those with special educational needs presenting specific physical difficulties and the great majority with English as an additional language. This maintains the good standards reported in the last inspection.
111. The garden area of the school is very well developed and organised to provide a very good range of activities of good quality that promote the children's physical development. A very good variety of opportunities exist daily, both indoors and outside, for the children to develop their skills and this is a key feature in the success of the teaching and learning in this area of the curriculum. The children show good control and co-ordination within their work and develop a good awareness of space and of others. They use the variety of climbing frames, balancing apparatus and swings outside in the garden area with enthusiasm, and enjoy hanging from the rope ladder attached to a well-established tree. A good range of wheeled toys is available and the bicycles, tricycles and trucks are controlled well as children navigate the road track through the garden, sometimes with passengers aboard. Large blocks are assembled carefully and successfully with co-operative play encouraged by staff. The children are learning to control small games equipment, such as the wide variety of balls, increasingly well. The children benefit from the daily opportunities for exercise, which is of particular value to the many children who do not have easy access to outdoor play areas at home.
112. There are wide and varied interesting opportunities for the children to practise control of their finer movements. The children's very good concentration skills mean that they often engage in these activities for extended periods of time. One child set up a 'party' for many members of his family, using the many small containers provided in a deep tray of salt, complete with funnels and spoons in a range of small shapes and sizes. He worked for a long time, filling a long row of very small bottles and canisters to represent the food preparations. Others were content to fill, empty and fill again, watching the movement of the salt and the success of their endeavours. Adults give time to all activities at various stages in the session and this significantly helps the very good achievement of the children through extending their ideas, their persistence and their sense of achievement.
113. The school provides a wide range of resources for creative work, such as crayons, felt-pens, paintbrushes and rollers, in many different widths and sizes. This gives the children a very good range of opportunities to learn to manipulate and control manual equipment for drawing, writing and other creative work. Glue is applied with good control and some very small items of collage, such as sequins, get attached firmly to artwork. The children learn to use tools such as scissors, hammers, saws and screwdrivers, with increasing precision and an awareness of the safety precautions necessary. Construction toys and malleable materials are used with good control and staff make activities more interesting and attractive by, for example, providing warm, freshly mixed play-dough and warm water in some of the water troughs.

114. The quality of teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. As in all other areas of learning, the teaching is very successful because teachers and support staff understand the needs of the children so well and are extremely diligent in arranging such a wide range of appealing and useful activities, and maintaining their quality throughout each session. The staff are adept at timely interventions that promote the children's thinking and learning very successfully. The staff are often as intrigued by the activities as the children and show an infectious interest in the children's achievements. This effectively builds on the children's skills and promotes their confidence and independence.
115. Excellent teaching and learning occur when staff use high quality activities with the children, becoming totally immersed in the children's interest, taking their learning forward through a dialogue that allows the children to practise a wide range of vocabulary as they organise and manipulate the equipment available. An excellent example of teaching was seen when a nursery nurse led the bathing and dressing of the babies in the 'maternity ward' of the 'hospital'. Many 'babies', of varying colour and gender, were available and bathing facilities were warm, clean and plentiful. Towels were of an appropriate size for the dolls. A very good range of suitable, attractive and pressed clothes were available. There were enough containers of talcum powder to allow each 'nurse' to proceed with his or her work uninterrupted. Workstations were well organised and equipped. Resources were sufficient for a group of five children to engage in concentrated effort for thirty minutes or more. With these excellent resources to hand, the nursery nurse engaged the children more deeply in their work through timely, quiet dialogue on the next manoeuvre, such as how the clean nappy might be secured. Girls and boys were taught in the same way, with no evidence of cultural stereotypes observed. The teacher took the opportunity to extend the children's language, physical skills and their understanding of the task in hand to a very good level, as well as their persistence, concentration and co-operation with others. As the 'babies' were dressed, the children were supported without missing any opportunities to practise, for example, fastening the jackets. The nursery nurse's language included suitable vocabulary for the children using English as an additional language, such as, "Where are you going to put the hat? Yes, the hat goes on the baby's head." The children began to echo her sentences and use her words increasingly within their own chatter. The nursery nurse's very good understanding of procedures involved in bathing babies was evident and she established an air of great confidence on the very calm and orderly 'maternity ward'.

Creative development

116. Standards are above average and for most children, the early learning goals set nationally are likely to be exceeded. Since the last inspection, high standards have been maintained in music and improved to an above average level in the provision for imaginative role-play.
117. As is characteristic of the very good provision within the school, a great range and variety of choices are made available to the children in order to extend their creative development. The children produce a range of independent creative work, samples of which are on display, effectively decorating the nursery and adding to the children's sense of achievement when tasks are complete. Colour, texture, shape and form are explored through a great variety of interesting art and craft work. The children are experienced in using a wide range of materials and implements and their work demonstrates individual choices and good skill in the use of colour and control of brushes and drawing implements. Much of the work achieved is directed by the child, using materials available, and the nursery's orderly storage systems mean that children

can use it as a workshop, collecting further materials to add to their work.

118. Opportunities are also found for the children to practise drawing from observation. Examples of such work were seen in the large drawings of shells, showing sensitive choice of colour and a clear representation of the lines visible on the shells. The range of widths of oil pastels made available adds interest and accuracy to their work. The staff display the drawings close to the shells, which helps the children to re-examine their work and provides opportunities to discuss it with others, thus extending their descriptive language skills. A key feature of the very good teaching in the nursery is the language teaching which adds value to every learning opportunity. In another activity, children were seen using hand lenses to examine the nursery's giant snails munching lettuce leaves, discussing what they could see with their teacher before attempting to draw. A member of the support staff made her own drawing, which added to the interest and involvement of the children as they emulated the approach of the adult model.
119. A rich supply of materials for collage work enables the children to produce elaborate work, sometimes working in partnership or in a small group to achieve larger pieces of work. Groups work on three-dimensional work, such as the large model of Elmer the Elephant. The children develop a high degree of confidence and are well equipped to make choices within their creative work, through learning to use and respond to a very wide range of materials. Labels on the displays of the children's work are often in three community languages in addition to English for the benefit of both children and parents.
120. The children explore sound as they play a wide selection of percussion instruments, listen to visiting musicians and recorded music and respond sometimes through movement to the music they hear. They learn to sing a selection of rhymes and songs linked to a variety of cultures. Celebrations linked to festivals such as Christmas, Eid and Diwali, give opportunities for the children, staff and parents to share music and dancing.
121. The imaginative aspect of play is a major part of the school's provision. It is developed through the provision of very good opportunities for role-play, both indoors and outside, such as in the home bases indoors and within the play houses outside, and within the extensive 'hospital' with wards, waiting room and office area set up outside each day. Other activities, such as railway and town sets, and constructional apparatus, such as large blocks, successfully add further opportunities for imaginative play. Stories are re-enacted, providing opportunities for the children to develop an awareness of drama. Drama groups visit the nursery to inspire the children through the performance of familiar stories. Staff have received training to raise their awareness of the role of adults in developing imaginative play. A consultant was seen at work in the nursery leading the children in the dramatisation of The Gingerbread man story, which involved the teacher dressed as the old woman in the story to lead the baking of gingerbread. This encouraged eager participation by the children and a spirited re-enactment of the story.
122. The quality of teaching is very good, overall, and sometimes excellent. A very good working atmosphere is established and creative responses are encouraged by the good balance between providing activities and materials with a specified purpose and allowing the children sufficient autonomy to make their own decisions and choices as they create their own work. The very good dialogue between the teacher and the children enriches the activities and many observations and ideas are exchanged as work proceeds. The wide variety of materials made available encourages originality. Staff involve themselves in imaginative role-play and successfully extend dialogue,

concentration and the depth and breadth of learning.