

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MARSH HILL NURSERY SCHOOL**

Erdington

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103126

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Masaun

Lead inspector: Michael Best

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2004

Inspection number: 261334

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery  
School category: Maintained  
Age range of pupils: 3 to 4 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 80 children (part-time)

School address: 275 Marsh Hill  
Erdington  
Birmingham  
Postcode: B23 7HG

Telephone number: 0121 373 3090

Fax number: 0121 373 3090

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Peter Lane

Date of previous inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Marsh Hill Nursery serves a mixture of owner-occupier and rented homes in the Erdington area of Birmingham. Most children start in the school in the September following their third birthday but the school admits three-year-olds at other times in the year, if it has places. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups is steadily rising, and currently represents just over a third of the number on roll. When they start school, a number of children have limited experiences, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Twenty-two children receive specific help in learning English an additional language and 13 are at the early stages of language acquisition.

There are 80 children on roll, all of whom attend part-time. Most children attend for a year before moving onto reception classes in nearby schools. Mobility is low. The school does not provide school meals but staff estimate that about a third would be eligible for free meals, which is above the national average for primary schools.

Six children are formally recognised as having special educational needs but none of them has a statutory assessment of their need. The local authority does not look after any children at the school.

The school is involved in the *Excellence in Cities* and *Single Regeneration Budget* initiatives. It hosts Portage, Behaviour management and curriculum courses as part of its membership of a local *Inclusion Network*. It won an *INSPIRE* award in 2001 for running family workshops and basic skills courses.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10413	Michael Best	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, Inclusion
10965	Patricia Edwards	Lay inspector	
3751	Trudy Cotton	Team inspector	Special educational needs, Provision for ethnic minority children and those with English as an additional language

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>10</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>21</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Taking account of all its work, Marsh Hill Nursery is a very inclusive and effective school that has many strengths and no major weaknesses.** It provides a high quality education for its children and they achieve well. The very good leadership and management of the school reflect the strong commitment and expertise of the staff team and newly appointed governing body. The school provides good value for money. This is a school with ambition that is well placed to meet successfully the many challenges that lie ahead.

#### **The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- Governors and senior staff have a clear and perceptive understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- The school's partnership with parents and other groups is very good.
- Children's personal, social and emotional education is very good.
- Teaching in all areas of learning is good and children are well on the way to meeting the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the time they move to reception classes.
- The school's provision for children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is very good and enables children to make very good progress.
- Children do not always have sufficient opportunities to pursue and develop their thinking and interest, particularly for those who are abler than others.
- Assessment of children's achievement is better in the activities led by adults than in those chosen by the children.

#### **Improvement since the last inspection is very good.**

The school has made considerable progress in many important areas since the last inspection. A strong and effective staff team is now in place and they are successfully carrying forward the school's plans for improvement. The provision for children's learning has improved from satisfactory to very good in their personal, social and emotional development; and from satisfactory to good in their creative development, physical development, and their knowledge and understanding of the world. The quality of teaching has improved, with higher proportions of good and very good lessons; there was no unsatisfactory teaching during this inspection. The school has successfully addressed shortages in learning resources and the accommodation is much improved.

The school has made good progress in implementing a whole school approach to developing children's writing skills and has successfully improved its procedures for assessing what children know and can do. The challenge for abler pupils has improved in adult-led activities. A strength of the leadership is that the school is not complacent; staff acknowledge that there is still room for further improvement in these areas.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children's achievement is **good**.

Children start school with a wide range of experiences and skills. A number have limited competencies in communication, language and literacy. Their achievement in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> is very good in their personal, social and emotional education and good in the other areas of learning. When they transfer to reception classes, children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals<sup>2</sup> in all areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning.

<sup>2</sup> The Early Learning Goals are the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception.

Children with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to the targets in their individual education plans. Children with English as an additional language achieve very well from their starting points in school. Abler children achieve well in adult-led activities but make less consistent progress in those activities they choose for themselves.

Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**.

The quality of teaching and learning is good across the areas of learning. Staff have a very good command of the way in which young children learn. Very good use is made of learning resources, particularly the interactive white board and the light table. Children are keen to learn and apply themselves enthusiastically to their work. The high quality work of support staff and outside experts makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning, particularly for those children with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Assessment procedures are good overall. In adult-led activities, assessment is often very good. However, the use of the information gathered from child-chosen activities is not always sharp enough to help staff plan the next steps in children's learning.

The school provides a good range of worthwhile curricular opportunities for its pupils. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The provision for children with English as an additional language is also very good. The quality and quantity of learning resources are very good. The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils throughout the school is good and contributes well to the very welcoming and supportive ethos of the school. The school's partnership with parents, other schools and the community is very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**.

The governance of the school is good. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff, particularly with regard to special educational needs and English as an additional language, is very good. The effectiveness of the management of the school is very good.

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

The majority of parents are very pleased with what the school offers. Children are very happy in school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

This successful school has no major weaknesses. In this context, the most important things the school should do to improve are:

- consistently challenge abler children;
- ensure that children have opportunities to develop their learning, explore and work in depth;
- improve the use of assessment information to help plan the next steps in children's learning, particularly in the activities they choose for themselves.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Children's achievement is **good**.

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

- By the time they transfer to reception classes, children are well on the way to meeting all the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- Children achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Children with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups with English as an additional language make very good progress.
- Abler children are not consistently challenged when working on activities they choose for themselves.

#### **Commentary**

##### **The Foundation Stage<sup>3</sup>**

1. Children have a wide range of skills and experiences when they start in the nursery. Taking into account the increasing numbers of children with English as an additional language, inspectors judge that attainment on entry is currently just below that expected for children of their age. The school concurs with this judgement.
2. There are no national tests for nursery children. Assessments made by staff about half a term after children start in the nursery and at the end of the nursery year are independently analysed and compared with assessments of children in other nursery settings. The results for the last two school years show that children at Marsh Hill have skills and experiences that are just above average when they are first assessed and that they make greater progress than children in many other settings. Taking account of the progress children make from when they start school until the time they are assessed, the inspection evidence bears out the school's evidence.
3. Inspection evidence indicates that in lessons children achieve well across the areas of learning. In their personal, social and emotional education, they achieve very well. Boys and girls make similar progress in all the areas of learning. Many children make very good progress when they are working with adults individually or in small groups. Where children are working on activities they choose themselves, most make good progress.
4. Children with special educational needs make very good progress from when they start school in all areas of experience. Staff have a clear overview of the learning undertaken in the six areas of experience and any special needs provision is purposefully linked to this planning. They use assessment well to identify individual need and to support ongoing learning. The number of staff working within the school is higher than usual and children can readily turn to an adult for help with their learning.
5. Children working in small groups with the Special Needs Support Teacher follow clear aims set for their learning and work is well matched to individual need. The teacher has a good understanding of the difference between having special educational needs and learning English

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<sup>3</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. The areas of learning mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.



as an additional language; this ensures that children receive the correct help to enable them to achieve well, particularly for those who need support in both areas.

6. From their own starting points, children from minority ethnic groups make very good progress and achieve very well. This is because assessment procedures clearly identify what stage of learning English as an additional language individual children have reached. Some children at the early stages have yet to communicate other than by gesture or facial expression, but can understand and follow instructions of much of what they can hear. At all levels of competence, teachers provide a purposeful range of opportunities for children to engage in speaking English with their peers and adults.
7. A small minority of children receives help from experts from outside school, for example, those with speech and language difficulties. Staff work hard to continue this support and build on the advice given. This helps children to achieve well.

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

Children's attitudes, values and behaviour are **very good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good overall**. Attendance is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships between all members of the school community are very good.
- Children's behaviour is very good and they enjoy taking part in the activities provided.
- Children's moral, social and cultural development is very good; spiritual development is good.

### **Commentary**

8. The children like being part of the school community and they enjoy the many activities which encourage their social development. The behaviour of the children is very good. Staff have high expectations for behaviour and adopt a consistent approach to encourage good behaviour. Parents gave good support to a course on behaviour management strategies organised by the school. Relationships between adults and children in the school are very good. Children enjoy acting as helpers, such as register monitors, which encourages their independence. There were no exclusions in the last school year.
9. The children feel safe and secure and are positive about themselves and their learning. Parents value the 'settling in time' and links before children start nursery and feel this makes for a good start to school life. Sensitive teaching encourages less confident children to join in. Teachers value children's ideas and provide good opportunities for them to reflect, use their imaginations and develop self-awareness. Staff provide very good role models in their dealings with children and each other. Children develop a clear understanding of right and wrong through regular discussions about behaviour and relationships. Children have a very good understanding of different cultures because the school highly values and celebrates diversity. The school receives much help from parents in celebrating different festivals and traditions during the course of the year.
10. At 86 per cent, attendance is satisfactory. Staff monitor attendance very carefully. Parents know the school rules regarding absence and usually inform the school on the first day of absence. The school works closely with outside agencies to support families who have difficulties with attendance. Most absences are for medical reasons. The recent outbreak of chicken pox led to several cast changes in the nativity play and a performance with only one shepherd and a reduced flock of sheep. The majority of children arrive punctually at the beginning of each session.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	14	School data	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is good overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff have a very good command of the areas of learning.
- The staff team and visiting experts work very well together.
- Staff make very good use of resources and successfully capture children's interest and enjoyment.
- Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well taught.
- Assessment of adult-led activities is more effective than that of child-chosen activities in helping staff plan the next steps in children's learning.
- On occasions, staff provide too many learning activities for children.

### Commentary

11. Teachers and nursery nurses work very well together: their team spirit is first-rate. Staff are experienced and have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They are well aware of the different needs of children. A particular strength is the way in which all staff engage children's interest and encourage them to develop their skills in adult-led activities. Staff carefully adapt activities to meet children's individual needs and they praise their efforts, however small the step in learning.
12. Staff have very high expectations of children's behaviour and deal with any issues promptly, quietly and effectively. Staff have good expectations of what children can achieve; in adult-led activities, these expectations are often very good but occasionally they are not high enough for children who are already confident readers and writers. Assessment information from previous lessons successfully informs learning objectives and very good use is made of learning resources. There is a strong focus on children acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. Staff use questions well to check children's understanding and to help move their learning on. Pupils apply themselves productively to their work.
13. In child-chosen activities, adult support is generally well measured, and builds soundly on children's interests and strengths. However, staff expectations are not so sharp and the level of challenge is not consistent, particularly for the abler children. Staff mostly make good use of teaching time; sometimes, however, the close observance of the daily timetable does not provide enough time for those children who become engrossed in their learning to explore and work in depth.

14. Staff have worked hard since the last inspection to improve the quality of their planning and the improved quality of teaching in this inspection reflects their success. Assessment procedures are also improved. Staff use the information gained successfully to guide future work, and to track individual children's development and achievement over time. Teachers from outside the school assist the staff in monitoring the progress of children with special educational needs and help to provide the best learning opportunities for individual children.
15. The quality of teaching of children with English as an additional language is good. Staff provide good models of spoken English and use effective questioning to extend and develop the children's vocabulary and speaking skills. Staff encourage children to take part in other activities, and the high level of adult help readily supports them. Throughout the school, assessment is used well to track progress and achievement in language acquisition, and teachers' regular evaluation of teaching and learning helps to guide future work.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	17	4	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons. Percentages are not shown as less than 30 lessons were seen.*

**The curriculum**

The school provides a **good** curriculum for its children. The accommodation and resources are **very good**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum provides a wide range of rich experiences.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is very good because it focuses on meeting individual need.
- Learning experiences are planned with children's needs and achievement in mind.
- The nursery includes all school groups in all experiences.
- Resources are of high quality and support learning well.
- Skills with large equipment are insufficiently developed in outdoor activities.

**Commentary**

16. The school has improved its curriculum planning since the last inspection. It has drawn well from its own self-evaluation, and from the guidance and support of expert practitioners, to provide a well planned and enriching curriculum.
17. A strength within the curriculum is the provision for creative development and the opportunities for supporting communication, language and literacy this provides. Experiences linked to creating and performing music, art and imaginative role-play enrich learning. Provision in social and emotional development is very good and provides a settled and positive start to school life.
18. Planned learning experiences are purposeful, but outdoor activities sometimes lack a clear structure for skill development. Staff do not always build on what the children can already do. There is a structure for teacher guided experiences, which helps the children to make very good progress. However, planning for adult support in activities that children choose themselves, in order to expand and build onto learning, is less clear.

19. The curriculum reflects the children's different starting points and is inclusive to all groups. For instance, it provides well for the needs of younger three-year-olds, who have recently started nursery, and is equally supportive of four-year-olds learning English as an additional language. Some children are still at the very early stages of learning English; staff support children well by naming everyday objects and providing plenty of opportunities for children to hear these words in the sentences and everyday phrases.
20. The school values the children's own cultural heritage and reflects this well in its curriculum and learning resources. The curriculum for children with English as an additional language is good. It enables children to take part in activities, encourages learning, and develops skills in communication in English. There are no barriers for learning for any nursery group and all children are happy and well settled. Parents say their children 'can't wait to get here!'. All groups have the opportunity to explore and create in all areas of experience, including outdoor activities.
21. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good, both within the classroom and in small group work. Clear aims for learning in children's individual education plans ensure that any specific needs are being met. The staff identify needs quickly and work is linked effectively to learning in all areas of experience. Whenever possible, the nursery links learning with first-hand experiences and provides additional support if needed. On occasions, children work on a one-to-one basis or in small groups withdrawn from the class. Work is relevant, and linked to class experiences. When children make pizzas, for example, they consolidate their earlier learning as they choose and label ingredients.
22. Provision for children learning English as an additional language is also very good. Staff use every opportunity to develop the children's spoken English and to help them take part in other activities.
23. The school is justly proud of its new community room and separate library, which enhance learning. It also provides first-rate learning resources, which encourage the children to join in with activities. Initiatives such as the story sacks and playground boxes are firm favourites. The outside play environment has seen great changes, and now provides a stimulating area for children's physical development and imaginative play.

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

The school provides **high quality** care, guidance and support for its children.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff know the children and their families well and are very supportive of them.
- Child protection procedures are well established but training needs updating.
- Parents are happy with the school's induction programme.
- Arrangements for first aid and care of the children are very good.

### **Commentary**

24. The school provides a very caring environment where the children are valued as individuals. The personal development of children is closely monitored through discussion. Staff know the children and their families well. Children's scrapbooks contain examples of good work and celebrate their achievements both in and out of school. Child protection procedures are well understood by staff. However, training for staff with the responsibility for child protection issues is in need of updating<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> The headteacher is aware of this and is actively seeking the necessary training. She was due to attend a course in November 2003 but this was cancelled at the last moment.

25. The school has an appropriate health and safety policy. Staff take health and safety procedures very seriously. Regular fire drills and risk assessments are carried out. All necessary safety checks on equipment are up to date. All staff have received first aid training and the procedures for informing parents of any accidents and the treatment given are very effective. In reply to the questionnaire, most parents say they are very happy with the school's induction arrangements. These allow children to settle quickly and feel secure in their new surroundings.

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

The school's partnership with parents, other schools and the community is **very good**.

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

- The headteacher and staff are willing to talk to parents at any time.
- The school has developed very good links with the local community.
- Parents are provided with very useful information by the school.

#### **Commentary**

26. Most parents think well of the school and are pleased with what the nursery achieves. They feel comfortable about approaching staff with any questions or concerns and know they are welcome in school at any time. The headteacher is available to parents at the beginning and end of each session. The school has a very successful partnership with parents. Visits and support before children start nursery are valued. Arrangements for settling in are flexible. Staff draw on bilingual support, as necessary, to ensure all community groups feel welcomed and valued. Many parents would like the school to provide full-time education; the governing body is aware of this, but has no authority at present to alter this provision.
27. The information provided for parents in booklets, leaflets, at the autumn open day and the spring and summer consultation meetings is very good. Parents feel well informed about the practical arrangements of the nursery and on how their children are progressing.
28. The school's partnership with parents of children with special educational needs is first-rate and enables all to work together for the benefit of the children. Parents and carers share the aims set for their children's learning and are kept regularly informed of the progress their children make. Parents value the sensitive way in which children are introduced to nursery life and the safe caring environment in which children learn.
29. Parents are encouraged to work alongside their children at occasional workshops such as the Easter hat and music workshops. The completed evaluation forms for these workshops show parents much appreciate these sessions and the time spent working with their children.
30. Parents are consulted about their expectations of the nursery in annual questionnaires and an additional questionnaire has recently been sent to parents regarding the use of the new community room. Parents involved in the Portage Programme, which assists with the inclusion of children with special needs, attend sessions in school each week; they speak highly of the help and guidance these meetings provide. Parents assist on trips, such as the annual visit to Twycross Zoo and attend special events in the school. Staff much appreciate the help they receive from parents.
31. The school has very good links with the community it serves and works well with local agencies including pre-school visitors, health visitors, social services and the Children's Society workers. The school has developed very good links with other local nurseries, which work together on various initiatives such as the Portage Programme. The school provides placements for students on work experience and for those studying at further and higher education colleges.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **very good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is very good.
- The management of the school is very good.
- The governance of the school is good.
- The staff work very well with each other and outside experts.
- The arrangements for the professional development of staff are very good.
- The school uses additional funds well to benefit children's learning.

### **Commentary**

32. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the development of the school and enjoys the full support of staff and governors in realising this. She provides a good role model for staff and successfully promotes a strong sense of teamwork in all aspects of the school's work. There is a strong resolve to achieving the highest possible standards. The school's strategic planning builds well upon its self-evaluation work and sets challenging but achievable targets for improvement. Priorities are carefully costed, and provision made from the outset for progress to be monitored and evaluated. The headteacher is particularly adept at attracting additional funding for the school and has a very good understanding of current thinking and developments in the provision for children of nursery age.
33. The headteacher and staff successfully inspire the trust and confidence of parents. The ease with which children settle at the start of each session reflects this well. The school enjoys a very good reputation in the community; successive generations of some families have attended the school since its establishment in the 1940s. Parents and carers highly value the very good commitment of the staff to inclusion and their very caring concern for needs of individuals.
34. The very good leadership of the special educational needs provision ensures that nursery has effective procedures whereby the staff team can respond to learning needs by quickly identifying any area of particular difficulty. The management of the school's provision for children with English as an additional language is also very good. The school uses the funds it receives well to meet the children's language and learning needs. Very good assessment of their language and communication skills sets the children off on the right road from the start.
35. Since the last inspection, standards of achievement have improved. There have been significant improvements and extensions to the buildings and learning resources are much better. The very good progress children make in the development of their personal, social and emotional education reflects the school's much improved provision, particularly for their spiritual, moral and social and cultural development.
36. The headteacher has put clear and effective systems in place to monitor standards and develop the curriculum. The school successfully tracks the attainment and achievement of pupils over time; analyses of the information gathered look at the progress of different groups as well as overall trends. The staff team share responsibilities well, with nursery nurses actively involved in developing aspects of the curriculum alongside teaching staff. There are equally effective systems in place for monitoring the quality of teaching, reflected in the increased proportions of good and very good teaching since the last inspection. The school does not have any particular problems in respect of the recruitment and retention of staff. Staff are effectively deployed and their workload carefully monitored.
37. Staff performance management is well established; it is successfully heralding improvements in the quality of children's learning and the standards they achieve. The school's arrangements for the continuing professional development of staff are very good; there is a good balance

between personal development and the wider developmental needs of the whole school. Two nursery nurses are currently studying for qualified teacher status (QTS) and the school provides very good professional support and personal encouragement. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are thorough and the school welcomes students undertaking child-related courses at further and higher education institutions.

38. Daily routines are very well established and the school runs smoothly. Financial management is rigorous and information and communication technology well used to support day-to-day administration. The school actively seeks *best value* in all its purchases. In the run-up to full budgetary delegation from April 2004, the headteacher and school secretary are working closely with finance officers. Although the school currently administers a relatively small budget, its use of the resources available and the standards achieved indicate that it provides good value for money.
39. Until recently, the local education authority has acted as the school's governing body. The headteacher is very pleased with the help and guidance of officers in helping to appoint and induct governors. The school benefits greatly from a number of experienced and enthusiastic governors who have quickly got down to business and successfully identified the priorities, strengths and shortcomings of the school.

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

#### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents and children value pre- nursery visits and 'settling in' time.
- Staff know the children well and respond successfully to a wide range of needs.
- Relationships with adults and peers are very good.
- The children are happy and well settled.
- Experiences encourage interest and a positive start to learning.

##### Commentary

40. Children make very good progress and are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
41. The school builds well upon the learning started at home. Parents and children are positive about their contribution and feel valued, and this in turn makes for a happy and settled start to nursery. Younger children, mostly three-year olds, work together, whilst older children, with longer experience in nursery, work in another class. The high level of adult support is well focused to meet individual needs, for instance, providing support for less confident children, or those learning English as an additional language.
42. A notable strength is the quality of relationships between adults and children, which enables the children to 'have a go' with their learning, try out new experiences and resources, and gain in independence. Children make choices about their learning, decide who is to be *monitor of the day*, and help tidy up and dress themselves. The majority of children take themselves to the toilet and wash their hands. Older children begin to work with others, take turn in the *doctor's surgery* and share books and toys. Many younger children are at the early stages of forming relationships, but with sensitive help from adults, communicate in gesture or single words and begin to play alongside others.
43. Teaching is good. Staff provide good role models of 'fair play', concern for the environment and for living things. In this way, children begin to learn right from wrong. Older children are excited about their experiments with water and ice, and staff develop their sense of wonder, and set them thinking about the wider world. Staff use resources well to develop concentration and encourage younger children to work together, for example, preparing pizzas involves making choices of toppings and sharing with others. The good use of ongoing monitoring and evaluation at the end of activities ensures that children's social, and emotional development is being well met.

#### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a clear focus on developing the children's speaking skills.
- A wide range of high quality resources and experiences supports learning.



- Staff make good use of assessment information to move children’s learning forward.
- Expectations of more confident readers and writers are not always high enough.

## Commentary

44. Children make good progress overall, and are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
45. Children have a wide range of cultural backgrounds and experiences. At the start of nursery, attainment in language and literacy is below average. However, the school responds very well to individual needs, and places importance on settling children in, and helping them to speak and listen in different situations. This in turn supports good progress. Children with special educational needs and children learning English as an additional language often make very good progress from the time they start school.
46. Throughout the school staff have good questioning skills and encourage children to talk about their learning and listen to what others have to say. Younger children begin to respond to ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions: older children, acting in role play in the doctor’s surgery, start to negotiate, expand on each others’ ideas and take turns in conversation. However, there is still a minority of children who communicate only in gestures, but are gaining in confidence, because of regular, focused support from adults and visiting teachers.
47. A strength in language and literacy experiences is the range and quality of resources. The new library, story–sacks and books with toy characters stimulate interest and enjoyment in reading. Three-year-olds enjoy recreating their favourite stories, read along with adults and recognise the difference between pictures and words. Many four-year-olds sequence stories, and recall important events. A fair number are starting to recognise common words and link letters with their sounds.
48. Provision for writing has improved since the last inspection. This is because staff have developed their own skills in promoting and developing early writing and make good links between the spoken and written word. Children are beginning to write for a range of purposes, for instance, writing letters to Father Christmas, or producing prescriptions in the doctor’s surgery. Adults frequently model writing and ask children to help them complete words and sentences. Expectations of more confident readers and writers in, for example, reading simple stories independently and writing their own are not always high enough. On occasions, in large group teacher-directed experiences there can be a lack of challenge for children working at a faster rate, and this sets a ceiling to their leaning.
49. Teaching in language and literacy is good. Staff target additional help for children with special educational needs well and this supports very good progress. Extra help for children learning English as an additional language enables children to communicate and share experiences with others. Staff use an effective range of assessment procedures, particularly in adult-guided experiences, enabling them to track achievement and guide future learning.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide children with a good range of opportunities to develop their mathematical skills and understanding.
- Learning resources are very good.
- Children readily use correct mathematical vocabulary.

## Commentary

50. Children make good progress. They are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
51. There are frequent opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills and understanding throughout each session. As part of the registration activities, everyone counts up the number of children present and the number is written on the board. To emphasise this number, the monitor of the day chooses a regular shape, such as a square or triangle, and draws this around it. Staff successfully reinforce the number and the shape name, using questions well to ask, for example, how many corners there are in a triangle. Staff make good use of labelling so that children become accustomed to recognising shapes by their properties and by name.
52. Children successfully sort and group items by colour or type. They systematically develop an understanding of pattern as they piece together jigsaws or objects of different colours. Most four-year-olds count reliably to 9 and many independently count beyond, with some showing a good understanding of *one more*. Regular opportunities to work with water and sand ensure that children's understanding of measures develops from an early age. Children make good use of the interactive white board to develop their understanding of shape.
53. Teaching is good. Staff give good thought to the sort of activities they provide for children and model mathematical language such as *more, less, bigger and smaller* well. They ask questions, such as *How many?* to encourage children to order their thoughts and check their progress. They ensure that children with English as an additional language understand the language of what they are doing. Children with special educational needs benefit from the strong emphasis on practical activities. Staff regularly note down what children do and share this information to help their future planning.
54. Staff encourage children with a particular flair or interest in mathematics to take their learning further. For example, one child was keen to gather information about children's preferences. He drew a simple tally chart and then recorded the information as he spoke to each member of the class. With well-measured support, he then interpreted his findings to the rest of the class.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are well-planned and linked to first-hand experiences.
- Activities are imaginative and enjoyable.
- Adult support helps children to communicate orally.
- Children do not sufficiently communicate and record their findings in different ways.

## Commentary

55. Children make good progress. They are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
56. A strength in this area of experience is that activities focus on first-hand experiences, which enable all age groups to observe, explore and investigate. In adult-guided experiences, older children sustain their investigation of natural resources over a period of time and find out that ice melts when heated. Skilful interaction by the teacher develops wider scientific vocabulary, and enables the children to think things out and make meaning. This is evident when one child describes bubbles as 'squishy water', whilst another labels 'steam' as 'smoke'. Younger

children, interested in the here and now, build on their own knowledge of food, and use their senses to identify different toppings.

57. Focused learning at the start of nursery sessions encourages children's understanding of the passing of time through labelling the days of the week and looking at changes in the weather. Older children consider changes in their own life, study photographs and notice their own development. A group of younger children studying a dinosaur book expand their understanding when an adult provides models of dinosaurs for them to handle and compare. Some exciting experimentation with light in the sensory area captures the imagination of children, who choose to explore in their 'observatory'.
58. Teaching is good in this area of learning. In particular, adults use their skills with information and communication technology (ICT) well and provide children with planned and incidental experiences with computers and the interactive white-board. Staff evaluate adult-guided experiences at the end of sessions and inform the next steps in learning. Staff develop spoken communication well for all groups, including those children at the early stages of learning English. However, there is room for children to more regularly communicate and record their findings in other ways, such as charts and different written forms from labelling to simple sentences.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff provide a good range of classroom activities to help children develop their handling and manipulative skills.
- Planned adult intervention is not so clear for outside experiences.

### **Commentary**

59. Children make good progress overall. They are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
60. Child-chosen activities provide a wide range of opportunities to encourage children's physical development. Staff draw on a very good range of learning resources to ensure a good mix of activities that develop hand and eye co-ordination and the finer skills. A wide range of mark-makers is always on hand, and children choose freely from these. They make good use of the interactive whiteboard to practise small and broad marks and filling-in shapes. They also use a variety of brushes and materials to create pictures and collages. Work in the sandpit and with water tray helps children to link together different movements. Putting together train tracks and building with blocks emphasises linked movements and control.
61. The school has very good outdoor resources to help develop children's physical skills. There is a wide range of large wheeled vehicles available. Fixed play equipment provides plenty of opportunity and variety for children to climb, crawl and travel in different ways. Most children are confident in their use of this equipment; however, some lack co-ordination and balance.
62. Teaching is good overall. In classroom activities, staff pay close attention to developing children's accuracy in using scissors, or when picking up small pieces of topping to place on their pizza. They actively promote the correct way of holding pencils, markers and crayons and are fully aware of the particular needs of children who prefer to use their left hand. In the outdoor activities observed during the inspection, children had a free choice of activities. Staff did not actively intervene to help children develop and improve their skills. Although inspectors appreciate the school's philosophy of giving children a balance of adult-directed and child-chosen activities over time, there were some missed opportunities to help children achieve

higher standards. Photographic evidence shows that children have regular opportunities to work outside, particularly in the summer and early autumn. Children participate in team games based on hockey and cricket and staff encourage children to invent and play their own games.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide a wide range of different activities to stimulate children's creativity.
- Children's confidence is carefully developed.
- Children with English as an additional language receive good guidance.
- Children are encouraged to think and talk about their experiences.

### Commentary

63. Children make good progress. They are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
64. Older children enjoy listening to stories, such as *The Snowman*. They listen attentively to the recorded story and, with the timely and enthusiastic help of adults, retell the story well through movement and mime. Children with English as an additional language gain confidence through the specific help and encouragement of adults. Many children are keen to tell visitors what it is like to be a snowman. One child says, *I am one large, big, round face* and another says, *He needs a carrot for his nose*. Another remarks, *He needs cold to keep warm* whilst another says *He can talk, dance and play*. An able child observes, *He's got real magic. He's going to fly*.
65. Younger children particularly enjoy sand play. They keenly handle, squeeze and mould sand. They concentrate well and collaborate with a partner to solve problems, such as how to get compacted sand out of a bucket. By trial and error, they find that a sharp tap on the base of the upturned bucket is just what is needed.
66. Children from all different groups enjoy acting out everyday experiences such as in the *doctor's surgery*. Many use the tape recorder independently to record messages or to sing a song such as *Mary, Mary* or *Bob the Builder*. They use the light table to create different patterns and effects, and marvel at the discovery that letters and words on a magnetic board do not fall off when held upside down.
67. Teaching is good. In adult-led activities, careful planning and a good appreciation of children's learning needs successfully help children to achieve well. The skills of a visiting music teacher are well deployed to help children make music individually and in small groups or to perform as a class group. Under careful guidance, children follow instructions accurately and handle instruments with care.
68. In both adult-led and child-chosen activities, staff are keen to promote children's confidence in experimenting and trying different ways to express themselves. The new *wet area* is well resourced. It provides good opportunities for children to try out different media and skills, particularly with paint and collage. Staff collate ongoing notes about what children do and say at the end of sessions to help plan the next steps in learning.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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

*poor (6); very poor (7).*