

INSPECTION REPORT

Bradley Nursery School
Nelson

LEA area : Lancashire

Unique Reference Number : 119078

Headteacher : Mrs D Parsons

Reporting inspector : Mrs M Heard
T12216

Dates of inspection : 11 - 13 November 1997

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School Inspections Act 1996

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Information about the school

Type of school :	Nursery
Type of control :	LEA
Age range of pupils :	3 to 5 years
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Bradley Road East Nelson Lancashire BB9 7QH
Telephone number :	01282 615183
Fax number :	Not available
Appropriate authority :	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Mrs S Nike

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Main findings

1 Bradley nursery is a good school with many strong features. The children settle quickly and make very good progress in their personal and social development. During their time at the nursery, they make good progress in all of the recommended areas of learning, so that by the age of five they are meeting the desirable learning outcomes. The nursery prepares the children well for primary school.

2 Approximately 50% of the children are learning English as an additional language. This group are very well supported, rapidly gain in confidence and make good rates of progress, thanks to the good quality teaching.

3 The nursery gives priority to children who have special educational needs. They receive sensitive care enabling them to join in all the activities, and they make good gains in their learning. Those who need extra help with speaking skills are well provided for and make good progress.

4 The children listen attentively and follow instructions carefully. During the relatively short time that they have been at the nursery, their confidence is growing as they talk about their own experiences, and respond readily to questions. The children are keen to try to write independently and make their marks on paper. Some write their names competently and show good control when they copy the teacher's writing. A keen interest in stories and books is developing.

5 In mathematics the children are making good progress as they learn to count, recognise simple shapes and are becoming quite adept at pattern-making. They handle money, weigh, measure and record information in charts. They sort and match by paying close attention to similarities. They have a wealth of opportunities to make use of their growing understanding and mathematical skills, in practical situations and in their play.

6 Their knowledge and understanding of the world is sound. They make many worthwhile visits to local places of interest and make good use of these in their role play. They remember things they did as babies and are developing an idea of the past. Their scientific understanding is developing as they investigate a variety of materials, observe changes as they cook their own snacks, and study the growth of young animals and seeds. They are making good progress in using computers and their control skills are well developed. They make models with wood, packaging materials and construction kits and are beginning to learn about the importance of designing, by making preliminary drawings.

7 The children's creative development is progressing well. They use paint, collage, textiles and a variety of modelling materials with confidence, and build up a wide repertoire of techniques, some of which are based on their close observation of the work of famous artists. They listen carefully to a wide variety of different kinds of music and are learning to develop their own tastes. They play simple percussion instruments with good control, and enthusiastically join in acting out stories and singing action songs.

8 Their physical skills are well developed for their age. Many children show good co-ordination of hand and eye movements as they play with bats and balls and use pencils, paintbrushes and modelling tools with considerable control.

9 Children at Bradley Nursery have very good attitudes to learning. They clearly enjoy their time at the school and find learning fun. They are well behaved and there is a very calm and purposeful atmosphere. Parents value the school's good discipline and the emphasis placed on teaching the children to respect a variety of cultures, and to treat one another with kindness. The children are developing their autonomy and are able to take decisions for themselves such as, choosing their own activity, though they are not given enough responsibility for tidying away equipment at the end of the sessions.

10 Attendance is satisfactory. Punctuality is good and the children settle calmly and purposefully to an activity of their choice on arrival.

11 The quality of teaching is good and much of it is very good. In 43% of the lessons observed the teaching was good and in a further 36% it was very good. No teaching was unsatisfactory. The work is very thoroughly planned and the activities are consistently well organised.

12 The staff are clear about what it is they want the children to learn and make precise assessments of the children's attainment. The teaching of language and literacy skills is particularly noteworthy and as a result the children do well. Very occasionally, for pupils for whom English is their second language, there is an over-use of the community language. This needs to be closely monitored to make sure that the children are given time to respond in English, and make full use of their skills. A strong feature of the high quality teaching is the skilled use of questions to tease out the children's understanding, and encourage them to expand on what they have to say.

13 Staff teamwork is excellent. The adults share their individual expertise and talents for the good of all. They have a wide variety of teaching strategies, which they use appropriately, and to good effect. Sensitive support is given to children with special educational needs to enable them to join in the full range of activities.

14 The curriculum is suitably broad and well balanced to meet the needs of young children. Good use is made of the local community to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The daily programme is well structured, with an effective balance of adult-directed activities, and others which the children can choose for themselves. There are not enough opportunities for children to work in small groups based on their prior attainment.

15 The staff make very effective assessments of the children's progress and make sure that each child has a balanced programme of activities. Parents are delighted by the excellent and informative portfolios of work which they receive at the end of their child's time at the nursery, showing the good progress that has been made.

16 A strong emphasis is given to the children's moral and social development. The provision for their cultural development is first class, engendering respect and interest in others. The school's aims are successfully achieved and the values it teaches are strongly supported by the parents. Moral values such as caring for one another, sharing and learning right from wrong are successfully promoted. Spiritual growth is developed through art, music, poetry and dance, but the children are not given enough time for reflection. There is not enough attention given to this aspect of their development.

17 The support, guidance and welfare of the children is a notable strength of the school. There is a welcoming and very caring atmosphere. The induction process is highly successful and fosters a strong link between home and school. Family group leaders provide a source of security for children and their families. The support for children as they move on to their primary school is commendable, thanks to the good liaison which takes place.

18 The quality of information provided for parents through the school prospectus and newsletters is very good. Courses run by the staff and local colleges are much appreciated. However, the school does not provide enough information about what the children are learning from day-to-day, or actively encourage parents to borrow books to share with their children at home.

19 The headteacher is a strong and dynamic leader. The staff are enthusiastic and share the same commitment to the school, reflecting on their practice and striving to maintain and improve the quality of the educational provision, and the standards achieved. The governors give good support

to the school and help to determine its priorities. There is a particular emphasis on nurturing children with special educational needs, and the school's good reputation in this area of its work is well deserved. The support for bi-lingual learners is equally commendable and is very much appreciated by parents.

20 The school's development plan sets out clear and realistic targets for improvement and is well conceived. Day-to-day organisation is smooth and efficient, due in part to the high quality teamwork. The school fully meets statutory requirements and successfully achieves its aims.

21 The staff are well qualified and have a good understanding of the needs of young children. The support staff are highly valued and make a substantial contribution to the school's work. The accommodation is bright, spacious and well maintained. There is a high standard of cleanliness. The outdoor play areas are stimulating and provide a source of inspiration for the children's curiosity. There are good quality resources for all the areas of learning.

22 The funds allocated to the school for furniture, equipment and staff training are well managed, and the school budgets systematically to cover expenditure. The administration systems are effective and the school runs smoothly. The staff are well deployed and the children make good progress in their learning. Overall, the school gives good value for money.

Key issues for action

23 The headteacher, staff and governors should:

- * provide more opportunities for children to work in small groups based on their prior attainment and monitor more closely the provision for children who are learning English as an additional language;
- * help the parents to become more involved in their children's learning by:
 - regularly providing information about the planned programme of activities within the curriculum;
 - publicise the book lending system and encourage more families to regularly borrow books;
 - develop a system for staff and parents to share information about the child's experiences of books and stories at home;
- * make better use of the planned and spontaneous opportunities for the children's spiritual development.

Introduction

Characteristics of the school

24 Bradley nursery is a local authority school situated close to the town of Nelson. There are 140 part-time places for 3 to 5 year olds. The current number on roll is 133, comprising 77 boys and 56 girls. Most of the children come from the immediate area, though some travel to the nursery school from the neighbouring suburbs and outlying areas of Barrowford and Blacko.

25 The majority of children are admitted in August following their third birthday and have three terms of nursery education. A small number of children are admitted during September and January if places become available.

26 There are 13 children on the special needs register. 3 have statements of special educational need and a further 4 children are in the process of statutory assessment. Some of this group are spending additional time at the nursery before beginning the next stage in their education.

27 Housing in the town of Nelson is mainly terraced with an estate of semi-detached houses which are owned by the local authority. There is a higher than average level of unemployment in the area.

28 The population is culturally diverse and 50% of the children are from homes where English is not the first language. Some are bi-lingual.

29 The children enter the nursery with varying degrees of readiness. Some are well prepared. They are confident in using language to express their needs and converse well. For others it is their first experience away from home. About half of the children have had some form of organised pre-nursery experience through parent and toddler groups, private nurseries and the mobile playbus provision. A significant proportion of the group need additional support with language development when they first begin at the nursery.

30 The school's declared aims seek to:

- * develop children's autonomy and independence;
- * create a warm and welcoming place where children feel secure and learn through structured play experiences;
- * provide a caring community in which the children learn to respect a variety of languages and cultures.

31 Major targets for the current year include:

- * reviewing the provision for language and literacy, mathematics and outdoor play;
- * developing the area of knowledge and understanding of the world by reviewing provision and establishing key concepts to inform curriculum planning;
- * continuing the Parents as Educators project;
- * improving the quality of individual education plans (IEPs) for children with special educational needs;
- * involving teachers in monitoring teaching and learning.

Key indicators

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

%

Very good or better	36
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress

32 When the children first start at the nursery nearly half of the group have had some organised educational experience. Approximately 50% are learning English as an additional language and many others need extra help with language. Priority places are allocated to children whose special needs have already been identified. At the time of the inspection the vast majority of the children had only been in school for an average of six weeks.

33 The children settle rapidly into the nursery routines and make great strides in learning to relate to others and to make choices for themselves. Throughout the year all groups of children make good rates of progress in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative development. In their personal, social and physical development they make very good progress. By the time they leave the nursery they are well prepared for primary school, and the majority are attaining the standards expected of five year olds in all the six areas of learning.

34 The children who are learning English as an additional language are exceptionally well supported. They quickly gain in confidence and make very good progress in their learning.

35 Thanks to the sensitive support and good teaching the children with special educational needs do well. They are able to join in all the available activities, and become confident and well adjusted individuals, who make good progress.

36 In language and literacy the children listen attentively in small and larger groups. They carry out instructions and answer questions confidently. At storytimes they contribute their own ideas based on their close observations of the pictures. They are keen to express their opinions and predict what might happen. A substantial group of children have some difficulties with articulation, but the staff give sensitive encouragement, and the children gain in confidence and contribute well to discussions.

37 The children who are learning English as an additional language have high self-esteem and do well, because they have regular opportunities to listen to stories told in English and Punjabi. In the majority of sessions the bi-lingual staff skilfully blend the two languages, taking their lead from the children's facial expressions and their questions.

38 Most of the children recognise their name from a name card and will confidently have a go at naming their work. Some make recognisable letter shapes, whilst many others use a single letter repetition, or their own invented marks. A small group are already able to write their names competently with most letters correctly formed and appropriate use of capitals. A small number of children attempt to write in Urdu. A few higher attaining pupils copy-write sentences dictated to adults, and use their knowledge of letter sounds to make good attempts at writing independently. This group are working towards level 1 of the National Curriculum.

39 The children are developing a familiarity with books and use the pictures to retell stories in their own words. They enjoy interacting with stories using the CD ROM and have many opportunities

to look at information books such as recipe books, and to make their own lists of ingredients using pictures and symbols.

40 In mathematics records from the previous year show that the children are making good rates of progress, so that by the time they reach the age of five, the expected outcomes are being attained. There are many opportunities for children to count real objects, sort and group items for the shop and home corner, and classify them by their use, shape and size. Many children make simple repeating patterns using two colours or two different shapes to decorate party hats and invitations. Through baking activities they weigh ingredients, make comparisons in the size of spoons and bowls and are immersed in the language of mathematics. In role play in the baker's shop, they recognise coins and read price tags. A small group of children are beginning to write numerals for themselves as they make up bills, and design their own stamps. At snack time they are often introduced to simple fractions when they cut up toast and other foods.

41 In their play with sand and water they confidently make comparisons of size and experiment by filling up a variety of containers and watching what happens when they transfer the contents. In the construction area they have access to surveyors tapes and are beginning to understand how to set about measuring distances, and are learning to recognise larger numbers. They have made simple pictorial charts to record the traffic, and produced their own calendars stimulated by the story of 'Spot's Birthday'. The children play a major part in deciding how many items are needed in group times for everyone to have an equal share. Daily opportunities are provided for them to sequence the days of the week, and to become aware of the vocabulary of time.

42 Good progress is made overall in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world. The children are good observers. They are keen to offer simple explanations and to ask questions about how and why things happen. Cookery is a fascinating activity and the children talk confidently about changes in the ingredients as they are blended together. In design technology they sketch out their ideas and make models using a wide variety of construction kits, packaging materials and wood. When using computers they show good control of the mouse to direct items on the screen, and are learning how to make letter-strings as they experiment with the keyboard. They are able to use headphones and tape recorders with confidence to listen to stories. A recent 'Tiger Hunt' was a great success and has stimulated the children's interest in the natural world. The children use playmats and set out rail and road tracks to act out scenarios from their own experiences. Outdoors they follow simple directions when they use wheeled vehicles. Their understanding of shops and other local services is well developed. They remember things they did as babies and bring in photographs to compile a time line of 'Me'. They bring in toys and foods they had as babies and have great fun trying these out.

43 In the creative area of learning the children are introduced to an extensive range of techniques with paint, collage, malleable materials and textiles. They use their imagination well and confidently represent their own ideas. They try out colour-mixing and blending to recreate similar effects in paintings by famous artists. Good standards are achieved. They listen attentively to music from a wide range of cultures and styles, experiment with music-making and learn to recognise and play simple percussion instruments. Some are already able to keep a steady beat to accompany taped music, and create different effects by playing loudly and quietly. They enjoy singing action songs and often join in with gusto.

44 The children's physical development is generally very good for their age. Outdoor play is well planned and there are many opportunities for them to run, jump, climb, swing and balance and to refine their skills. Most of the children propel themselves forwards and backwards on the swings and their co-ordination is good. They pedal and manoeuvre trikes and steer carts taking care not to collide, and showing awareness of others. They try hard to co-ordinate their actions when using bats

and small balls or working together to rake leaves into a pile. The children's fine motor skills are developing well. They handle brushes, pencils and modelling tools with care and hold them correctly. They are making good progress in cutting and joining materials. Some children produce quite detailed drawings of people, buildings and machines.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

45 Children at Bradley Nursery have very good attitudes to learning. They clearly enjoy their time at the school and find learning fun. They show interest in the activities provided by the staff, listen attentively and work purposefully, with and without adult support. Their concentration and perseverance with often quite difficult tasks is commendable, memorably so, with the challenge of tying a ribbon around a birthday parcel. They take pride in their work and show a great sense of achievement in accomplishing tasks. The many opportunities to select their own choice of activity or resources are taken up eagerly, and the task of registering themselves with their photograph cards is undertaken with responsibility.

46 Children behave in a calm, orderly fashion and learn to be kind to each other. They respond well to praise, and to little rewards like the use of stickers. They understand the need for self-discipline, by talking through the consequences of their actions with an adult. Apologies for poor behaviour and hurtful deeds are an expected part of nursery school life. As a consequence, the children develop self-control and patience. This leads to a very well developed ability to take turns and share playthings in a most harmonious atmosphere. The children explain why certain behaviours are unacceptable, and refrain from actions which might hurt others. They show great love and care for those with special needs and a sense of respect for the feelings of others.

47 Attainment and progress in personal and social development are very good. In many respects the children are already achieving the targets expected of five year olds. They have high self-esteem and are growing in confidence. Relationships with each other, and with adults are very good often showing a level of tolerance, understanding and mutual respect beyond their years. They work well in pairs, small groups and by themselves. They enjoy collaborating as they enact scenes from the 'real world', and take their roles as shop assistants and customers earnestly and with great pride.

48 While they demonstrate independence in their personal hygiene, dressing and making choices, they do not have sufficient opportunities to take on communal responsibilities for instance, in tidying up after outdoor play. Sometimes they have the chance to show their own personal feelings for example, when they tenderly feed the 'baby' in the home corner.

Attendance

49 Parents feel that their children are keen to attend the nursery so much so that they miss it at the weekends. Punctuality is good and helps to create a settled and calm atmosphere. The school follows up absences to avoid the possibility of wasted places.

50 The attendance records for most children are satisfactory and parents are aware of the importance of regular attendance and inform the school of reasons for absence. Some children make extended visits to family abroad, but these are normally within the guidelines of the county council.

Quality of education provided

Teaching

51 In 43% of the lessons observed the teaching was good and in a further 36% it was very good. No teaching was unsatisfactory. The work is very thoroughly planned and the activities are consistently well organised. The staff are clear about what it is they want the children to learn and make precise assessments of the children's attainment.

52 The teaching of language and literacy is a strong feature of the school. The staff know the children very well and skilfully modify their own use of language to meet the children's individual needs. The bi-lingual staff expertly interchange between English and community languages. They give careful thought to the knowledge and understanding that will be introduced during an activity. In this way they are well prepared, and know in advance where they may have to provide extra support, to help the children to gain a firm grasp of particular concepts.

During a visit to a local bakery, excellent use was made of English and Punjabi to simplify the explanations being given by the bakery manager. This high quality dual use of languages made a significant contribution to the children's enjoyment, and to their understanding. In their role play back at school they showed that they had absorbed important concepts about the process of bread-making and were able to incorporate these in their play.

53 Very occasionally, during adult-directed activities, there is an over-use of the community languages. Care will need to be exercised to make sure that children are given time to respond in English, and make full use of their developing skills.

54 Writing areas are well resourced. The staff provide many worthwhile opportunities for children to write in meaningful contexts for example, making shopping lists, invitations and greetings cards. The staff praise the children's efforts, and sometimes write alongside them providing good role models. Story-telling skills are very sound. Some of the staff use drama and suspense to good effect, and are skilled at holding the children's attention, and involving them in acting out parts of the story.

55 A strong feature of the high quality teaching is the skilled use of questions, to tease out the children's understanding, and encourage them to expand on what they have to say.

In a superb session where children were consolidating their knowledge of percussion instruments, and exploring differences in sound quality, the teacher was adept at asking an introductory question to gain a measure of the children's understanding. She then quickly followed on with a more precise question which enabled them to expand on their original ideas, and in some instances, revise their initial response. When other children came to join in, she asked the original group members to explain what they were learning.

56 Techniques such as colour-washing in art, using a vice and hammering nails into wood are very well taught. The adults intervene precisely at the right moment, giving the children time to take the lead and to do as much as possible for themselves. A strong emphasis is given to enabling children to make choices, for instance in the colour and size of the paper they use for art or the size and type of brush. However, although the staff encourage the children to put on painting overalls and clothing for themselves, this same level of independence is not being fostered when the children prepare for home-time. Outdoors, the staff too readily tidy away equipment on behalf of the children.

57 The quality of staff teamwork is excellent, and the adults share their individual expertise and talents for the good of all. Temporary staff and students are well briefed, and provided with key points of information, to enable them to play their part and to fit in comfortably with the nursery routines.

58 On many occasions the teaching is characterised by high expectations of what the children can do. In these lessons the adults present extra challenges which are just within the child's grasp,

so that a successful outcome is achieved.

In a very good session the teacher played alongside the children in the shop, to assess their recognition of coin values. She skilfully tailored her questions to each child's level of understanding, building on each response and leading them on. By the end of the session, two children were beginning to grasp the idea of selecting a coin of the same value as the price of goods and using simple addition to purchase 2 items.

59 The staff have a wide variety of teaching strategies which they use appropriately, and to good effect. They give competent demonstrations, coupled with clear instructions, and join in role play to teach the children how to behave as shop keepers or customers. In the construction area, they offer sensitive support and suggest new ways of tackling problems. On some occasions, the adults have a tendency to steer the children a little too much, by their own preconceived notions of an acceptable outcome, for example when children work with wood.

60 The support for children with special educational needs is of a very high quality. The staff provide sensitive encouragement and the children are successful in meeting the targets in their individual education plans (IEP's). With patient direction and quiet insistence, they enable the children to enjoy and benefit from the full range of available activities, and to be as independent as possible.

The curriculum and assessment

61 The curriculum is balanced and broadly based promoting the children's intellectual, physical and personal development to good effect. It covers all the recommended areas of learning for children under five, and prepares them very well for the next stage in their education. Health education forms an intrinsic part of the programme with good habits being formed at an early age. Close links with local primary schools ensure that the nursery curriculum provides a gradual transition towards the National Curriculum.

62 The daily programme is well structured with sufficient time being spent on all the areas of learning. There is a good balance of adult-directed activities, and others which the children can choose for themselves. However, there is a need for the school to offer more planned opportunities for children to work in groups based on their prior attainment, so that higher attainers can work in a focused way, and children for whom English is an additional language can work in groups where their peers may act as role models for language development.

63 The school's curriculum plan for the child's year at the nursery is well conceived. There are many opportunities for children to learn from first-hand experiences, and to make meaningful links in their learning. For example, a visit to the local bakery is combined with bread and cake-making activities, shop-play, imaginative play in the 'Three Bears Cottage' and lots of stories about baking. Within this topic there is a sharp focus on mathematics and children are able to consolidate their understanding in meaningful contexts. Short-term plans clearly identify what it is the children will be learning and how the adults will assess the children's knowledge, skills and understanding.

64 The school fully meets the code of practice for children with special educational needs. Appropriate individual education plans (IEPs) are drawn up, often in consultation with the Child Development Centre. There is enormous commitment to ensuring that children with special needs can enjoy the full range of learning experiences. This is successfully achieved through the school's planning. The staff ensure that all activities allow for the children to make an individual response, and that support staff are on hand to provide additional help where this is needed.

65 The school has a very comprehensive and highly effective equal opportunities policy. Its whole philosophy is based on a valuing of bi-lingualism and the need to prepare children for life in a multi-cultural society. The school takes great care through its planning, organisation and teaching to differentiate between the language needs of bi-lingual learners and the more specific needs of others. Staff from the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Project are fully involved in curriculum planning and assessment. Their support is of a high quality and is an important factor in the school's successful provision for bi-lingual learners.

66 The school has several initiatives designed to help parents to support their children's learning at home, but in general, there is not enough information provided about the curriculum.

67 Good quality day-to-day assessment is an integral part of the school's provision. It is very effectively used to monitor access to the activities, and to note progress in identified areas of learning. There is a need for a closer monitoring of provision for children who are learning English as an additional language in order that their individual needs can be more specifically met, as they increase in confidence, and to ensure that groupings provide opportunities for them to work more frequently alongside peers, who have English as a first language.

68 The nursery has developed excellent portfolios of work showing the individual progress of children in all the areas of learning. Each child's unique experience of the nursery is exceptionally well documented. Parents express great appreciation of these portfolios, which clearly show the child's progress and are a memento of their time in the nursery.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

69 The nursery is a calm and purposeful place where the children feel happy and secure. The school places a strong emphasis on the children's moral, social and cultural development. Its aims give prominence to developing respect for a variety of languages and cultures, and to fostering kindness. The school's policy gives suggestions on developing moral attitudes and exploring feelings through stories and role play. It sets down realistic expectations for developing the children's independence. The school's stated aims are very well met, and the values it teaches are strongly supported by parents.

70 The family groups are a strong basis for training in social and moral values. They create a sense of belonging, essential in a large nursery, and enable the staff to develop close bonds with the children in their care. Well-chosen stories are used to teach the differences between right and wrong, and to tackle issues which may arise incidentally for individual children such as bullying, bereavement, loss or the birth of a new baby. The children have opportunities to learn about the work of people in the community. The staff provide excellent role models for the children at all times.

71 The provision for the children's cultural development is first class. Respect for other cultures is fostered through activities which embrace ideas from a wide variety of cultures, but which emphasise the faiths and cultures from the immediate community. For example, the theme of baking is celebrated with an extensive range of breads and cakes, to introduce the children to Lancashire and Asian traditions. All of these experiences are equally well enjoyed by the children. A wide variety of festivals is celebrated during the course of the year, and all children enjoy and embrace one another's special times. Local cultures are reflected in home corner equipment, dressing-up clothes, jigsaws and books celebrating bi-lingualism. Music and art reflect European impressionism and Islamic mosaic. The children's cultural development is a very strong feature of the nursery.

72 There are planned opportunities for spiritual growth through art, music, poetry and dance, but the nursery does not focus enough on these, or provide sufficient time for the children to reflect and

express their own feelings.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

73 The nursery school makes very good provision for the support, guidance and welfare of the children. Right from the start there is good liaison with families, and with professionals who work with the under-fives such as, health visitors. The system of home visits is highly regarded by the parents, and fosters a strong link between home and school. The induction process provides a gentle introduction to education, with flexibility to allow for settling-in. Strong emphasis is placed on the pastoral care of the children. The family group leader remains a source of security for the child through the daily storytime sessions. Children with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language are very well supported.

74 Progress in academic, personal and social skills is carefully monitored, and the excellent record-keeping leads to a very informative progress report for parents, at the end of their child's time at the nursery. This is accompanied by a beautifully compiled treasury of work samples and photographs, to mark the child's achievement. Other opportunities to discuss progress are readily available and include termly parents' meetings.

75 Attendance is monitored carefully. Measures to promote good behaviour are very successful, with much emphasis on the use of praise and encouragement. The rare instances of anti-social behaviour are dealt with swiftly and sensitively.

76 Transfer procedures to a wide range of receiving primary schools are commendable. The headteacher makes every effort to liaise with these schools and facilitate the exchange of information. Children have the opportunity to make preliminary visits, and invitations to attend special events at the main local primary schools are taken up.

77 Child protection procedures are effective and follow the local guidelines. The school has close working relationships with several specialist support agencies. The welfare, health and safety of its children is given a very high priority, and appropriate policies are followed diligently. The staff are vigilant and train the children in aspects of personal health and safety. The dental service is currently making regular visits to promote the protection of infant teeth by fluoridation. First aid provision is good. The staff are conscious of the dangers to children posed by traffic hazards in the adjacent road and campaign to improve safety awareness.

Partnership with parents and the community

78 The staff and governors value the contribution of parents to their children's education. The quality of information provided about the school is very good, with attractive, informative and readable booklets and newsletters, which make good use of children's illustrations. The eight week course, 'Parents as Educators' and the lap-top computer course have been very well received by those who participated.

79 There is a lack of a systematic approach to the day-to-day involvement of parents in their children's learning. This is partially the result of insufficient information about what is being taught. Parents are justifiable in their feeling that they do not have enough knowledge about the curriculum content, and how they might support learning at home. The past history of parent workshops was a valuable means of communicating with parents and providing guidance in the use of home learning materials. The expertise of the bi-lingual staff is not fully utilised to encourage a wider use of the children's borrowing library.

80 Otherwise, parents are very supportive of the school, feel welcome to approach the staff with any concerns and participate in social and fund raising events. Some parents volunteer to help with nursery activities and are welcomed as a member of the nursery team during the session.

81 The children benefit from a wide range of links with the local community, which helps in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Visitors talk to the children about their work and visits are made to places in the locality. A trip to the local bakery resulted in an excited level of interest, and an opportunity to relate the experience to activities back in the nursery. Confidence is built up through performing to patients at the local community hospital at Christmas. The celebrations of Eid were shared with visitors from a special school. A project with the local probation service has resulted in the construction of beautiful, landscaped grounds, for stimulating outdoor play. The nursery offers training placements to students from local colleges and schools, thus providing a variety of adult expertise.

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management

82 The headteacher is a strong and dynamic leader who gives a very clear steer to the school. All new initiatives are carefully researched and underpinned by a sound educational philosophy. The strong emphasis on teamwork, and on utilising the skills and interests of every member of staff are very successful components of the headteacher's management.

83 There is an excellent team spirit where everyone is eager to do their best and committed to life-long learning, and to reflecting on their practice and striving for improvement. The teachers lead their nursery teams proficiently and provide good support. They value the skills of the nursery nurses and treat them as equal partners. Alongside the headteacher, they monitor the provision for learning through the planning, and by informally observing one another at work. Although these strategies are reasonably effective, the staff need to stand back and take a more focused and objective view of the quality of teaching, and the effectiveness of pupil groupings.

84 The school's aims are very appropriate to the needs of the under-fives. They are successfully achieved through the warm, trusting ethos, and the staff's commitment to providing a high quality nursery experience for all the children. There is a particular emphasis on nurturing children with special educational needs and the school's good reputation in this area of its work is well deserved. The school's support for bi-lingual learners is equally commendable and is very much appreciated by parents.

85 The school development plan is well conceived with clear and realistic targets within a four year timescale. Governors and staff play a full role in policy development, evaluation and review of the school's work. The plan includes criteria for judging the successful completion of targets, and in most instances these are very clear and comprehensive. The governors give good support to the school and are very much involved in determining its long term priorities.

86 Day-to-day management and organisation are of a high quality. The staff share a common purpose and conscientiously work towards achieving the same goals, and ensuring that there are rich opportunities for children's learning. The care and attention given to valuing every child's achievements and attractively displaying their work contribute to the successful fulfilment of the school's aims. Procedures for identifying special needs are secure and the staff monitor the children very closely during the settling-in period. The staff share their early concerns and keep a close eye on the children's progress, but these concerns are not always formally recorded in line with the agreed policy. The register of special needs is very detailed, but the format does not make it easy to track

the movement of children between the stages laid down in the code of practice.

87 The governors annual report to parents is friendly, informative and beautifully illustrated with children's work. It mirrors the high standard of the school's policies and other documentation. The school fully meets statutory requirements.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

88 There is a very good mix of experienced and recently qualified teachers and support staff. All the staff have a sound knowledge of the curriculum for the under-fives, and a good understanding of the development of young children. Support staff are highly valued and make a substantial contribution to the school's successes. Arrangements for the support and mentoring of new staff, and students in training, are very thorough. Appropriate advice and information is given to temporary staff to enable them to teach effectively. The school is well served by the caretaking, cleaning and administrative staff, who are dedicated to their work. Inservice training has helped to raise standards, notably in the area of outdoor play, and is currently beginning to have a positive impact on the teaching of information and design technology. The school makes effective use of the local authority's appraisal scheme to help with the process of prioritising the school development plan.

89 The accommodation is spacious, well maintained and the space is very well organised. The bright, cheerful and meticulously clean environment contributes to the children's sense of pride, and has a positive influence on their attitudes to learning. The well equipped family room is well used for adult education, and provides a quiet space for small group activities such as, storytimes and cooking sessions. The nursery grounds are very attractive and securely fenced. The gardens, hard play surfaces and fixed equipment are appreciated by the children, and provide a safe haven where they can investigate, use their imagination and practice their physical skills.

90 Learning resources are in good supply and are of a high quality. They are carefully organised, and clearly labelled so that adults and children can access them with ease. The computers are well used but the machine with CD ROM is shared between several nurseries. The remaining machine is not so up-to-date and limits what the children can achieve. The school has accrued a good selection of fiction and non-fiction books, some of which are printed in English and Urdu. These books are available to children on loan, though there is a need for this facility to be better publicised, and for its accessibility and use to be monitored.

The efficiency of the school

91 The local authority controls major spending on staffing and buildings maintenance. The headteacher has control of small sums of money to purchase resources, furniture and cleaning materials. Grants for in-service training and special needs are also delegated. The school budgets systematically to meet its regular commitments and any new expenditure. Priorities in the school development plan are carefully costed and the staff training budget is well used to support the school's current initiatives.

92 The headteacher and governors plan strategically for longer-term projects such as, the improvements to the outdoor area, and consult with parents, who generously support the school's plans through their fund raising events. There are very good systems in place for financial management and the accounts are meticulously maintained. Auditing is very secure. The administrative assistant is well organised and gives good support to the school.

93 The staff are very well deployed, good use is made of the attractive and well maintained accommodation, and the good quality learning resources are looked after and used effectively. The children are making good rates of progress and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The school provides good value for money.

Summary of inspection evidence

94 The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors some of whom was a lay inspector. The team spent a total of 7 days in school. The evidence base included:

- * 24 hours observing activities and talking with children;
- * discussions with teachers, support staff, caretaking staff, the administrative assistant, the chair of governors, parents and students;
- * 19 parents attended a pre-inspection meeting 64 questionnaires were received expressing parents' views of the nursery;
- * school policies schemes of work curriculum plans pupil records reports samples of work and individual education plans (IEPs) were examined;
- * attendance registers financial statements, headteachers's reports to governors minutes of meetings and the school development plan were scrutinised.

Data and indicators

PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Nursery Unit/School	67	3	13	0

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	3.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

Education support staff

Total number of education support staff	8.5
Total aggregate hours worked each week	275

Average class size:

22

FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:

1997/8

	£
Total Income	11,412
Total Expenditure	11,412
Expenditure per pupil	168
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

132

Number of questionnaires returned:

64

Responses (percentage of answers in each category)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	43	52	5	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	70	30	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	30	56	14	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	43	52	7	5	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	41	45	11	4	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	43	52	5	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	40	51	9	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	30	42	21	0	2

The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)

40	50	10	0	0
39	52	6	4	0
82	18	0	0	0

The school achieves high standards of good behaviour

My child(ren) like(s) school