

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWTOWN NURSERY SCHOOL

Colne

LEA area : Lancashire

Unique Reference Number: 119090

Headteacher : Miss Sandra Williams

**Reporting inspector : Mr. Michael Hewlett
Ofsted number: 1569**

Dates of inspection : 25th January – 27th January 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 703803

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Nursery
Type of control :	County
Age range of pupils :	3 to 4 years
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	West Street Colne BB8 0HW
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Appropriate authority :	Lancashire.
Name of chair of governors :	Mrs Mary Thomas
Date of previous inspection :	May 1995

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MICHAEL HEWLETT, Rgl	Language and Literacy Mathematics Knowledge and understanding of the world	Attainment and progress The efficiency of the school Teaching Leadership and management
JUNE HUNTER, TI	Physical development Creative Development Personal and Social Development	The curriculum and assessment Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources Equal opportunities English as an additional language Special educational needs
JANE HUGHES, Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

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MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- . The school is very well led and managed.
- . Children make good progress.
- . Creates a happy welcoming environment.
- . Establishes a good partnership with parents and the community.
- . Promotes good relationships and a high standard of care; all staff work effectively as a team.
- . Teaching is good or better in more than three quarters of lessons.
- . Ensures children achieve very good standards of behaviour.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- I. Some children are helped too much and this limits their independence.
- II. Children are not given enough encouragement to clear away at the end of the session.
- III. The school does not always measure the impact of its spending decisions.

The weaknesses are far outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all guardians or parents of pupils of the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has overcome most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection which took place four years ago. Planning of teachers' work is much more consistent now and so are the standards achieved in all areas of learning. Children's progress is assessed more regularly and detailed records are kept.

Policy documents have been produced for most curriculum areas and these have helped to maintain this consistency of approach and ensure that the work set meets the needs of each child. The school development plan is a much better document now that it includes links with finance and resources. However, the school still doesn't measure the effect of spending on standards achieved or on the quality of the education provided. More work needs to be done here. Improvements have been made in the provision for spiritual and cultural development. More opportunities and experiences are offered to the children in these areas.

The school has set itself clear and realistic targets for the future. It is well set to sustain its improvement.

Standards

There are national standards for children by five years of age. Most children are likely to achieve these targets in all areas of learning by the time they enter compulsory education. In information technology, they are likely to exceed them. They all make consistently good progress during their time in nursery.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in areas of learning	
Personal and social development	Good
Language and literacy	Good
Mathematics	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Good
Physical development	Good
Creative development	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good or better in over seventy five per cent of lessons. Six per cent of the teaching is very good and none is unsatisfactory. The best teaching occurs in language and literacy and information technology.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good. Children respond well to the high expectations set for them
Attendance	Satisfactory
Ethos*	Very positive, good relationships and high expectations
Leadership and management	Very well led and managed. Clear educational direction set
Curriculum	Broad and balanced; good planning and assessment
Children with special educational needs	Good levels of support and children make good progress
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good in all areas
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Well qualified teachers and support staff; good levels of resources, spacious, attractive accommodation indoors and out
Value for money	Good

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
IV. Children like coming to school V. They are kept well informed VI. Their children make good progress VII. Staff are friendly and approachable VIII. Good behaviour is strongly promoted	IX. No negative comments received

Inspectors' judgements support parents' very positive views.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

Raise standards by:-

- (i) Ensuring that levels of support given by adults are suitable for the children's age and stage of development. This will involve giving them more independence and greater opportunities to complete tasks on their own, for example, writing their own name on their work and selecting materials they wish to use.
(paragraphs 26, 74, 86, 120)
- (ii) Making sure children take more responsibility for tidying away materials and equipment.
(paragraphs 8, 20, 26, 72)
- (iii) Setting up procedures to measure the effectiveness of spending decisions on standards achieved and the quality of education provided for the children.
(paragraphs 55, 66)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Newtown is an average sized nursery situated near the town centre of Colne, Lancashire. There are 102 children on roll, all of whom attend part time.
2. They are taught by three teachers, including the headteacher, who work full time and one who works part time. In addition, there are four NNEB's (Nursery Nurse Examination Board) two of whom work full time. The part time nursery nurses are employed to support children who have special educational needs.
3. The school's admissions policy offers places to children from "Colne and outlying places" but in practice the majority come from the immediate area. The intake reflects a wider social mix than when the school was last inspected in 1995. Children's overall attainment on entry is average. Only a small proportion of children, four per cent, come from homes where English is not the first language.
4. One child has a statement of special educational need whilst fourteen more are included on the school's register as requiring additional support. Targets identified by the school include improving skills in information technology and completing the policy for design and technology.

Key Indicators

(iii) 5. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

6. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	6
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

7. By the age of five, children's levels of attainment are in line with levels expected of children of this age. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were unsatisfactory in some aspects of mathematics, art and physical activities. The school places an appropriately high emphasis on literacy, numeracy and developing children's personal and social skills.

8. Attainment in personal and social development is what you might expect for children of this age. Most children are confident and are able to establish good relationships with other children and adults. They are friendly and some seek out their special friends. Others speak readily to both children and adults. Most children can work independently, in pairs, or as part of a group at story and music time, listening carefully to the story and joining in the songs. Children co-operate well with each other and share the cooking and baking tools carefully when, for example, making pizzas and birthday cake. Most are able to make choices by selecting the area of the nursery in which they will work and making decisions about the activities they wish to undertake. Children behave well and most are beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong. They respond positively to the ready praise from adults and are remorseful when gently corrected. Children are kind to the school pets and some feel responsible for them. They understand their need for food, water, space and appropriate attention. Most children are aware that they should take care of the nursery equipment. However, at the end of the school sessions, there are times when jigsaw pieces, construction equipment and other resources are left on the floor and not cleared away.

9. Children's attainment levels in language and literacy are in line with levels expected for their age. Most children listen well and they are keen to talk about their experiences. The majority talk confidently, particularly during group time and story time when they share their ideas and opinions.

10. They take part enthusiastically in imaginative play and this improves their ability to express themselves. For example, groups of children using the imaginary post office talked about the role of the postman, how letters were transported and how the print on the envelope conveys a meaning to the reader. Selecting and using books are given high priorities within the nursery. All the children handle books and many are able to retell their favourite stories using picture clues. Most are able to recognise their own names whilst some higher attainers can pick out letters from their name in other words. Writing skills are in line with expectations for their age. All are able to make marks on the paper and explain what they are trying to say. A small number are able to write their names independently.

11. Attainment in mathematics is in line with levels expected of children of this age. Children have a good awareness of number and many can count to ten. They recognise number in the environment and can apply their knowledge in practical situations, as for example, when they work out how many drinks their group will need at snack time.

12. Most are able to compare, sort and match objects and they are starting to use mathematical

language to describe shape, position and size. They have a good knowledge of counting rhymes and songs and use these to help themselves count accurately.

13. Children reach the expected standard. in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They have a good understanding of their local environment and they can talk about the families and people who help them. They explore natural materials such as water and sand and are beginning to understand how change can occur. For example, when a group made a birthday cake, they were able to describe how heat caused the ingredients to change. Standards in design and technology have improved since the last inspection. Children are able to plan and construct models, using tools and equipment safely.

14. Children's attainment in information technology is above average. They are confident when they use computers; most can move between different screens using the cursor and then, with adult support, print out their finished piece of work.

15. Children's attainment in physical development reaches the standard expected. Most children handle tools and resources appropriately. They demonstrate good control when using paint brushes, pencils, crayons and scissors. Malleable materials, such as dough and pastry, are moulded effectively and children can roll, press and cut them successfully. Most use construction kits with dexterity to make buildings and wheeled vehicles. When using the indoor climbing frame, the majority of children travel and climb confidently, showing a good awareness of space and others. Some show good levels of co-ordination as they climb up the rope ladder, balance on the platform and slide down the other side. Many children can balance along a raised bar for a short distance.

16. Children's attainment in the creative area of learning reaches the standard expected. All children are able to use paint, crayons and felt pens to good effect. Their paintings and drawings are developing well. Most children know the primary colours and some recognise secondary colours. Many can wrap up parcels and presents showing competence in using glue and tape. Children sing well and many can clap or play percussion instruments to rhythms played on the piano. All are encouraged to use and develop their imagination. Most children can do this successfully in the home corner and in the role play area of a 'post office' where they copy the mannerisms of adults and incorporate them within their play.

17. During their time in nursery, all children make good progress. This can be measured more accurately now that the school tests children when they start. Ongoing assessments show that the progress they make is consistent across all areas of learning and for children who have special needs as well as the higher attainers. Children are highly motivated and enjoy their work and this helps progress. The planning of teachers' work is carefully undertaken and this means that each child is given tasks which match their capabilities. Lessons move at a brisk pace and children understand what is expected of them. Throughout the day, there are opportunities for children to consolidate their learning and apply it in different situations. For example, they are asked to use their knowledge of number to set out the correct number of chairs for each table. Using and applying the skills they have gained helps to maintain their rate of progress.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

18. Children show very positive attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic in their approach and they persevere well with the activities set by staff. They work well independently, alongside an adult or their peers. Some are already able to co-operate well, passing resources to each other or helping to complete a task. For example, two boys were seen to work well together when wrapping parcels, with one helping the other to cut the sticky tape. Children make their own decisions about the activities they wish to try each day. Those who choose to work on the computers work for long periods without adult intervention and are very familiar with the programs and how they work. The children enjoy coming to school and parents believe that this sets an important foundation for the future. Inspectors agree with this view.

19. Children's behaviour is very good. They understand the staff's high expectations and are familiar with the school's routines. Children understand the need to take turns with some of the equipment and there are few arguments during the sessions. Snack times are pleasant, social occasions where the children display good manners and consideration for others at their table. They particularly enjoy the birthday celebrations and sing "Happy Birthday" with enthusiasm. Parents are very happy with the standards of behaviour set by the school.

20. Relationships in the school are very good. Children establish warm relationships with the staff and chat happily to them about their news and ideas. These constructive relationships help to improve their personal and social development. Children also relate well to each other. Girls and boys mix well during activities, they sit and chat together on the settee before snack time and show maturity in their relationships with others. They are successful in completing some tasks without any adult help and staff praise them when they achieve good results. Some children would make even greater steps in their personal development if they were offered more opportunities by the staff. For example, most children are ready to accept greater responsibility for tidying away resources at the end of an activity than they are currently offered.

Attendance

21. Levels of attendance are satisfactory. Most children are brought to school on time and there is a punctual start to sessions. Children's regular attendance has a positive impact on their attainment and progress.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

(iii) Teaching

22. The quality of teaching was judged to be good in seventy three per cent of lessons observed. In six per cent of lessons the teaching was very good and no teaching was unsatisfactory. This is an improvement on the last inspection where the teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. The school has responded well to the recommendations made previously. Staff plan their work in more detail, there is a greater consistency of approach and the assessment and recording systems are better. There are examples of good or very good teaching of children with special educational needs. Teaching is also good for those for whom English is an additional language.

23. Staff understand the needs of young children well. Work is well planned and it supports the teaching by identifying exactly what staff want children to learn. These objectives are linked to the Desirable Learning Outcomes for nursery education and all staff contribute to the plans.

24. Children are expected to work hard and lessons proceed briskly. Little time is wasted so that maximum benefit can be gained from each session. Children's work and progress is carefully monitored by the staff to ensure that tasks meet the individual's needs. On most occasions they maintain a good balance between adult directed and activities chosen by the children. Some of the best teaching took place when staff responded spontaneously, developing an approach to suit the needs of children in a particular group. A number of role play activities fall into this category. Adult support is skilful and non intrusive. Staff engage in the role play, offering advice and asking questions but ensuring that children take the lead and allowing them to express themselves.

25. Some children lack confidence in talking in a large group when they first arrive in nursery. Through imaginative play, staff build their confidence, encouraging them to observe initially and then supporting them as they eventually take part. Their language skills and the rate of progress all improve following these activities. During occasions such as these, staff offer detailed explanation to ensure children know what is expected of them. They ask questions which are challenging but appropriate.

26. On a small number of occasions, the teaching does not reach such high standards. When this happens adults offer too much support for the children and restrict their opportunity to operate independently. For example, during a painting session the paper was selected for the children and their names were written on top of the paper for them instead of allowing them to make their own marks. Similarly, at the end of the session, staff do not always ask children to tidy away after they have finished. These are opportunities missed and they detract from children's sense of personal responsibility, especially as they show great care and respect for books and equipment on all other occasions.

27. Classroom accommodation within the nursery is well organised. Staff make good use of all available space and this enhances the curriculum they offer. For example, computers are grouped together, this frees up space elsewhere and allows one adult to work with two groups of children in a self contained area.

Curriculum and assessment

28. The curriculum is broad and balanced and successfully promotes children's intellectual, physical and personal development. All areas of learning are well provided for with an appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is successful in developing children's personal and social skills. It successfully meets the needs of all children including those for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs. Both boys and girls have equal access to the full range of activities in all curricular areas. Through the nursery's special needs policy and practice, a suitable level of support and guidance is given to those children with learning or physical difficulties. Their individual educational plans are realistic and set achievable targets.

29. Much work has been undertaken since the last inspection in developing curriculum documentation. Detailed curriculum policies, linked to the Desirable Learning Outcomes, are now in place for all areas of learning, except for design technology which has yet to be completed. All contain aims and objectives and clearly identify the skills to be developed. These clear, concise documents support the curriculum planning.

30. Teachers' planning is thorough with all staff actively involved. Half termly topics, weekly and daily activities are well planned to provide a range of experiences across all areas of learning. Plans set out the daily organisation, which provides valuable guidance for staff. Staff plan as a team, they share expertise and ensure a consistency of approach. They make good attempts to evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of the activities through regular meetings.

31. The headteacher works alongside her staff; she effectively monitors and regularly evaluates the curriculum. Parents are informed of the current planning, details of which are displayed in the corridor of the school. The curriculum prepares children well with experiences that eventually lead towards the programmes of study in the National Curriculum.

32. The curriculum is enhanced through regular visits and walks to local places of interest. For example, a group of children walk to the library to listen to stories and choose books for the school. A recent visit to the local fire station was used effectively to support the topic on 'People Who Help Us' and many children produced informative pictures and paintings on their return.

33. Following the last inspection of the school, the headteacher and staff have developed and established consistent assessment procedures which clearly reflect the progress that all children are making in their learning. These systems of assessment are comprehensive and useful. Detailed information gathered from home visits before the children come to school and early observations of what they can achieve in nursery, form a useful initial assessment. Detailed assessments are made throughout the year by staff as part of their work with the children and are used effectively to set clear, relevant targets for each child. Careful, completed records are maintained and children's progress is regularly monitored. The information gathered from monitoring and assessment combines to create a well rounded picture of each child's development.

34. A useful individual folder for each child celebrates success and contains photographs, pieces of work showing their best achievement and samples of work recording progress over time. This provides a useful summary. Assessment information and samples of work are carefully collated and are available for parents to read throughout the year. Parents receive the child's individual folder and the records of children's achievements are sent to the receiving primary school at the end of the year.

(iii)

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

35. Following the last inspection report, the school has maintained its good provision for social and moral development and is now providing more opportunities and experiences to support spiritual and cultural development.

36. Provision for moral and social development of the children is good. The school creates a warm, welcoming atmosphere of trust and respect throughout. The organisation offers children clear boundaries in which to develop. Basic routines and simple school rules, carefully applied, are readily understood by most children and are accepted as being fair, for example, when it is necessary to wait your turn before selecting a percussion instrument or why it is important to walk along the corridor. There is a consistent approach by all staff to emphasise good behaviour and children develop a clear sense of what is right and what is not acceptable.

37. Staff are calm and deal with any moral issues as they occur. They intervene positively and encourage the children to think about the consequences of their actions and to be kind, considerate and honest in their dealings with one another. They are taught to be tolerant of each other's differences and to consider the feelings of others. This was particularly evident on one occasion at the sand tray when children thoughtfully shared the favourite spade and sand mould with a child with special needs.

38. Provision for spiritual and cultural development of the children is good. Staff carefully promote these aspects through a wide range of new experiences which provide opportunities for thought and reflection. For example, children are taught to consider the natural world around them. They plant spring bulbs and watch with delight as the purple flowers of the crocus open. Children are taught to care for living things, such as the school guinea pigs, and to consider their need for food, water, space and attention. Staff choose stories well to explain feelings and personal values. Following a story about a child going alone to stay with her grandad, for example, they sympathised with her feeling of sadness at leaving her mother, thought how she felt at going to bed in a strange house, and considered ways she could help herself to feel better. All were relieved when she settled down and became happy at grandad's house.

39. Positive steps are taken to introduce children to a variety of cultural traditions. The curriculum provides opportunities to reflect on festivals and celebrations such as Christmas, Eid and the Chinese New Year. These occasions are used effectively to provide examples of children's own and other cultures. The school has a very good range of books, pictures, stories and items for the home corner, which reflect a variety of traditions and life styles. All children are encouraged to show respect for the traditions, values and beliefs of their own and other cultures.

Support, guidance and pupil's welfare

40. The school makes good provision for the educational and personal support and guidance of its children. Parents are very happy with the levels of support the nursery offers and inspection findings confirm these views.

41. Staff know the children well and the system of home visits prior to the new school intake is effective in providing the foundation for a positive relationship between home and school. Staff create a welcoming and secure learning environment for the children who respond very well to the clear expectations and educational direction set by the headteacher. Detailed records of children's academic attainment and progress are maintained for each child. Staff meet daily to assess the changing needs of all the children. Records of achievement are compiled for each child and these are available for parents to look at any time.

42. Children with special educational needs are offered good levels of support by the staff. Their individual needs are well considered and they are well integrated into the daily life of the school. They are offered equality of opportunity in all areas and make good progress during their time at the nursery. Parents are involved in their reviews and are well informed of the progress their children make.

43. The school promotes good behaviour very effectively and sets high standards for the children to follow. All the adults provide good role models for the children, offering them consistent praise and encouragement for good behaviour. The school is a very calm and orderly community.

44. Arrangements for child protection are secure and follow the local authority guidelines. The headteacher is designated responsible for child protection and has attended appropriate training. The deputy headteacher has also received training and all staff are given regular guidance on current procedures. Outside support agencies are contacted as appropriate to meet the individual needs of the children.

45. The headteacher ensures that attendance registers are completed at the start of each session. She also investigates any unexplained absence and encourages parents to inform the school if their child is not coming on a particular day. The majority of parents are reliable about advising the school of reasons for absence.

46. The school makes appropriate arrangements for the provision, administration and recording of any first aid or medical treatment. There are a suitable number of qualified first aiders and all the staff are familiar with the health and safety policy. All adults are conscientious in their duty of care and are vigilant in ensuring the health, safety and general well being of the children.

47. Good liaison takes place with the local primary schools to which children transfer. Staff make visits with the children in addition to the visits they make with their parents and this helps them to make a smooth transition to full time education.

Partnership with parents and the community

48. The school maintains a good working partnership with its parents and with the community it serves. It enjoys a good reputation in the local community.

49. Useful information is sent to parents in the school prospectus and throughout the year in newsletters. Noticeboards in school and informal, daily conversations between staff and parents ensure they understand what is happening in school and how their children are progressing. Formal opportunities are offered in the autumn and summer terms for parents to visit the school to discuss their child's work with the teaching staff. The school encourages parents to come into classrooms as much as possible and always welcomes offers of help. Parental opinion is regularly canvassed by the staff through questionnaires and this helps to consolidate and develop the good partnership they foster. The Parents as Educators course improves parents' understanding of what their children learn at nursery and helps them to support their children more effectively at home.

50. Parents are supportive of the work of the nursery staff. Many attend the meetings arranged by staff to explain how the nursery works and what they can do to support their children's learning at home. The system of work packs is very popular and provides parents with information about the learning activities they share with their children at home. A good selection of library books is available regularly for parents to take home and this helps to encourage a love of books. Parents say they feel well informed and involved in their children's life at school.

51. Good links are established with the local community. The staff take children on walks to the local shops to support classroom based learning activities. Children are able to visit the local public library in Colne once a fortnight and the librarian reads to them. Staff organise trips on buses and trains to places of interest and these help children to experience aspects of the wider world. Representatives from outside agencies also visit the school to talk about their role in the local

community; for example, the community policeman introduces the subject of Stranger Danger to the children. Local residents are invited to school celebrations such as the Nativity and this helps to establish closer community links. The school does not have a regular link with local business but during previous major fundraising activities, their support was generous and helped to provide the new equipment for outdoor play, raising children's attainment in physical development.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

52. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher, who is well supported by a committed and successful team, provides a clear sense of direction for the school's work. There is a positive ethos displayed by all who work in the school and parents comment favourably on the friendly, welcoming atmosphere.

53. The school has a clear set of aims which is reflected in all aspects of school life. Governors support the work of the school and the chair is actively involved. For example, she meets regularly with the headteacher to discuss future initiatives and all policies are reviewed and approved by the governing body.

54. Throughout the school, high standards are set for children in terms of their social, moral and academic development. A culture exists which encourages continual improvement. For example, all staff contribute to weekly evaluations of lessons which are then used to modify work.

55. The school development plan is a valuable document. It has improved since the last inspection when the links between finance, resources and the school's priorities were not detailed enough. The plan now covers a three year period, sets clearly identified targets which have been costed but there is no evaluation of the impact of spending decisions and this is a weakness. A regular theme throughout the plan is the school's intention to raise standards and improve the quality of the teaching and children's learning.

56. The school is well organised, with established routines that are well understood by both the staff and the children. The headteacher is effective in monitoring the teaching and learning. She is actively involved in teaching throughout the nursery, works alongside colleagues and offers feedback on how lessons might be improved. There is a climate of openness and honesty which encourages all staff to reflect on their own practice and seek to improve.

57. Good appraisal systems are in place and all other statutory requirements are met.

58. The provision and support for children who have special educational needs is very well managed. Parents are kept actively involved and individual education plans are regularly reviewed. Once again, the effectiveness of this provision is carefully monitored by the headteacher who takes an active interest in children's attainment and progress.

59. There is a strong commitment within the school to high achievement and constant improvement. Most recommendations of the previous inspection report have been addressed and good progress has been made since then. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

60. The school is well staffed with suitably qualified and experienced teachers and nursery nurses to teach the curriculum to children under five years of age. Two part time support staff provide a good level of support and guidance for children with special educational needs. There is a strong sense of team work with teachers and nursery nurses sharing responsibility for planning, assessment, organising and managing activities. All staff, including the part time staff, are confident in their roles and contribute fully to all aspects of school life. An effective induction programme and informative handbooks for students and supply staff provide good information, useful guidance and reference to organisational and emergency procedures.

61. All staff understand their role and responsibilities. Staff show a commitment to professional development with courses and in-service days well attended. This professional development and the practice of sharing with colleagues the expertise and knowledge gained on courses have a positive impact on teaching and the children's learning. For example, an information technology course is increasing staff confidence and competence in computer skills and this is improving the quality of their teaching in this subject.

62. The internal accommodation of the nursery provides a colourful, interesting and stimulating setting for the teaching of young children. Adequate space is allocated to book corners, practical activities and imaginative and role play. Additional rooms provide appropriate space for musical activities and indoor physical development.

63. The outdoor play area and grounds provide a secure, spacious setting for physical development. The playground with its marked routes and games, and the grassed area with its variety of static climbing equipment, have been developed with care. Other curriculum areas are further developed through the gardens and grounds. For example, children plant bulbs, flowers and shrubs to further their knowledge of the natural world.

64. The school is well resourced in all areas of the curriculum. Following the last inspection report the school has extended the resources for music, science and design and technology and now they fully support the children's learning in these areas. All resources are of good quality and well maintained. Additional books are obtained through the library service to extend and improve the provision.

65. Resources are labelled clearly, suitably grouped and stored where they are available to children.

The efficiency of the school

66. The school does not have a delegated budget and most of its resources are managed by the local education authority. The limited funds available are supplemented by generous contributions from parents through the school fund. All resources are used effectively within the school and priorities are determined following an audit of need which forms part of the school development plan. Priorities are now costed and the links with finance are much more detailed. However, the impact of spending decisions on standards achieved and on the quality of education provided are not made clear in the evaluations. This is a weakness which needs to be improved.

67. Day to day management of finances is good with responsibility shared between the headteacher and school secretary. Whilst the school fund is audited regularly, there has been no recent local authority audit of the school budget.

68. The school deploys its staff very well and ensures maximum contact with the children. The timetable is well organised and all available space is used effectively to provide good quality learning experiences for the children.

69. The school receives additional funding to provide staff who support children with special educational needs. These staff are well deployed and they work closely with all other adults in the nursery to ensure a consistency of approach. For example, they attend the weekly planning meetings and contribute to children's records. Their involvement has a positive impact on children's attainment and progress. During their time in nursery, all children make good progress and, by the time they leave, most reach levels expected of children of their age. Taking into consideration the consistently good teaching and high quality of education provided, the school provides good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

Personal and social development.

70. By the time they are five, children's attainment in personal and social development is in line with standards expected. Children are happy to come to nursery and most are confident and eager to try the new experiences and activities that are planned for the day. They are friendly, speak readily to both adults and other children, and many seek out their special friends. They are able to work independently, in pairs, in small groups or successfully as members of a large group for story time or music activities. They listening with interest to stories and join in with songs. Children work and play co-operatively, sharing the cooking and baking tools fairly, for example, when making pizzas and birthday cakes for snack time. Most children listen carefully to instructions and can act on them, concentrating and persevering with tasks for quite long periods; for example, when sorting and selecting materials for a collage, or completing jigsaws.

71. Many children quickly become independent and are able to make choices by selecting the area of the nursery in which they will work. When given opportunities to do so, they make decisions about the activities they wish to undertake.

72. All children behave well and most are beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong. They respond to the ready praise from adults and are remorseful when corrected. Some are beginning to understand the feelings of others and say they are sorry and try to make amends. Most are polite and courteous and will remember to say please and thank you with very little prompting from adults. Children are kind to the school pets and take some responsibility for them, remembering that they need food, water, space and appropriate attention. Although most children are aware that they should take good care of the nursery equipment, there are times at the end of the school sessions when jigsaw pieces, construction equipment and other resources are left on the floor and not cleared away.

73. Children respond positively to this area of learning and make good progress throughout most of the activities. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported. Adults set work for them at the correct level and offer positive encouragement when they complete an activity. This helps them to make good progress. The good relationships between all adults and children help them to develop confidence and to build on the many experiences offered in the nursery.

74. The quality of teaching promoting personal and social development is mostly good. Where the teaching is good, staff have high expectations of good behaviour, gently reinforce simple school rules and take every opportunity to increase children's personal and social skills. For example, a child who wanted the same percussion instrument as another child was carefully reminded that he had chosen first on many previous occasions and it was now time for him to take his turn. All adults consistently encourage consideration for others, praising children enthusiastically for playing together successfully and co-operating with others as they climb safely on the climbing frame. All staff have friendly relationships with the children and a good knowledge and understanding of their needs. They are kind and patient with the children, especially those who are reserved or unsure and

give them plenty of time to answer questions and develop confidence. This is particularly evident at story time when adults give praise and encouragement as children try out their ideas and new vocabulary. Where the teaching is less successful, adults don't give children enough opportunities to choose. This happens, on occasions, in the painting areas of the nursery where adults over support children by choosing the size of paper and writing children's names on it. It is also evident throughout the nursery at the end of the school sessions when most children walk away from the activities and leave them scattered on the tables and floor.

75. Teachers' planning for personal and social skills is thorough and provides many interesting, imaginative and stimulating activities and experiences for the children. Detailed records are maintained for each child and this information is then used well to track children's progress and plan future work. Resources for learning are of good quality and are well maintained.

(iii) **Language and literacy**

76. By the time they are five, children's attainment in all aspects of language and literacy is in line with that expected for their age. Standards achieved in this area are similar to those found during the school's first inspection but, in the intervening years, the intake of the children has changed. More now arrive in school with speech delay and this is reflected in the school's baseline assessments which are undertaken soon after children start school.

77. This area of learning is given a high priority by all staff and children receive extensive support. Adults take every opportunity to engage children in discussion and try to extend their vocabulary.

78. Most children are attentive listeners. They pay close attention during story time, can follow instructions and pass on messages. Many opportunities are offered to reinforce this skill as, for example, during snack time when staff offer clear instructions about the next activities to be undertaken.

79. The majority are able to express themselves clearly and have made good progress in this area from the time they arrived in school. They are enthusiastic 'talkers', keen to share their ideas and opinions with classmates or adults. For example, during story time they readily contribute to discussions, showing good levels of confidence.

80. Children are able to improve their speaking skills through imaginative play which is a very successful aspect of the nursery life. In both the play room and the role play area, children take on the character of adults they know, often for lengthy periods. They retell stories and respond positively to the adults who work with them in these areas, including them in their play.

81. Writing skills are regularly taught. All children can make marks and a small number are able to write their own names independently. They know that the marks made on paper can convey a meaning to the reader and many of them are quite explicit when they explain the message that they want their adult helper to put on paper. They use pencils confidently and some can talk about the different purposes of writing. For example, in the imaginary post office, they write letters to their friends, design birthday cards and fill in the pre-printed forms left on the counter. They can explain how the words they use will differ, depending on the type of writing they do.

82. Children demonstrate a positive attitude towards books and they benefit from the interesting

literary environment. They select books spontaneously and choose to read them in the comfortable library area. Most have a good understanding of how books work. They know how to handle them and turn the pages carefully. The majority can recognise their own name in print and some can pick out the individual letters when they occur in other words. They are able to retell their favourite stories and use the picture clues to explain what is happening.

83. All children respond positively to the school's provision in language and literacy. They show good levels of concentration and generally complete a task or activity before they move on. The majority of children make good progress in this area when measured against their attainment on entry to the school. The work they undertake is carefully planned and builds on what they already know. There are frequent opportunities to consolidate their learning and they receive regular praise and encouragement.

84. The quality of teaching is good. On a small number of occasions it is very good and it is never less than satisfactory. All staff have a good knowledge of the needs of young children and they plan their work accordingly. They talk to children about their work, encouraging them to try new vocabulary. In imaginative play, for example, many adults take a full and active part. They ensure that the play remains worthwhile and provide good role models in the way they speak and ask questions.

85. Developing a love of books is regarded as an important part of the school's philosophy. Staff encourage children to read books and interpret what they see around them. Story time is well used to highlight the importance of print and pictures in conveying a meaning to the reader. In the very best examples, adults share a story with their group, building up a sense of interest and enthusiasm. They are skilful in their questioning, ensuring that each child is given an opportunity to contribute.

86. All staff encourage children's writing. For example, cards were produced to celebrate birthdays and children selected their own messages which they wrote with variable degrees of success. The teacher identified some of the letters children needed to include and offered ideas and suggestions on how their work might be improved. On a small number of occasions, the teaching of writing did not meet these high standards. This was due to the adult giving too much support which included writing each child's name and selecting the paper to be used.

87. Children with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. They receive extra support which is targeted at improving their standards in literacy. Their individual education plans are realistic and are known to all staff which helps to ensure a consistency of approach. On most occasions, the adult support works with the children within the classroom. This ensures that all children who have special needs see themselves as an integral part of the nursery.

88. Only a few children have English as an additional language and they are well supported by all staff. They are fully integrated into the life of the nursery and enjoy the full curriculum range. They make good progress during the year.

(iii) **Mathematics**

89. Children are well on line to achieving the expected standards by the time they enter compulsory education. Standards of achievement are more consistent than those found during the last inspection. The overall provision for mathematics has improved considerably. Planning and

resources are much better and there is now a detailed policy in place which helps the teachers.

90. Most children are able to sort objects according to different characteristics such as colour, shape and size. Some can recognise and recreate repeating patterns and then explain what they have done.

91. Children are confident when they talk about objects which are bigger or smaller and are beginning to use simple mathematical language in their everyday conversation. For example, one group explained that too many children were playing in the home corner and it was becoming overcrowded. They used phrases such as “more than”, “in front of” and “not enough” when negotiating with their friends who wanted to join them. Some were able to apply their counting skills up to ten which confirmed that they were right to ‘refuse entry’ to any more. The nursery staff give many such opportunities to children to apply their mathematical knowledge in practical situations.

92. Only a few can count numbers beyond ten, although some can work out simple sums, for example, they calculate how many drinks will be required for their table at snack time.

93. Most children have a satisfactory understanding of shape and some can name objects such as circles and squares. They use this knowledge when completing jigsaws or constructing models and many show good levels of concentration as they complete their tasks before moving on. For example, one group of children spent a long period constructing a model using plastic shapes. They planned their work carefully and concluded that the square blocks would make the most efficient foundation. The time and effort taken ensured that the completed model was both stable and close to their original plan. Their attainment improves when they apply their knowledge and understanding in such a practical way.

94. All children, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in their mathematics from the time they enter school. Their work is now carefully planned, in a structured and developmental way. This allows them to build on their knowledge and understanding. Each day they practise number songs and rhymes so that they know them well. Their work is set at a level which challenges them to think and little time is wasted. This is an improvement on the last inspection when planning was inconsistent.

95. Children enjoy taking part in mathematical activities and they support and encourage one another.

96. The quality of the teaching is good on most occasions and it is never less than satisfactory. Staff offer a wide range of interesting and practical activities.

97. In one particularly successful lesson children helped to bake a cake. They were expected to count out the ingredients and add them to the group’s cake mix. Skilful adult questioning helped them to realise how one more or one less could make a significant difference to the finished product. There were consistent promptings throughout the lesson which encouraged the children to recognise the mathematical implications of what they were doing.

98. The planning, resourcing and general organisation of mathematics has improved greatly since the last inspection. All adults contribute to the planning now and this ensures a consistency of

approach. Resources and equipment have been purchased and a policy completed. This helps all staff to deliver the subject successfully.

(iii) **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

99. The children are on line to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes for this area of learning, by the time they enter compulsory schooling. In information technology, their attainment is higher. Children are provided with a wide range of experiences and develop a good knowledge and understanding of their environment. They can talk about people who help them and their current topic, people who deliver the post, provides children with opportunities to talk about their immediate area. Most know where they live and can describe how they get to school. They talk confidently about their family and friends and some can relate past and present events in their own lives. For example, some engage in role play which is centred around how they behaved as babies, whilst others try to imagine what life will be like when they grow up. Staff questioning helps them to gain a clearer understanding of this sense of time as they discuss yesterday, today and tomorrow.

100. Most children are beginning to understand simple scientific processes. They recognise the similarities and differences between materials and how they can be changed. For example, a group of children baking a birthday were able to describe the way in which the original ingredients had changed to become a cake. They know that heating the ingredients caused them to change.

101. Children demonstrate appropriate skills in technology. Attainment in technology has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory. Children's use of construction kits is good and they work collaboratively to produce imaginative models, often from their own design. They use a range of techniques to join paper and construct their models. Most are confident when they handle tools and equipment. They have been taught to use them safely. Information technology is used successfully to support children's learning in language, mathematics and creative development. Most children can use a mouse to change screens and know how they can type letters which appear on the screen. Their skills in this area are particularly well developed and they achieve high standards. For example, many children are able to customise a greetings card program by clicking on shapes, colours and objects that they want to incorporate in their work.

102. During their time in nursery, all children make good progress in this area of learning. They enjoy the good range of opportunities offered to them and concentrate for long periods. Skilled adult support ensures that progress is consistently good by making sure lessons proceed at a brisk pace and providing activities which are at a suitable level for each child.

103. The quality of teaching is good and in almost a third of lessons observed it was very good.

104. Staff plan very effectively but they are also responsive to children's natural interests and enthusiasm. They encourage them to observe, discuss and then record what they have seen.

105. All staff expect a lot of the children and their questioning ensures that all children stay involved. During one story activity when discussion centred on the story of Goldilocks, children were encouraged to empathise with the characters in the story and relate the experiences to their own families. In the discussion that followed, each child was kept fully involved, the debate made them think about events that had happened to them in the past and finally they were asked to

predict what might happen in the future. The range of language used and the standards they achieved all improved when practical, first hand experiences such as these formed the basis of the lesson.

106. Planning for this area is effective and is linked to the national guidelines. At present, there is no policy document which covers all aspects and this is an area the school is keen to improve. Good use is made of the local environment for visits and people who help in the community regularly visit school.

Physical development

107. Children's attainment in physical development is in line with the levels expected for their age.

108. Most children handle tools and resources appropriately. Many can hold pencils and felt pens with a correct grip to make their marks or try to write their names on letters and envelopes. They use paintbrushes with control to paint detailed pictures. The majority can hold scissors with a correct grip to snip and cut. All can roll, press and cut malleable materials such as dough and pastry to make pizzas or pretend biscuits. Most use construction kits of various sizes with dexterity, to make buildings and small wheeled vehicles. In the indoor play area, children climb confidently on the large climbing equipment, exploring and travelling in different ways. Some show increasing control and co-ordination as they climb up the rope ladder, balance on the platform and slide down the other side. A few children with a well developed sense of balance can walk along a raised bar for a short distance. Early games skills are good and most children can throw beanbags with care and control, whilst some can catch them successfully. A few children can work in pairs, throwing and catching together. All demonstrate a good awareness of space and others when using the indoor play area.

109. Most children, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress. The variety of tasks provided for each skill, for example, the differing challenges on each part of the climbing frame, enables them to build on their experiences and develop confidence. Some children with special educational needs have less well developed manipulative and co-ordination skills. They make good progress during their time in nursery but their attainment levels remain below what might be expected from children of this age. Their progress is accelerated by the high quality of the adult support available to them. Adults practise with them individually and offer positive encouragement.

110. The quality of teaching in physical development is always good. Staff plan carefully for all activities and have a clear understanding of the skill they wish to develop and a good knowledge of the needs and abilities of the children. In one successful lesson, for example, children working with scissors were given clear instructions, shown how to hold them correctly and were encouraged to repeat the task until they managed to cut a piece of paper the right size to wrap up a parcel. In another successful lesson aimed at developing co-ordination skills, a variety of climbing activities were provided for the children in the indoor activity area. The adult working with a group of children at the climbing frame supported them, gave clear coaching points and extended the activity by encouraging them to climb the frame from many different starting points. Children's attainment and their progress improved following these activities. All staff give ready praise and encouragement for both enthusiasm, effort and achievement.

111. The quality of teaching for the children with English as an additional language and for those with special educational needs is equally successful. Adults ensure all children understand the task, demonstrate the skill to be developed and sensitively support them until they achieve success. For example, a child with special educational needs who was trying to improve co-ordination skills, used a small spade with care to fill a bucket with sand. She was constantly praised and encouraged until the bucket was full.

112. A comprehensive policy supports the planning for physical development. Long, medium and short term planning are detailed and support the teaching, both indoors and out. Teachers regularly assess children's progress. This information is used effectively when discussing the next stage of planning. For example, it is used to decide on the level of difficulty to be set for the climbing frame.

During the inspection, the outdoor area was not used because of the poor weather conditions. However, photographic evidence shows that it is used to support the development of physical skills. Outdoor play is regularly timetabled and a good level of resources is available for the development of climbing, balancing, pedalling and steering skills. Additional resources are available for games skills such as a variety of balls and hoops.

113. Good use is made of the additional room allocated to climbing and balancing activities. It improves the provision for physical development and has a positive impact on standards of attainment

(iii) **Creative Development**

114. By the time they are five, children are on line to meet the expected levels. All children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, have access to a wide range of resources and activities and make good progress in their creative development.

115. Children explore a wide range of colour, media, texture and tools. They can express themselves well when using a variety of colours of paint. For example, their paintings and drawings reflect their efforts to depict the current interest in the topic 'People Who Help Us'. Brush control is developing well, with many children able to paint a picture of their family and some can add features with reasonable accuracy. A few children demonstrate well developed observational skills. For example, they use crayons and felt tips to make clear, detailed drawings of firemen and fire engines following a visit to the fire station. Many children can name primary colours correctly and can point out colours around the nursery. Some can recognise and name secondary colours such as green, orange and brown. A few children can name all the colours including black and white.

116. Most are able to use tools, glue and collage materials with confidence for specific tasks. They are competent in using glue, glue sticks and sticky tape when wrapping presents. The majority can hold scissors successfully to cut and snip to make a fancy wrapping paper. Children can make models from reclaimed and recyclable materials. For example, they are able to produce three-dimensional models representing fire engines, applying the practical skills they have been taught.

117. Children explore texture. They can comment on the textures of different materials when making a collage and say, for example, that the materials feel smooth, rough or prickly.

118. Children enjoy music and they are able to listen to the piano, join in and sing a range of familiar songs and rhymes. They are able to clap in time to the music and some can beat out a simple rhythm with percussion instruments.

119. Children are encouraged to use and develop their imaginations. They respond well to the 'home corner' and the pretend 'post office' and are skilled at copying the mannerisms of others, including adults and incorporating them into their play. For example, children playing in the 'Post Office' sold envelopes and stamps and cashed pretend 'Giros'. They also ensured that the school post box was emptied regularly and the letters were delivered. There is equal opportunity for all children in their play, for example, girls as well as boys are at ease delivering letters.

120. The quality of teaching is mostly good and never less than satisfactory. Staff provide a broad range of creative activities which are carefully planned, well prepared, imaginative and interesting. There is a good balance between teacher directed and self chosen tasks. Good teaching is characterised by high expectations which are clearly communicated to the children, and there are sustained levels of challenge. For example, during a music activity the teacher used every opportunity to improve music skills. She encouraged all children to sing the words to the song, then asked them to hum the tune to the piano. Ready praise and encouragement is given and adults demonstrate genuine pleasure at children's achievements. For example, they invite children to sing songs on their own and then applaud their efforts. Where the teaching is less successful children are over supported by the adult and independence for some children is limited. This happens at painting activities when adults select the size of paper for the children, fix it on the easel and write the child's name on the painting without giving the children time to do these tasks for themselves.

121. Careful assessments of children's attainment are made and these are used to plan the next stage of work.

122. Children's work is effectively displayed throughout the nursery. These attractive displays celebrate achievement in this and other areas of the curriculum. Resources are good and materials are well suited to children's needs. They are stored appropriately to allow children easy access to them. However, there are occasions when resources for creative development are not cleared away by the children and staff spend time tidying up the areas. Opportunities to develop independence and to teach children to take care of resources and the school environment are missed.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspection was carried out by a team of 3 inspectors who:-

- (●) Observed 55 lessons
- (●) Interviewed the Chair of Governors, headteacher, teachers, nursery nurses and support staff
- (●) Held discussions with parents accompanying children to school
- (●) Talked to children about activities they were undertaking
- (●) Examined school documentation, curriculum plans, records and children's work
- (●) Arranged a pre inspection meeting with parents, providing an opportunity for them to express their views (6 attended)
- (●) Analysed the written replies to the parent questionnaires (44 responded)

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	51	1	15	N/A

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	3.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week	81

Average class size:	16
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• **Financial data**

Financial year:

97/98

	£
Total Income (includes school fund contribution)	15189
Total Expenditure	15189
Expenditure per pupil (full time equivalent)	303
Balance brought forward from previous year	224
Balance carried forward to next year	-

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

102

Number of questionnaires returned:

44

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	25	66	7	2	-
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	61	36	4	-	-
The school handles complaints from parents well	16	45	27	-	-
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	36	55	4	4	-
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	34	45	16	4	-
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	39	55	4	-	-
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	34	55	7	2	-
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	25	59	9	-	-
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	50	45	4	-	-
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	45	52	2	-	-
My child(ren) like(s) school	73	27	-	-	-