

INSPECTION REPORT

McMILLAN NURSERY SCHOOL
NELSON

LEA area : LANCASHIRE

Unique Reference Number : 119095

Headteacher : MRS. G. WROE

Reporting inspector : MICHAEL HEWLETT
T11848

Dates of inspection : Monday 26th October 1998 - Wednesday
28th October 1998

Under OFSTED contract number: 702303

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 - 4 years
Gender of pupils : MIXED
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Appropriate authority : LANCASHIRE

Name of chair of governors : MRS AMY SPENCE

Date of previous inspection : 9TH - 11TH OCTOBER 1995

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MICHAEL HEWLETT, RgI	Language and Literacy Mathematics Knowledge and understanding of the world	Attainment and progress The efficiency of the school Teaching Leadership and management The curriculum and assessment
JUNE HUNTER, T1	Physical development Creative Development Personal and Social Development	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

School encourages very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning

Teaching is good - sometimes very good

Promotes excellent relationships and provides high standards of care

Successfully involves parents in children's learning

Achieves regular attendance

Provides a broad, balanced curriculum which meets children's needs

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

Monitoring of teaching, learning and children's records

Children's attainment on entry is not recorded so it is hard to measure their progress

Staff expertise in information technology is limited

Some curriculum policies need to be updated

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 parents or guardians of pupils

at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has overcome most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report and continues to provide a high quality of education. Children have a better range of activities outdoors and standards have improved in this area. A greater emphasis has been placed on developing children's awareness of other cultures and their response has been positive.

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

Standards

There are national standards for children by five years of age. The oldest children are likely to reach these in all the areas of learning. They are all making good progress towards achieving these targets.

Quality of teaching

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

Seventy per cent of the teaching is good. Almost twenty per cent is very good and none is less than satisfactory.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good, staff have high expectations
Attendance	Good
Ethos*	Very positive, relationships excellent
Leadership and management	The school is well led and a clear direction is set. Monitoring of children's learning needs to be improved
Curriculum	Generally good but some weaknesses in

assessment and monitoring

Children with special educational needs	Good levels of support for individuals
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Well qualified teachers and support staff, well equipped, spacious accommodation, attractive outdoor area
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
ú Staff are friendly and approachable	ú One parent expressed concern about the school's adherence to the published opening and closing times
ú Children enjoy coming to school	
ú They achieve high standards of good behaviour	
ú Complaints are handled well	
ú Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress	
ú All staff perform a valuable role in supporting children who have English as an additional language	

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To build on the good provision the school currently makes it should:-

Raise standards by:-

- (i) Improving the systems for monitoring teaching, learning and children's records.
(paragraphs 27, 30, 31, 52, 82)
- (ii) Measuring children's attainment on entry and using the information contained in records to assess their progress by the time they leave.
(paragraphs 30, 31, 52, 82, 95)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated in paragraphs

- (i) Improve staff expertise in information technology.

(paragraphs 27, 56, 103)

- (ii) Update curriculum policies to ensure that they reflect the Desirable Learning Outcomes. (already identified by the school) - (paragraphs 28, 103)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

McMillan is an average sized nursery school situated near the town centre of Nelson. There are 110 children on roll, all of whom attend part time. They are taught by three teachers, including the headteacher and five NNEB's (Nursery Nurse Examination Board), two of whom work part time. In addition, there is one teacher and two nursery nurse assistants employed through section 11 funding to support children who are learning English as an additional Language.

All children are aged between three and four years old and the school's admission policy indicates that children with special needs will be given priority. All other places are allocated based on proximity to the nursery. Half of the children come from homes where English is not the first language. The school's intake covers a wide area and children's attainment on entry is judged to be just below average, particularly in language and literacy. There are no children with statements of special educational needs in attendance although seven have been identified as requiring additional support. There have been a number of staff changes since the school was last inspected in 1995. The present headteacher was appointed twelve months ago.

Targets for improvement identified by the school include a comprehensive review of systems for recording and reporting achievement, as well as developing the role of parents as educators.

Key Indicators

Attendance

Not applicable.

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :	%
Very good or better	20
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

11. By the time children are five, their attainment is in line with levels expected of children of this age. Attainment levels are in line with those identified in the previous inspection. The school places an appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy and developing children's personal and social skills.

12. Attainment in personal and social development is in line with what is expected for children of this age. Children are confident in the nursery and many speak spontaneously to both adults and other children. They are able to make choices and most can select the activities they wish to undertake. They listen carefully to instructions and can act on them. Many children are becoming independent and will select resources to use and help to clear away at the end of activities. All can work as part of a group for story or music time, responding appropriately by listening and joining in the story and songs. Children play co-operatively indoors and out and readily take turns with the wheelbarrows and hoops. Children behave very well. They are beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong and respond pleasurably to praise and remorsefully to gentle correction. All treat the school environment with respect.

13. In language and literacy, children listen attentively to adults and to each other. They enjoy discussing work they have completed and their confidence is improving in this area. All children enjoy handling books and this is a very positive feature of the nursery. They know how to handle them correctly and they share them with others, often retelling stories they know. Writing skills are at an early stage of development but most are able to explain that the marks they are making can convey a meaning. Some higher attainers can make a good attempt at writing their own name and recognise some of the letters contained within it.

14. Over one third of the children are learning English as an additional language. Many are at the early stages of acquiring English, using a mixture of first language and English. They can respond to simple directions, name objects and put together phrases in English. They are well supported by staff funded under Section 11 who carefully record their progress. This support has a positive impact because they know each child's needs. A small proportion, less than six per cent, of children are identified by the school as having special educational needs. In most cases the need is linked to delayed language skills. They are able to take part in most activities and are growing in confidence. Staff set work which meets their individual requirements and take every opportunity to introduce them to a wide range of language. They attain standards which are appropriate.

15. Attainment in mathematics is also in line with national expectations for their age. By the time they are five, they can compare, sort and order everyday objects. Most have a good awareness of number, counting to ten confidently and they can apply their knowledge of number in practical situations. For example, they can share the drinks at break-time, recognising how many are left over and calculating how many there must have been originally. They can describe and name simple shapes such as square, triangle and circle.

16. Attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is in line with what might be expected for children by the time that they are five. Through well chosen topics, children are able to experience scientific processes. They can talk about materials and why they change, often taking part in simple experiments. For example, they observed how ice melted and could explain what caused the process to speed up. They have a good knowledge of the environment around them and most are able to talk about their families and where they live. Attainment levels in construction and technology are particularly good. Children handle tools confidently and safely. They can make working models, joining pieces of wood accurately using a hammer and nails. Most are competent users of information technology. They use a mouse to change screens and can select from a menu on the screen, usually with adult support.

17. Children's attainment in the creative areas of learning meets age related expectations. All children are able to use paint, felt pens and glue to good effect. Their early observational drawings, paintings and collage work are developing well. Many children can mix red and yellow powder

paint and are aware that it becomes orange. Children know some of the primary colours, such as red and yellow, and some recognize the secondary colours of green, orange and brown. Children are able to sing well and many can clap to the rhythm. All experiment spontaneously with the percussion instruments. Children use their imagination as they develop successfully the roles of firemen, bus driver and passengers in their role-play.

18. Children's attainment in physical development is in line with expectations for their age. They can handle tools and resources appropriately. Many use paint brushes with increasing control to paint pictures of sunflowers. Some hold pencils, crayons and felt pens with a correct grip to make their marks on paper. Malleable materials such as dough and pastry are moulded effectively and children can roll, press and cut them successfully. They can use construction kits with dexterity to make vehicles and machines. Outdoors, children run and jump with good co-ordination and skill. Many have an awareness of space and others as they push and pull the wheelbarrows to clear the leaves. A few confident children can climb up the climbing frame and slide down the other side. Others can walk a few steps on stilts or balance on a raised bar. Early games skills are well promoted and children can throw and catch a large ball with a good degree of accuracy.

19. Children make good progress in all curriculum areas. Activities are carefully planned so that they build on children's prior knowledge and understanding. Work is set at a challenging level so that lessons and children's learning proceeds at a brisk pace. For example, in a mathematical lesson, two members of the group quickly completed their matching activity. The adult supporting the group then suggested that they selected more objects but this time using size and colour as well as shape. This offered them a high degree of challenge but it also improved their learning and rate of progress. A significant proportion of children arrive in school learning English as an additional language. The quality of the support they receive from all staff ensures they make rapid progress, they are offered a structured approach, constant reinforcement and positive atmosphere where their self esteem is boosted.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

20. Children demonstrate very positive attitudes to their work. They listen carefully to instructions and many are able to tidy up when they finish an activity. Children concentrate very well. They complete an activity before moving to another, even when working without direct adult help. However, their attainment improves in the adult supported activities. For example, one girl made an initial observational painting of a sunflower. Her two subsequent paintings, with increased adult guidance on how to observe the

detail of shape and colouring, resulted in a much improved picture by the end of the session. Children are eager to please and appear at ease in the welcoming nursery environment. Parents report that their children are happy to come to school.

21. Standards of behaviour are very good and the school functions in a very orderly way. Children are familiar with the routines and respond positively to the high expectations set for them by all the adults working in the school. Parents agree that the school sets high standards of good behaviour for their children.

22. Relationships are excellent and a strength of the school. Children make good progress in their personal and social development. They work and play equally well individually or in groups. Snack-times are pleasant social occasions, where children learn to co-operate. Some are proud to offer the daily snack to their friends. They sit and listen to each group member as they describe the activities they have completed during the session. Attempts by children to become increasingly self-reliant in the classroom are valued and praised by adults. For example, some children involved in creative activities are able to replace their brushes, take their completed painting to the drying racks, pull down a free rack, carefully place the wet painting on it and then pull down another rack ready for the next child's painting. Children with special educational needs also take responsibility for replacing resources correctly and storing their work with care. They make good progress with their personal and social skills due to the sensitive guidance of the teaching staff.

Attendance

23. Levels of attendance at school are good and have a positive impact on children's attainment and progress. Parents ensure their children are punctual and sessions begin and end on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

24. The quality of teaching by nursery nurses and teachers, including those funded by Section 11, is good in over 70 per cent of lessons observed. In almost 20 per cent it is very good and it is never less than satisfactory. The school has maintained the high standards identified in the previous inspection. Improvements have been made in the quality of teaching observed during children's outdoor play. Better resources are now available for this area and teachers' planning identifies the skills to be developed.

25. All staff have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the needs of nursery aged children. This is reflected in their planning and in classroom organization. Activities are planned which provide children with interesting and

challenging tasks to complete. For example, one group was asked to combine their knowledge of a story they had heard with their imaginative play. The adult working with the group became actively involved in the play, extending their vocabulary and boosting their confidence. Children of all abilities and linguistic backgrounds were able to take part in this imaginative play. Their levels of co-operation and the quality of their role-play could be attributed to the skilful questioning and constant encouragement of the adult working with the group.

26. Staff are particularly successful in improving children's language skills. They offer good role models, sharing books and demonstrating an enthusiasm for reading which is passed on to the children. Staff are well organised and they set high but attainable standards. For example, children are expected to show care and respect for others. Group times are used to reinforce this expectation and staff give clear and explicit instructions on how they expect everyone to behave. Children respond positively. Most groups reinforce their knowledge of numbers when they assemble for story or gather as a group, whilst on other occasions they use the time to talk about the work they have completed. When the teaching is less successful, these chances are not taken. For example, when sharing out books and equipment an adult missed the opportunity to talk about the number of books needed.

27. Teachers and nursery nurses keep a detailed account of how each member of their group is progressing. This provides useful information to inform the next stage in the planning. There is no regular overview of these individual records to ensure a consistency of approach and this needs to be addressed. Staff make good use of the available resources to support their teaching. Resources are imaginatively deployed and they make maximum use of the space available. For example, two computer stations share one worktop allowing a number of children to work productively, supervised by one adult. Information technology is used well to support children's learning but staff recognize the need to improve their own skills in this area. All staff combine to provide a calm, secure environment. Relationships are excellent and this helps to build children's confidence and self esteem.

The curriculum and assessment

28. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which meets the needs of all children including those for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs. All areas of the curriculum are well provided for with the necessary emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills. Both boys and girls have equal access to the full range of activities in all curriculum areas and children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive a good level of support and guidance. Whilst policy documents for most areas of learning are in place, the history and geography section of Knowledge and Understanding is not updated. Other areas of learning are being reviewed and updated. The school has identified these areas for improvement on the school development plan.

29. Curriculum planning is thorough with all staff actively involved in the process. At regular meetings they share expertise, plan as a team to ensure consistency of approach and evaluate outcomes and effectiveness. Termly or half termly topics are chosen with care to ensure appropriate curriculum coverage within the theme. The diversity of cultures is celebrated through different aspects of topic work. For example, Diwali is woven into a theme of opposites, light and dark. Weekly and daily plans clearly identify what the children should learn and the skills to be developed. Current planning is prominently displayed in the school entrance for parents and visitors to read. The curriculum is enhanced through local visits to the garden centre and bus wash. Visitors to the school such as a violinist and a brass band effectively support the curriculum. They help to broaden the curriculum and improve children's skills.

30. Staff show a high commitment to planning, assessing and recording children's achievement. The headteacher works alongside staff and monitors the planning, teaching, learning and children's records in an informal way. These systems now need to be formalised to gain an overview of children's attainment and progress.

31. Arrangements for assessment are manageable but there is no overview of the children's attainment on entry. Assessment information is gathered by staff throughout the year as part of their work with children and all staff, including the Section 11 staff, and those who support children with special educational needs, make regular and relevant observations of children's work and attainment. Future planning and current teaching are assisted by this approach. However, although staff are aware of individual children's preferences for some activities, the monitoring of take up of activities needs to be improved.

32. A record of achievement file is kept for each child throughout the year. The folders contain a range of work samples showing their best achievement as well as photographs and samples of work recording progress over time. Children's folders are carefully collated and are available for parents to read throughout the year. This file is given to each parent at the end of the year and it provides a useful summary.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

33. The school is effective in promoting children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

34. The provision for spiritual development is good. The broad, balanced curriculum provides experiences and activities which support spiritual development. There are many moments each day when children express joy, delight and wonder. For example, children observe blocks of ice marvelling how cold it is and watching with wonder as it melts into water. Others observe a rainbow and describe with delight the many colours. Through these observations and investigations they are developing an understanding of the natural world. Well chosen

stories are used effectively to help children express their thoughts, feelings and emotions. All show sensitivity for the feelings of others and treat each other kindly and with respect. Provision for moral and social development is good. Staff lead by example, stressing the importance of honesty, fairness, truthfulness and respect. Clear routines and simple straight forward rules consistently applied, help children distinguish between right and wrong. Staff deal sensitively with any issues as they arise, explaining to the children the consequence of their actions, encouraging them to say they are sorry and make amends. Self discipline and self control are encouraged and children are taught to be patient, tolerant and help one another when necessary. Story and group times are used well to praise attentive listening and good behaviour.

35. The organisation of the nursery provides many opportunities for children to work individually or in groups of various sizes. Confidence and independence are encouraged and children take responsibility for their learning by selecting the area of the nursery they will work in and choosing the activities to pursue. Self help skills are effectively promoted and children hang up their own aprons while others try to manage their outdoor clothes. Good attention is paid to the development of social skills at snack time. Courtesy and good manners are particularly emphasised and children are expected to wait their turn, ask politely for their drink and thank the helper.

36. Provision for cultural development has improved significantly since the last inspection. A greater emphasis is now placed on this aspect and staffs knowledge has increased. Policy documentation and planning for cultural development is effective. It gives teachers a good basis for their lessons. The cultural diversity of the school is valued and reflected throughout the curriculum. All children are encouraged to show respect for the traditions, values and beliefs of their own and other cultures. They are given opportunities to reflect on and appreciate festivals and celebrations such as Diwali, Eid, Chinese New Year, Christmas, May Day and birthdays. Attractive displays with labels in both Urdu and English, a good range of books, some of them in dual language and well chosen pictures provide positive images of beliefs and customs of themselves and others. Simple role play, music making with instruments from other countries and tapes of Asian music are skilfully used to improve children's knowledge and experience of the similarities in the life styles and cultures of others. Children respond positively to this aspect of provision.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

37. The school makes good provision for the support, guidance and welfare of its children. The standards of pastoral care are high and are a strength of its provision.

38. The headteacher establishes a welcoming atmosphere and all the staff work hard to make children and their parents feel relaxed in the school environment. Home visits prior to the start of the school year enable the new children to meet their teacher in familiar surroundings. Both staff and parents value the system.

39. All staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. Adults quickly address any instances of unacceptable behaviour in a sensitive and positive manner. The staff praises good effort, manners and work. Parents feel the school promotes high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes.

40. Children with special educational needs are well supported by staff who take care to offer them good levels of guidance. Children for whom English is not their mother tongue are also well supported through the provision of additional staff. Equality of opportunity for all children is an important consideration for the staff.

41. The school follows the County guidelines for child protection. A staff member is designated responsible for this area and, along with the headteacher, has followed the appropriate training. All the staff are aware of their role and have received some training on this aspect of the children's welfare.

42. Appropriate health and safety procedures are in place. There are a sufficient number of trained first aiders and first aid boxes are well stocked. All staff are very conscientious in their duty of care and are vigilant in ensuring the health, safety and general well being of the children. Problems are dealt with in a sensitive manner and any feedback to parents is given in a discreet manner.

43. Children help to self-register at the start of a session by sticking their cloakroom badge on the wall chart by the classroom. Teachers sit here and mark the official registers, at the same time greeting the children and parents. This gives parents the opportunity to speak to teachers at the start of the session and helps them to understand the importance of regular and punctual attendance. The system is good and works well. Staff monitor children's attendance daily and any unexplained absence of more than three days is followed up. Most parents are conscientious about informing the school of any reasons for absence. The school has worked hard to improve its attendance levels which are now good.

44. Children attending the nursery transfer to a large number of primary schools. The school establishes links with many of these and children visit their new school during the summer term. This helps the transition process.

Partnership with parents and the community

45. The headteacher promotes a strong commitment to effective home school partnership. Parents feel very welcome in school and find the staff approachable and helpful.

46. The useful school prospectus provides parents with details of the ethos and daily routines of the school. This is published in English and Urdu, to ensure all families have access to the necessary information. The initial home visit is valued by parents and enables staff to become more familiar with a child's background before they start at the school.

Regular newsletters are sent home and these help parents to keep up to date with school events. Bilingual staff members are always available to interpret for parents of Asian heritage when they need to speak to staff. Parents feel well informed about the progress their children make. They value the Record of Achievement file and the end of year report.

47. Parents are welcome in the nursery. Most accompany their children into the classroom and some stay to talk to the staff. Most encourage their children to borrow activity packs from the library and to bring home a book to read. A number of parents who have helped regularly in the classroom are now furthering their own education. Some have followed a 'Parents as Educators' course and are now involved in training in the nursery as classroom assistants. Others have completed computer courses. A recent Family Numeracy Project run by Lancashire County Council was also held at the school. Funding for these courses is not permanent but they run whenever finance allows. The spacious and well-equipped Family Room is also used for the weekly Parent and Toddler Groups. Staff ensure parents are made to feel welcome at these meetings. For the younger children, this proves an ideal introduction to the nursery environment. The programmes actively involve parents in their children's education. They are aware of the school's aims and expectations and many reinforce the work of the school when they are at home. This improves children's rate of progress.

48. This is a well-regarded and popular nursery. The school makes use of the locality to support children's learning. Outings, in small groups, are made to local parks, a caf, and a return train trip is made to Colne. These links have a positive impact on children's attainment and progress. For many, it is their first experience of these aspects of English life. Some local businesses donate materials for use by the nursery in connection with a specific project.

49. Well established links are maintained with colleges of further education and local secondary schools. Students attend regularly on work placements from these establishments and they help to provide children with individual support.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

50. The headteacher provides effective leadership and has created a strong sense of teamwork. Working with colleagues and governors, she provides a clear educational direction for the work of the school with a shared educational vision for the school's future.

51. The headteacher has been in post for twelve months and there has been a high turnover of staff since the last inspection. Nevertheless, the leadership and management have been effective in responding to the issues raised in the previous inspection. For example, the provision for outdoor activities has been a major area for development. An effective policy has been produced, staff have been trained and additional resources allocated. The quality of the provision

in this area has improved significantly and children are making faster progress.

52. The staff, led by the headteacher, regularly review teaching and curriculum development. Weekly staff meetings are used productively to plan work, update policies and discuss individual children's progress. All staff understand their roles and responsibilities and they carry them out enthusiastically and professionally. However, systems for monitoring the work of teachers and nursery nurses are informal. The headteacher works alongside colleagues and offers support and guidance. With the increased staff numbers since the last inspection, procedures to monitor the staff effectiveness and the general work of the school need to be agreed and formalized. Children's records are detailed and informative and they reflect a huge commitment of time on the part of teachers and nursery nurses who complete them. The records provide a valuable means of tracking individual children's progress but they need to be monitored to ensure there is a consistency of approach over all groups. At present there is no mechanism for measuring children's attainment on entry and one needs to be introduced.

53. Governors have a good level of involvement with the school. They meet regularly, discuss policies and procedures and provide guidance and support for the headteacher and staff. Communication systems used by the school are good. Parents feel well informed about all aspects of school life and commented very favourably on this during their meeting with inspectors.

54. The school development plan is a detailed and useful document. It plays a prominent role in guiding the future direction of the school. The identified priorities are being addressed and they are accurately costed. Progress towards achieving the objectives is regularly monitored by the headteacher and staff. This allows additional funds to be allocated where required.

55. The aims and values of the school are securely established and regularly reviewed. A positive ethos pervades all aspects of school life and relationships are excellent. All adults contribute to the stimulating learning environment, which encourages equal opportunities for all children. The school is very successful in this area. The current leadership is well placed to maintain the school's high quality of provision and to ensure it continues to improve.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

56. The school has sufficient suitably skilled and qualified teachers and nursery nurses, including those funded under section 11, to meet the demands of the nursery curriculum. However, staff acknowledge that their expertise in information technology is limited. The current staffing provision, which includes bilingual nursery nurses, to support those for whom English is an additional language, and the staffing provision for the children with special educational needs, are effective. They work as a mutually supportive, enthusiastic team demonstrating a clear commitment to planning, teaching,

organising and managing activities. Established procedures such as regular meetings ensure good lines of communication between all staff.

57. Comprehensive induction procedures are in place and new members of staff are given appropriate support and guidance to settle into school routines quickly. The informative staff handbook provides a useful reference for curriculum, organisational and emergency procedures. All students, who regularly provide assistance with a variety of tasks, receive an appropriate induction and an instructive handbook to enable them to make a worthwhile contribution to nursery life. Children benefit from this support.

58. Good appraisal arrangements are in place. They identify some of the training needs for staff. The school has a commitment to staff training and relevant courses and in-service training are well attended to update knowledge and skills. For example, a recent course on outdoor play has been beneficial to both the staff and the school. It stimulated debate, increased staff confidence and expertise and raised awareness of the variety of opportunities that could be offered in a well developed outdoor area. Many of the ideas have been incorporated in the recent policy for outdoor play. The practice of sharing with colleagues the expertise and knowledge gained on courses has a positive impact on children's learning and achievement.

59. The nursery accommodation is good both indoors and out. The internal accommodation provides a clean, well maintained, spacious, stimulating learning environment for young children. Adequate space is allocated to book corners, practical activities and imaginative and role play areas. The outdoor accommodation is good. The outdoor play area and grounds have been developed with care to provide a safe, secure and stimulating setting for physical development and other areas of the curriculum. Herb and wild life gardens, model canal and pulley system are recent additions. This area shows a big improvement since the last inspection and it now supports areas of the curriculum such as knowledge and understanding of the world.

60. The range of resources is good and of high quality. Books are attractive, well cared for and often used spontaneously. They reflect careful selection and choice. Some are dual language and many reflect life styles and other cultures in a positive way. The library service supplements the school book provision. Resources are well organised and this helps the teaching. All resources are well maintained, clearly labelled and easily accessible to staff and to children.

The efficiency of the school

61. The school does not have a delegated budget and the local education authority manages most of its funds. The limited money available is managed efficiently and spending plans are agreed following widespread consultation. Useful links with finance are identified in the school development plan, which is an effective framework for targeting the school's priorities. Resources bought are well deployed so they have maximum effect on children's learning. For example, computers are grouped so that more children can use them and they can be

adequately supervised.

62. Day to day management of the school's finances is good with responsibility shared between the headteacher and school secretary. There has been no recent audit of the school by the local authority but the additional funds raised by parents and friends of the school is audited annually. The school receives funding to support those children for whom English is an additional language. This is used to employ more staff and they have a positive impact on children's attainment and the progress that they make. The work of those staff employed under Section 11 funding is ably supported by all staff within the nursery who make equally valuable contributions in this area.

63. Additional part time staffing is allocated to support children with special needs. The NNEB appointed to the post is deployed well and contributes to the progress that children make. She provides individual language support and gives children the opportunity to consolidate their developing skills in this area.

64. Taking into account the children's attainment on entry, which is just below average, together with the quality of the education provided and the good progress children make, the school provides good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

Personal and Social Development

65. Attainment in personal and social development is in line with what is expected for their age. Most children are confident in the nursery. On arrival they are happy to leave their parents and are eager to explore all the activities planned for the day. They are able to make choices and most can select the activities they wish to undertake. Children are able to relate well to the staff, are respectful to all adults and other children and make special friends. Many can speak confidently and spontaneously to both adults and other children. All are able to work as part of a large group for story or music time, responding appropriately by listening and joining in with the story and songs. They can work successfully as individuals or as members of a small group. Most children can concentrate on tasks, listen carefully to instructions and can act on them. They work and play co-operatively, for example, when sharing the train track and trains fairly. Some children are becoming independent and can select appropriate tools and resources to use when working at the woodwork bench. They help to clear away at the end of activities. All treat the school environment with respect. Children behave very well both indoors and out. They are beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong and are able to respond pleasurably to praise and remorsefully to gentle correction. They are aware of the feelings of others and they are able to say they are sorry and try to make

amends.

66. Overall the children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. The excellent relationships between all adults and children enables them to develop confidence and build on the many experiences offered in the nursery.

67. Children's response to personal and social development is good. They are at ease with the routines of the nursery and are enthusiastic and responsive to all activities. They enjoy their work and some show examples of sustained concentration. This is evident during the activity with large blocks of ice, when they spent a long time watching the ice change and discussing what might be happening and why. Children were fully involved in the activity, co-operated well with each other and asked relevant questions. Some children showed greater confidence and independence as they continued the activity when the supporting adult left. All take a pride in their work and behave very well.

68. The quality of teaching in this area is always good. Staff have high expectations of children's personal and social development and promote these values throughout the school day. For example, they celebrate good behaviour during group time. All staff have excellent relationships with the children and have a good knowledge and understanding of their needs. They are especially aware of those who are reserved, shy and timid and ensure they are not overlooked. Staff are kind and patient and give children appropriate time to answer questions and develop confidence. All give ready praise and encouragement and show genuine pleasure at children's achievements.

69. Teachers planning is thorough and all the experiences and activities are well prepared, varied, imaginative and interesting for the children. Teachers regularly assess children's progress and their records are updated. Resources for learning are well maintained and accessible.
Language and Literacy

70. By the age of five, children's attainment in language and literacy is in line with that expected for their age. Standards are similar to those found in the school's first inspection report. Standards have been maintained in the intervening years, and the school is well set to achieve further improvement.

71. This area is given a suitably high priority within the nursery and good opportunities are provided to develop and practise the four elements and language, speaking, listening, reading and writing.

72. Most children are able to listen attentively to adults and to other children and they concentrate well. They are able to respond to instructions and pass on messages. When they come together at group time, most children are able to contribute to discussions and join in some of the nursery rhymes. A few are able to express themselves fluently and

enjoy describing the work they have completed during activity sessions.

73. Those children for whom English is an additional language are making rapid progress. Their competence in English is increasing as is their confidence. A great emphasis is placed on developing children's self esteem. Staff offer good role models and encourage them to try new words, offering ready praise.

74. Developing role-play is a very successful feature of the nursery. Children are able to express themselves imaginatively, regardless of their grasp of English. For example, one group built a fire engine using large wooden blocks and then drove themselves to the imaginary fire. They maintained their role for a long period and sensitive adult support and intervention ensured that their play remained purposeful and their language skills were extended.

75. The library area is an attractive feature of the nursery and many children choose books spontaneously. They know how to handle them with care and hold them up the right way. Some are able to retell familiar stories and use picture clues from the books. Their confidence with books is a particular strength. Most children are confident when using pencils but their control and their ability to write letters or names is less well developed. They know that writing can convey some meaning to the readers and they are keen to tell adults what their marks represent.

76. All children respond positively to this area of learning. They are attentive listeners who take a pride in their work. They show respect and care for the equipment they use, especially their books. Many tidy away readily and take responsibility for items of equipment.

77. A small group of children are identified as having special educational needs. The work set for them is at an appropriate level and they receive additional support from an NNEB assistant. They make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. For example, most are able to join in role-play activities with the rest of the group.

78. All other children of different abilities and backgrounds make good progress during their time in nursery. The activities planned by staff ensure that key literacy skills are consolidated in interesting and enjoyable ways. For example, story time is used successfully to encourage an appreciation of books as well as reinforcing the link between pictures, text and meaning. Children's good progress is aided by their effective use of time. Little is wasted and activities proceed at a brisk pace.

79. The quality of teaching is very good in almost seventy per cent of lessons. It is never less than satisfactory. All staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of children in this curriculum area. Activities are carefully planned and they engage children in conversation, often becoming involved in their role-play. For example, one group of children retold the story of Goldilocks. The adult became

a member of the bear family and helped to ensure that the play remained true to the original storyline, offering ideas and suggestions which refocused the learning. Staff also take opportunities to link the four elements of language. The story of Goldilocks was extended to allow children to produce their own books, making marks on each page to represent different parts of the story. Children's attainment and the progress they make increases with such skilled adult intervention and guidance. The quality teaching for children who have English as an additional language is equally successful. For example, during one lesson, a teacher worked with a group of bilingual children who were functioning at different language levels. They were talking about hot and cold and relating it to their own experiences. Each group member made a contribution and questions were asked in such a way that all were able to succeed. This increased their confidence and self esteem. The progress they make improves during such an activity. The additional staff allocated to support children with English as an additional language has a positive impact on the provision. They relate well to the children and can encourage them to try new vocabulary at their own levels.

80. Teachers plan thoroughly for this area of the curriculum and they meet regularly to review how effective they have been.

81. Individual records of children's progress are made and these are kept by teachers and nursery nurses. These provide valuable anecdotal evidence and the information is periodically transferred to record sheets which reflect the national guidelines. They are well used.

82. Although information is shared at regular staff meetings, no one has an overview of the individual records and this makes it difficult to measure the progress of the nursery group as a whole. This is an area which needs to be improved.

83. Resources such as books, writing materials and equipment for imaginative play, are of good quality. These have a positive impact on the standards of attainment. The library area is attractive and is well stocked with an appropriate range of fiction and non-fiction books.

Mathematics

84. By the age of five, children's attainment in mathematics is in line with the level expected of children at this age.

85. Most are able to count to ten and they can use number rhymes and songs to reinforce their understanding in this area. They can apply this knowledge in practical situations as, for example, when they count the number of children in their group.

86. Children recognise primary colours and they are able to match, sort and order different objects. Many can make simple comparisons and recognize "bigger" and "smaller" objects around the nursery. One group, for example, made their own books and they were able to decide how big or small the pictures would need to be to fit the front cover.

87. Children for whom English is an additional language demonstrate satisfactory levels of attainment in most areas of mathematics. Understandably, their ability to express themselves when using mathematical vocabulary is limited. However, they benefit from the practical activities offered and some show good levels of attainment when matching shapes and patterns following a plan.

88. A small minority of children shows well-developed mathematical skills. They are able to calculate simple subtractions using coloured blocks and they are confident when they use information technology.

89. All children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress.

90. Individual progress is recorded and children show good gains in their knowledge and understanding in the subject. For example, regular reinforcement activities are used at group-time to build on children's prior knowledge. They count familiar numbers and then move onto new ones using the cups or biscuits set out in a line as practical examples. Children respond very positively to the interesting and stimulating range of activities provided by the staff. Most show good levels of concentration. They remain at their tasks until they are completed and take a pride in showing what they have done to others.

91. The quality of teaching is good in half the lessons observed. In a quarter of lessons it is very good and is never less than satisfactory.

92. Staff plan the activities in great detail and they have a clear understanding of the skills they wish to focus on. They respond to the needs of individual group members and encourage them to work independently, solving problems for themselves. In one successful lesson, for example, a child was trying to match carpet tiles to recreate a pattern. This proved to be a complex operation involving different shapes, sizes and colours. The adult intervention guided the child's thinking and asked pertinent questions but did not offer a solution. Both the child's attainment and the progress he made improved following such an activity.

93. In the more ordinary teaching, some learning opportunities are missed. For example, sharing out books and equipment to group members provides a good opportunity to reinforce children's knowledge of number. In most groups this happened successfully but not in all.

94. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of children's needs in this area of the curriculum. They are well organized and provide a good balance between adult directed and self-chosen work.

95. Records are maintained of individual children's progress. They are kept regularly and are manageable. In their current form, they do not provide an overview of the group's level of

attainment. This makes it difficult to accurately measure progress that is made.

96. A good range of resources is used well to support children's learning. They are well deployed and children are able to get them for themselves. This improves their independence.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

97. Children's attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is in line with the levels expected for their age. Their attainment in aspects of technology and construction is particularly good.

98. Many can talk about scientific processes such as heating and cooling when they work in the sand and water area. For example, they can describe how blocks of ice change their characteristics when they become warm and how adding salt brings about change. They are able to make good observations and then describe what they have seen.

99. Most children are able to talk about their local area. They describe visits they have undertaken and are confident when discussing their family and friends. The majority knows about the shops in Nelson and what different ones provide. They can talk about past and present events and how their lives changes as they get older. Some can talk about other parts of the world, relating what they have seen in books to practical experiences in nursery. For example, a desert landscape set out in the sand tray was then contrasted with a scene from Antarctica arranged in the water area. They select pictures from books, which represent the different climates.

100. Attainment levels in construction and technology are particularly good. Children are competent when using tools and cutting equipment. They handle them safely. For example, many are able to make wheeled trolleys. They handle hammers and nails safely and skilfully, joining materials with a good degree of accuracy. Most children use computers successfully. They have a good awareness of the cursor and the mouse and understand that they can change images on the screen.

101. All groups of children, including those with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in this area of learning. The curriculum is well organised and provides a wide range of experiences. Skilful adult intervention supports progress by making sure that children's play remains purposeful. For example, one group of children was playing with blocks of ice in a water tray. At first they found it difficult to understand how the ice could change. The adult working with them provided practical examples and asked open-ended questions to ensure that their knowledge and understanding increased during this session. Their progress is rapid on such occasions.

102. The quality of teaching was good in all the lessons observed. Activities are well prepared and planned. Adults become actively involved in the practical sessions and work at a brisk pace. They ask questions which match each child's needs and set them a suitable level of challenge. For

example, bilingual children are asked questions in both English and their mother tongue. This helps to ensure they stay totally involved in the activity and achieve success.

103. Teachers subject knowledge is sound in most aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world and this means that lessons are productive and well organized. Staff are less proficient in information technology skills and this is an area that needs to be improved. The school provides a broad curriculum in this area which meets the requirements of the national guidelines. However, the school's written policy does not yet reflect the Desirable Outcomes for nursery education and it needs to be updated.

104. Teachers' records for this area are detailed and are used effectively when discussing the next stage of planning. Teachers meet daily to evaluate the success of their work. Suitable resources are available to successfully deliver the elements required for knowledge and understanding of the world. They are well maintained and accessible.

Physical Development

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

106. Indoors, children experience many activities which help them to develop and improve their manipulative skills. Most children are able to hold tools and resources correctly. Many use paintbrushes with increasing control and skill to paint pictures of their families. Some children hold pencils with a correct grip when attempting to write their name or put their marks on paintings and models. Crayons and felt pens are used with confidence to draw pictures of rainbows and some children hold scissors in a correct grip to snip and cut out pictures. They can use construction kits with dexterity to make fire engines and towers.

107. Outdoor play is a regular feature of the nursery and most children can run and jump with good co-ordination and skill. Many children can climb onto the climbing frame and a few confident children can climb up the ramp, across the bridge and slide down the other side. Many children have a good awareness of space and others as they pull and push wheelbarrows of leaves around the playground. Some of the children have early games skills. They can throw and catch large balls with a good degree of accuracy whilst others can roll and kick large balls.

108. Children's progress is never less than satisfactory and mostly it is good. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. The wide variety of activities provided for each skill, for example, balancing activities, enables them to build on their experience and develop confidence.

109. Children's response to physical development is good. Children enjoy the physical area of learning, joining in all the activities with great enthusiasm. They respond well and are highly motivated. When working with tools and equipment children work quietly, listen to instructions carefully and

share resources fairly. Most concentrate on activities for an appropriate length of time. For example, children working with scissors stayed at the activity, cut the picture out carefully and then stuck their pictures into a book

110. The quality of the teaching is always good. All staff have a very good understanding and knowledge of the needs of young children and plan well for physical skill development both indoors and out. Activities are well managed with the adult role clearly focused on the skill to be developed. For example, children painting pictures of sunflowers are taught to hold their brushes carefully as they paint with different colours. Clear coaching points are given to children to hold pencils correctly when writing their names on their work. Outdoors, each day a variety of challenging and imaginative activities are provided for the children. For example, the adult working with a group of children on the climbing frame stayed with the children coaching and encouraging them until they achieved success. Ready praise increased children's confidence and encouraged them to think of different ways to safely climb along, up and down. The teaching of outdoor activities has improved since the last inspection. Planning is more detailed and resources are better.

111. All children have equal access to all activities. Staff are aware of those who need extra help and guidance and ensure that the children for whom English is an additional language clearly understand the skills to be developed.

112. A comprehensive policy for outdoor provision and organisation is in place and staff effectively plan for the use of the outside area. Adults are suitably deployed to support and teach. All staff keep regular assessments of children's achievement and progress and use them to organise the next stage of the work.

113. The school has good accommodation both indoors and out for the development of physical skills. The outdoor area has been developed with care to provide a safe, challenging and imaginative area to support and extend physical development.

114. The school is well resourced to support physical development. All resources are well maintained and stored appropriately both indoors and out.

Creative Development

115. By the age of five, children's achievement in the creative area of learning is in line with levels expected for their age. Children are given access to a wide range of media, materials and tools. They can use paper, glue and collage materials to make hat bands and texture pictures. The children enjoy experimenting with dough and they are able to mould, roll and shape pretend cakes and pizzas. Children enjoy painting and drawing. They can use brushes well and are able to express themselves in paint. They can select various colours for different objects in their paintings and many observational paintings are good, with recognisable images of sunflowers being produced. Children can mix red and yellow powder paint successfully to make orange paint and many can recognise and name the primary colours such as red, yellow and

blue, in English or their mother tongue. A few children can name the secondary colours of green and brown. Most children are able to sing tunefully and can clap to a simple rhythm. They are familiar with a good range of rhymes and songs, which they are able to perform with success and enthusiasm. Many children can express their ideas through role play. They can play imaginatively and co-operatively in the role play area, for example, when enacting the story of the three bears or when making an ice terrain in the water tray.

116. Children make good progress in most aspects of creative development. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Children's attitudes towards their learning are positive. They respond with enthusiasm to the activities provided and are eager to complete tasks. They take pride in their work and are appreciative of the achievement of others. They show good levels of concentration and most are able to share tools and materials and take turns fairly. They co-operate well with each other, especially in the role play area, for example, when a large group of children decided to go on an imaginary train to Blackpool illuminations. The key roles of train driver, mother and father were shared equally. All children behave well.

117. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and in over 80 per cent of the lessons it is good. Teachers planning is thorough and the activities provided are well prepared, varied, imaginative and interesting. Adults are enthusiastic teachers and some skilfully transmit their enjoyment of music and singing to the children. Others work carefully with the children showing them the correct way to hold pencils, felt pens and paintbrushes to achieve success. Ready praise and encouragement is given and adults demonstrate genuine pleasure at the children's achievements. For example, they invite children to retell stories they know and then applaud their efforts.

118. All children have equal access to a wide range of creative activities including children with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Care is taken to ensure that children with limited English fully understand the skill to be developed.

119. Resource provision is good. Children have access to a wide range of good quality materials. A large amount of children's work is effectively displayed throughout the nursery. These bright displays celebrate achievement in creative development and in other areas of the curriculum and reflect the multicultural nature of the nursery.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

120. The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors who:-

- ú Observed 49 teaching activities.
- ú Interviewed the Chair of Governors, headteacher, teachers, nursery nurses and support staff.
- ú Held discussions with parents accompanying children to school.
- ú Talked to children about the activities they were undertaking.
- ú Examined school documentation, curriculum plans, records of children's work.
- ú Arranged a pre inspection meeting with parents, providing an opportunity for them to express their views (26 attended).
- ú Analysed the written replies to the parent questionnaires. (73 responded)

DATA AND INDICATORS

121. 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	55	0	7	N/A

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked each week	179

Average class size: 16

Financial data

Financial year: 1997/98

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Total Income	6983
Total Expenditure	6983
Expenditure per pupil	133
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 110

Number of
questionnaires
returned:

73

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strong ly agree	Agre e	Neith er	Disag ree	Strong ly disagr ee
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	40	56	3	1	-
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	51	47	1	-	-
The school handles complaints from parents well	22	53	18	-	-
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	38	51	10	1	-
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	34	49	10	3	-
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	38	52	5	1	-
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	34	49	11	1	-
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	33	53	8	1	-
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	38	55	5	-	-
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	38	51	6	-	-
My child(ren) like(s) school	73	27			