

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Walton Lane Nursery School**  
Nelson

LEA area : Lancashire

Unique Reference Number : 119079

Headteacher : Mrs Audrey Wilson

Reporting inspector : Mr Peter Noden  
T11225

Dates of inspection : 27th - 28th January 1998

Under OFSTED contract number: 508881

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 :	L.E.A Nursery School
Age range of pupils :	3 - 4
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Walton Lane Nelson Lancashire BB9 8BP
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Appropriate authority :	Lancashire
Name of chair of governors :	Mr David Hardacre

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Mr D. Heath - Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils` welfare Partnership with parents and community Equal opportunities
Ms L.Short - Team Inspector	Personal and Social Development Mathematics Creative Development	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Teaching The curriculum and assessment Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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## **Main findings**

- 1 Walton Lane Nursery School is a very successful school. The children benefit from a high quality of education which has many outstanding features.

### **Standards**

- 2 By the end of nursery education the children's overall attainment is likely to exceed national expectations in all of the areas of learning. The attainment of most children is on target to exceed the national expectation in language and literacy, mathematics, their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their physical and creative development. All children, including those with any identified special educational needs, make good progress from a range of different starting points, towards all of the nationally recognised learning outcomes for children on their entry to compulsory education.
- 3 Children's attitudes to learning are very good. Relationships are of a very high standard, with children responding to the excellent examples provided by all staff members working in close harmony. The quality of provision for the children's personal development results in their deep interest in all activities, and in being able to accept responsibility from a very early age. Nearly all children exceed the national expectations for their personal and social development by the time they are ready to leave the nursery, with all making good progress in this area of learning. Children enjoy coming to school, their attendance is very good and the standard of their behaviour is exceptionally high.

### **Quality of education provided**

- 4 The high quality of teaching is a major strength of the school. All staff have high expectations for children's attainment. Their teaching methods, organisation and management of the children's learning are excellent, based on a deep understanding of how young children learn and make progress.
- 5 The rich curriculum is broad, balanced and very successfully promotes the children's intellectual, physical and personal development. Children are provided with an imaginatively presented range of activities and resources which take full account of the nationally recognised 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning on Entering Compulsory Schooling'.
- 6 Procedures for assessing children's attainment are good. However, the valuable information obtained from assessments made is not always used to best effect in planning and when grouping children. The current 'Record of Achievement' does not at present cover all the areas of learning. Ongoing day-to-day assessment is very effectively used to inform future teaching.

### **The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

- 7 Promotion of the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a major strength of the school. Parents expressed strong support for the values and attitudes which the school promotes. The children demonstrate exceptional ability for their age to reflect on their own experiences, feelings and ideas, and those of others. Their social skills are of a very high order, and children very quickly learn the difference between right and wrong. A strong feature of the school is the way in which the children celebrate cultural diversity.

- 8 The school makes very good provision for promoting the children's welfare. Monitoring of children's progress, behaviour and attendance is good. Very effective measures are in place to achieve the exemplary behaviour which is evident. A comprehensive programme, often involving parents, promotes the health and general well-being of the children. The school provides a focal point for the local community, and the partnership with parents is outstanding. Such liaison is a high priority for the governing body.

### **Efficiency**

- 9 The headteacher provides excellent leadership to create a team committed to high standards of attainment. Together, the governing body and headteacher, provide very clear educational direction for the work of the school with a shared vision for the school's future. There is a sense of common purpose amongst staff, parents and governors which creates united support for curriculum development and high standards. The headteacher is strongly supported by all staff and parents and by a committed governing body. Many governors have long, close and beneficial connections with the school and are voluntarily and practically involved in its day-to-day functioning. Teaching and curriculum development are very effectively monitored and evaluated.
- 10 The school is very successful in achieving the high ideals expressed in its aims for all children, including those with special educational needs, to reach their full potential, and to respect the backgrounds and cultures of others.
- 11 The school works very effectively towards the relevant priorities and realistic targets outlined in a clear, useful and practical school development plan. Progress towards these targets is monitored carefully, but insufficient use is made of evaluative measures, with quantitative data where appropriate, to assess the impact of initiatives on standards attained. A positive ethos, which reflects a deep commitment to high achievement, permeates all aspects of school life, with excellent role models set by all staff. Within this ethos, equality of opportunity for all children, including those with any special educational needs, is provided. Relationships of a very high order underpin all aspects of school life. All statutory requirements are met.
- 12 The highly effective teamwork, which is one of the outstanding features of the school, makes full use of a wide range of staff expertise and experience. Accommodation is limited in size, but a rich and stimulating environment celebrates the high levels of the children's attainment. This, and the excellent range of resources, are used to their maximum potential. The school benefits from, and capitalises on, an outside teaching area which has been imaginatively developed to provide an outstanding resource for children's learning. Financial controls and school administration are unobtrusive, efficient and effective.
- 13 In relation to its context, income and available resources, the school provides very good value for money in terms of the educational standards achieved and the quality of education provided.

## **Key issues for action**

- 14 The governing body, headteacher and staff should:
- \* make more effective use of assessment information when planning, and when grouping children;
  - \* extend the present children's 'Records of Achievement' to include all of the areas of learning;
  - \* assess the impact of initiatives on standards attained by incorporating more evaluative measures, with quantitative data, where appropriate, in the development planning process.

## **Introduction**

### **Characteristics of the school**

- 15 Walton Lane Nursery School is situated in Nelson, Lancashire, and provides part-time education for 80 children (38 boys and 42 girls) aged from 3 - 4. There are two teachers, including the headteacher who has a full-time teaching commitment, and two full-time nursery assistants. Another full-time nursery assistant supports children with special educational needs. One child has a statement of special educational need, three are in the process of being assessed and eight other children are identified as needing some form of special educational support. Increasing numbers of pupils attend the school who come from Chinese, West African and Asian backgrounds and from second and third generation Anglo Asian families. All children come from homes where English is the first language. The proportion of boys and girls is broadly equal, although nine more girls than boys attend the morning sessions and five more boys than girls attend in the afternoons.
- 16 Ten percent of the children have attended playgroups prior to entry to nursery school. The school serves a wide and varied catchment area which extends from the centre of Nelson to Nelson moors. Unemployment in the area is considerably above the national average. Attainment on entry reflects the full range of ability, but with some 15 percent of the children having some form of special educational need, particularly with regard to immature language and speech.
- 17 The school aims to provide a happy, secure and stimulating environment, and activities in which each child, including any with special educational needs, can develop his or her potential to the full. The school's prospectus states that learning should start from the child's existing attainments. The school's aims emphasise the development of each child's intellectual, physical, emotional, moral, social and cognitive skills, and the need for all children to respect the backgrounds and cultures of others. Positive relationships between children and adults are stressed, as is the need to enable children to learn how to make choices. The governing body places high priority on close liaison with parents and links with the community.

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	87
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**

- 18 By the end of nursery education the children's overall attainment is likely to exceed national expectations in all of the areas of learning. The attainment of most children is on target to exceed the national expectation in language and literacy, mathematics, their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their physical and creative development. All children, including those with any identified special educational needs, make good progress from a range of different starting points, towards all of the nationally recognised learning outcomes for children on their entry to compulsory education.
- 19 In language and literacy, the children are able to listen attentively, and to use a growing vocabulary with increasing fluency. They enjoy and respond well to stories and handle books carefully, recognising that words and pictures carry meaning. Most children recognise their own names and other familiar words, and some are beginning to associate sounds with words and letters. Many are beginning to write accurately their own names and some familiar words and letters.
- 20 Most of the children are developing a good mathematical vocabulary using phrases such as 'bigger than' and 'smaller than' in their activities, and they can name and describe shapes such as square, circle, rectangle and triangle. They can match, order and count accurately using everyday objects. Many children can recognise, use and write numbers up to 10 successfully. Some of the more able children are confident in using their developing mathematical understanding to solve simple practical problems.
- 21 During activities which relate to the area of their knowledge and understanding of the world, the children talk confidently about themselves, their families, and past and present events in their own lives. They talk readily about their environment, and explore the nature of new materials very effectively: for example the ingredients they used when making porridge as part of their work on the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. Children show high levels of skill when cutting, joining, folding and building in a range of different activities. Many children are very confident when using the computer and know how to 'drag a mouse' and 'click' on to the programme of the game chosen, demonstrating a high level of attainment.
- 22 The children attain good standards and make good progress in their physical development. They move confidently and imaginatively in dance, showing increasing control, coordination and mobility. When participating in physical activities the children develop a good awareness of space and of other children. They demonstrate increasing control when using tools such as pencils, crayons, brushes and scissors in construction work.
- 23 In the creative area of learning children explore to a good standard, sound, colour, texture, form and space. They make good progress in art, music, dance and in imaginative play. The children demonstrate high levels of confidence and skill when choosing appropriate material, tools and musical instruments to communicate their ideas and feelings.

## **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

- 24 The personal and social area of learning very effectively permeates all of the work within the nursery. The staff are very successful in meeting all of the school's aims with regard to the children's personal and social development. Children settle quickly into nursery routines and their attitudes to learning are very good, being rooted in their involvement in learning.
- 25 Children's behaviour is exceptional. The ethos of the school engenders good behaviour, with excellent role models set by all staff. Children quickly develop an understanding of right and wrong, and of how to express their feelings. They take turns and share with other children. Children are given opportunities to accept responsibility and to develop autonomy. They show initiative through making choices and they take responsibility: for example they know that when they hear taped music it is time to tidy away and do this willingly.
- 26 Relationships between children, parents, voluntary helpers and staff are of a very high order. Children's co-operative and collaborative play is of a very high standard for their age. The attitudes of staff towards children are of the highest order, respecting children's contributions in discussion, work and effort.
- 27 People involved in the life and work of the school make voluntary contributions and the school uses different cultures in the community to enrich opportunities for children to develop respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs. For example, Chinese New Year was celebrated by staff and children learning a greeting and Chinese writing. They learned about the traditions and decorations, and tasted a great variety of food generously prepared and donated by the family of one of the children. The school also contributes to the life of the community with performances at Christmas and a garden party in summer; and children's work is exhibited in the local agricultural show.

## **Attendance**

- 28 Children enjoy coming to the school; they accept the responsibility of self-registering, using a simple system which is also educational. Attendance at the school is good and the interesting lessons start on time. The school registers are well-kept and are immediately available if required.

## **Quality of education provided**

### **Teaching**

- 29 The quality of teaching is a major strength of the school. Teaching is consistently very good in all areas of learning. It is never less than good and 87 percent of the teaching seen was very good or better. The high quality of teaching is based upon the teachers' good subject knowledge of the curriculum for children under five years of age, and their deep understanding of how children learn and make progress.
- 30 All staff have high expectations of children's attainment; and their methods, organisation and management of children's learning are excellent. Teachers and nursery nurses plan and organise activities and work very effectively together. Their teamwork is an outstanding feature and a joy to observe, being highly enjoyable and motivating for both children and others helping in the nursery. It exemplifies their enthusiasm and the high quality of their working relationships.

- 31 Activities are well-planned with a very good match of activity to the intended learning, and they build on previous learning. The excellent links between activities show a topic approach to planning being used to optimum advantage. Teachers have high expectations for work and behaviour and make sure children understand what is expected of them; and this, together with the high level of appropriate intervention, motivates and inspires children. The teachers' use of very good questioning and encouragement through positive feedback and praise, empowers all children to participate. Children are encouraged very effectively to work autonomously.
- 32 The very good use of questioning and discussion is also used to assess and extend children's learning. Records are kept of children's involvement and attainment in activities. However, the assessment information is not always used to best effect when grouping children, or in planning to focus on the range of differing abilities and to make learning more manageable.
- 33 Time is used very well and lessons are well-paced and structured. The accommodation is imaginatively used and all activities are resourced very well.
- 34 The excellent relationships amongst all staff, children, and with parents and voluntary helpers, underpin the high quality of teaching.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

- 35 The nursery provides a broadly based, well-balanced and rich curriculum which, through the cross-curricular topic approach to planning, provides continuity of learning. The curriculum very successfully promotes children's intellectual, physical and personal development and is planned to take into account the backgrounds and experiences of the children. Children are provided with an imaginatively presented range of activities and resources which take full account of the nationally recognised 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning' in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and for their physical and creative development.
- 36 Through the use of ongoing assessment, children are given equal access to a range of activities which are planned to meet individual needs. The curriculum very effectively meets the requirements of children identified as having special educational needs. Curricular provision is enriched through the toy library. Parents are actively involved in the nursery and well-informed to support their children at home and to extend the work done in the nursery. There is very good provision for children to learn about cultures other than their own. They are very well-prepared for the next stage of education.
- 37 Procedures for assessing children's involvement and attainment are good. Attainment is monitored in each area of the nursery, and the information gained is available to all staff in their weekly planning meetings. Ongoing day-to-day assessment is used very effectively to inform teaching. However, the valuable assessment information gained is not always used to best effect in planning and grouping children. A 'Record of Achievement' is maintained for each child and provides a record of attainment and progress. This record does not at present cover all areas of learning.

## **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

- 38 The promotion of the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a major strength of the school. During their meeting, and in their questionnaire, parents expressed strong support for the values and attitudes which the school promotes.
- 39 The children demonstrate exceptional ability for their age to reflect on their own experiences and ideas, and those of others. Excellent opportunities are provided for spiritual development during most activities, and particularly in whole school gatherings, held towards the end of morning and afternoon sessions, which celebrate individual and group achievements. Within many areas of learning, and especially in the rich environment of the outdoor teaching area, children develop a strong sense of awe and wonder about the beauty of the natural world. Here, the children are very effectively introduced to the changing seasons and to the exploration of wildlife.
- 40 Attitudes of care and concern for others permeate the curriculum and community life of the school, with the children quickly learning the difference between right and wrong. They relate very positively to other children and adults and co-operate very effectively when working in pairs or in groups. A framework of simple rules is readily understood and accepted as being fair, for example, when only a limited number of children can take part in an activity. From an early age they are encouraged to accept responsibility for themselves and each other and respond exceptionally well to the trust placed in them. Children wait patiently for their turn in activities. Their behaviour in all areas of school life is exemplary.
- 41 Good opportunities for cultural development are provided in many areas of the curriculum. School themes often emphasise the children's cultural backgrounds through traditional stories, nursery rhymes, dance and singing games. Such themes are also effectively supported by educational visits. A strong feature of the school is the way in which the children celebrate the cultural diversity of the community. During the inspection they celebrated Chinese New Year in a 'Chinese restaurant', which was the focus for some of their imaginative play that week. In the 'restaurant' they were introduced to Chinese food prepared by a parent, and also to Chinese writing and various utensils. Similar activities also mark Christian festivals and major festivals from other faiths and cultures.

## **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

- 42 The school makes strong provision for the children's educational and personal support, guidance and welfare. The children's academic work is carefully monitored to ensure that all children make good progress. Together, the teachers and support staff provide very effectively for the children's personal development by means of close contact throughout the day. There are effective arrangements for the induction of new children, and the school provides additional support by organising home visits prior to the children starting school. The school gives details of the planned curriculum, and new parents are invited to stay in school with their children. The school is quick to identify children who have special educational needs, and the children are well-supported within the class group.
- 43 The school has an imaginative self-registration system which is simple and effective. The attendance records are kept well, and attendance levels are monitored regularly.

- 44 There are very effective measures to promote the children`s outstandingly good behaviour. All staff are aware of child protection procedures, and the school follows the Local Authority guidelines. It arranges a comprehensive programme of visits from various outside agencies, including the nurse, to promote the health and general welfare of the children.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 45 The school has established an excellent partnership with parents and the local community which makes an important contribution to the children's attainment and personal development. New parents are invited to stay with their children if they wish. Parents are welcomed into the school at any time, and they are invited to meet the governors at a monthly clinic.
- 46 Parents and children are made welcome at the beginning of every session, the teachers are approachable and good relationships between the staff, governors, children and parents are immediately evident. There is a sense of fun about the school and parents provide refreshments for special occasions. Parents and ex-parents are encouraged to help in school by talking to children, listening to reading, helping children with the computer and running the toy library. These parents are given clear guidelines so that their help is consistent and effective. The parental help in the school provides valuable additional support.
- 47 The school is good at providing well-presented and interesting booklets, including the school brochure covering all aspects of school life. The information provided includes teaching plans and advice on how parents can reinforce children's learning.
- 48 Parents are invited to 'Progress Days', giving them an opportunity to see their child's work and to discuss progress with the teacher. The school provides a 'Record of Achievement' file for each child.
- 49 The parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show overwhelming support for the school and its work.
- 50 There is a 'Friends of Walton Lane Nursery School' association which is well-supported by the parents, and substantial funds are raised to provide important extra equipment and books for the benefit of the children.
- 51 The school receives students from the local colleges; and local secondary school pupils spend their work experience at the school. There are good community links with various agencies which include the police, fire brigade, the local vicar, the local `Neighbourhood Watch,` children's entertainers and library staff.
- 52 The school recently worked with the Probation Service in a pilot scheme as part of community service sentences. The school designed plans for pieces of equipment or projects which were then built. This scheme has proved to be a major success, resulting in the transformation of the school`s outdoor area, providing an excellent learning resource for the children. The school also designed items of internal equipment and furniture which have been manufactured to a high standard.

## **The management and efficiency of the school**

### **Leadership and management**

- 53 The headteacher provides excellent leadership to create a team which is committed to high standards of attainment. Together, the governing body and headteacher provide very clear educational direction for the work of the school with a shared educational vision for the school's future.
- 54 There is a sense of common purpose amongst staff, parents and governors which creates united support for curriculum development and high standards. A committed governing body contains many governors with long, close and beneficial connections with the school, who are voluntarily and practically involved in the school's day-to-day functioning. All share a commitment to high standards of attainment.
- 55 Teaching and curriculum development are very effectively monitored and evaluated. Teachers and nursery nurses regularly observe, monitor and evaluate each other's teaching. Regular and careful evaluations of the school's work are systematically carried out at weekly staff meetings. Full and detailed job descriptions, which have been discussed and agreed, are available for all members of the teaching and non-teaching staff. Senior management responsibilities are effectively carried out by the headteacher and by the other teacher who makes a very strong contribution to overall curriculum management. Respective roles and responsibilities are fully understood, with very clear lines of communication in place.
- 56 The school has a clear set of aims which express high ideals for staff and children. Central to these aims is for all children, including those with special educational needs, to achieve their full potential, and for children to respect the background and cultures of others. The school is very successful in achieving these aims, and also in developing strong, close and productive links with parents and the community, which is a priority for the governing body.
- 57 The school works very effectively towards relevant priorities and realistic targets. These are outlined as part of a clear, useful and practical school development plan. Curriculum priorities for this year include review of the school's special educational needs Code of Practice, and of technology, science and physical education policies. Progress towards targets is monitored carefully by the headteacher and governing body. However, insufficient use is made of evaluative measures, with quantitative data where appropriate, to assess the impact of initiatives on standards attained.
- 58 A positive ethos permeates all the school's work, and reflects a common commitment to high standards of achievement. A rich and stimulating environment celebrates the high levels of the children's attainment. Outstanding relationships underpin all aspects of school life. Within this ethos equality of opportunity for all pupils is provided. Any statutory requirements are met.

## **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 59 The headteacher, teacher and three nursery nurses are very effectively deployed to meet the demands of the curriculum for children under the age of five. Staff are well-qualified and experienced to teach nursery aged children and one of the nursery nurses is employed to support children with special educational needs. All teachers and nursery nurses have a deep understanding of how children learn, which greatly enriches the children's learning experiences and is a key contributory factor to the high standards achieved. Staff have detailed job descriptions and are appraised regularly. Staff levels are enhanced by nursery nurse students, work experience students from local schools, and by parents and volunteers. All work very effectively together and the quality of the team work is one of the outstanding features of the school.
- 60 The school is accommodated in a post-war prefabricated building. Accommodation, although restricted in size, is used imaginatively, and to maximum potential, to allow the curriculum to be taught effectively. The school benefits from an outdoor area which has been imaginatively developed and which provides a rich learning environment for children. The design of the outdoor area and resources is impressive. This includes a 'natural' area of wild garden and pond, a grassed play area with custom built resources, an 'adventure trail', a log cabin, miniature traditional 'gypsy' caravan, and an inviting and imaginatively designed arbour.
- 61 The range of learning resources is good and is of high quality. Resources are very well organised for effective delivery of all areas of learning. They are well-maintained, clearly labelled and are easily accessible to staff and to children.
- 62 Links with external agencies are good. The school has had the garden transformed, garden resources constructed and the exterior repainted as part of an initiative for the provision of services to schools through very successful links with the Probation Service within the context of Community Service sentences.

## **The efficiency of the school**

- 63 In the absence of a fully delegated budget the school has limited control of finances. Spending is largely confined to purchasing books, material and equipment, with the available budget greatly enhanced by parental donations and a range of fund raising events. Financial planning is clearly linked to the relevant educational priorities identified in the school development plan. The resources reflect wise decisions about the purchase of good quality resources. Some of the excellent equipment which is available to enrich the children's learning has been specifically designed by the headteacher and staff, and built through very productive use of community services.
- 64 The highly effective teamwork, which is one of the outstanding features of the school, makes full use of the good range of staff expertise and experience. Accommodation, although limited in size, is used to its maximum potential. The school capitalises fully on the outside teaching area which has been very imaginatively developed. This makes a highly significant contribution to the children's standards of attainment and their all-round development. A rich and varied range of imaginative resources is organised very efficiently. The use of these resources to support the children's learning makes a very strong contribution to the quality of education provided and the high standards achieved.

- 65 There has been no overall Local Authority audit of the school`s financial methods and systems, but the school fund accounts have been privately audited. This auditor`s report, made just before the inspection, was satisfactory. Internal school systems for financial controls and school administration are unobtrusive, efficient and effective.
- 66 In relation to its context, income and available resources the school provides very good value for money in terms of the educational standards achieved and the quality of education provided.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **Areas of learning for children under five**

#### **Language and literacy**

- 67 Most children attain standards in language and literacy which exceed national expectations for their age and they are likely to exceed the national expectation by the time they leave the nursery. All of the children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress towards the nationally recognised 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning'.
- 68 Children listen attentively to stories and participate confidently in role play, using a growing vocabulary with increasing fluency. Many use an increasingly conventional and accurate language structure. They enjoy and respond well to stories, with some children beginning to anticipate and predict the possible outcome of a story. The children were able to recall elements in the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' with accuracy. They handle books with increasing confidence, knowing that print runs from left to right, and understand that words and pictures convey meaning. Most children recognise their own names and familiar words and letters of the alphabet by shape and sound. Many are beginning to write their own names, and some familiar words, in a recognisable way, using pencils and crayons with increasing control.
- 69 As they work on a range of activities, children co-operate very successfully in pairs and in small and large groups. Attitudes towards books, stories, reading and writing are very good. Children particularly enjoy browsing through picture books, especially following a story they have enjoyed. They are often found deeply engrossed in books. The children's deep involvement in their learning activities results in exemplary behaviour. All children rapidly gain confidence in their abilities as they are encouraged to attempt to write for a variety of purposes.
- 70 At all times the children respond extremely well to the encouragement provided by the teachers, nursery nurses and parent helpers. The quality of teaching is very good, with clear objectives and excellent preparation of resources. Work is imaginatively presented, and staff stimulate and inspire children to high levels of concentration and achievement. Adults join in the activities and extend the children's learning very skilfully through careful questioning. For example, the adult intervention in the imaginative play in the 'Three Bears' House' and in the 'Chinese Restaurant' to extend vocabulary, was very successful.
- 71 The teamwork amongst the teachers and nursery nurses is excellent and their co-operation is a strong element in the children's positive attitudes and the progress they make. A rich, imaginative and varied curriculum leads children very successfully through work which enables them to move quickly towards the 'Desirable Learning Outcomes' for language and literacy by the age of five.
- 72 Although assessment is used very effectively to inform future teaching, the information about children's progress is not always used appropriately to group and match work to individuals. Work for pupils with special educational needs is, however, very appropriate to support the progress of these children. Work in language and literacy makes a very effective contribution to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **Mathematics**

- 73 Most children are likely to exceed national expectations for their age by the time they leave the nursery. All children, including those with special education needs, make good progress towards the nationally agreed `Desirable Outcomes for Children`s Learning` in mathematics.
- 74 Children count, recognise and write numbers to 10. Children can say how many more they need to add or subtract to solve simple addition and subtraction problems using objects: for example, toy spiders. They can match the number to sets of objects correctly.
- 75 Good use is made of every opportunity to introduce and extend appropriate mathematical language. Children are developing a good vocabulary for size and know the terms 'large', 'medium' and 'small'. They use 'small', 'smaller' and 'smallest' accurately. They can compare sizes and sort bears into sets according to size and colour in their imaginative play. They can talk about things they have found in the 'Bears` House' related to the size: for example, the three sizes of bowls, chairs and beds.
- 76 Children recognise and name correctly circle, square, rectangle and triangle in two or three dimensional shapes when sorting and during physical activities using specially made soft play equipment.
- 77 Children participate in, and enjoy, mathematical activities: their attitudes and behaviour are very good. They concentrate and persevere in all of the activities. Relationships amongst children are of very high standard and they co-operate well in groups, helping each other and sharing equipment.
- 78 The quality of teaching is very good: staff have a very good subject knowledge and understanding of how young children learn. Their teamwork and enthusiasm are outstanding features which motivate and produce high quality productive working relationships to the benefit of the children. Number work permeates all areas of the nursery and very effective use is made of resources and space.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

- 79 In the area of their knowledge and understanding of the world most children are exceeding national expectations for their age. They are well on target to attain standards which exceed the national expectations by the time they leave the nursery. From their attainment on entry, progress for all children towards the nationally recognised `Desirable Learning Outcomes` by the age of five is good. Children with any special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points.
- 80 Children talk confidently about themselves, their homes and families, and about past and present events in their lives. They talk readily about their environment, and are curious about the world around them. The children have a very good awareness and knowledge of other people and of other cultures. They enjoy activities which involve investigation, and explore the nature of new materials very effectively: for example the ingredients used when making porridge as part of their work on 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. In this work they noted how the ingredients changed rapidly when heated.

- 81 The children enjoy, and turn naturally to the computer to support their learning. Many children are very confident when using information technology and demonstrate a high level of attainment; they know how to 'drag a mouse' and 'click' on to the programme of the game chosen. With appropriate support, children with special educational needs use the 'touch-screen' successfully.
- 82 Very positive attitudes are acquired about the world around them. Children make a very good response to the teaching, are enthusiastic and confident when exploring new experiences, and persevere and concentrate well. They enjoyed the experience of tasting Chinese food as part of their work on the Chinese New Year. The children work exceptionally well in pairs and in small groups, co-operating well with each other and with adults. When participating in activities they take turns when necessary, and wait patiently. Behaviour is excellent at all times.
- 83 The quality of teaching in this area of learning is at least good, and is nearly always very good. Activities are very well-planned to build up the children's confidence, skills and knowledge. Teachers manage the learning very effectively to stimulate the children in an exciting and imaginative way. Through impressive teamwork, all of the adults, including parents helping in school, support and challenge the children to high levels of attainment. Teachers and nursery nurses have high expectations of the children and successfully extend their achievements through some excellent questioning.
- 84 The curriculum offered to the children is rich and varied and meets national recommendations for the under-fives. Assessment to inform future teaching is good and is used effectively. However, assessment to match work to individual needs is less effective and little evidence relating to this area of learning is included in the records of achievement. The children's learning is greatly enriched by visits locally and further afield. In the rich environment of the outside teaching area, children develop a strong sense of awe and wonder about the beauty of the natural world, and are most effectively introduced to the changing seasons.

### **Creative Development**

- 85 The attainment of the majority of the children is likely to exceed the national expectation for their age in the nationally agreed 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning' by the time they leave the nursery. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their creative development.
- 86 Children select and use a range of paintbrushes, pencils, crayons and other mark-making instruments when painting and drawing. They are competent in using glue sticks, cutters and scissors. Children name primary colours correctly and can recognise these on the labels around the nursery. Some can recognise and name secondary colours such as green, orange and the white or 'nearly white' of the porridge oats. They select and mix colours and are aware that the result is a different colour. When printing with leaves they select the colours which are representative of autumn, and choose appropriate colours for their paintings of bears and materials for collage. Children explore texture, and discriminate between, and comment on, the textures of different materials when making collages. They say, for example, that the materials feel rough, smooth, furry or lumpy and that dough is smooth and 'squashy.'

- 87 Children explore sound and are able to identify high and low sounds and demonstrate this knowledge through saying their own names in either high or low pitch. They sing well, knowing the tunes and words of familiar songs and rhymes, and accompany these with actions. They use instruments to represent and respond to the story of the 'Three Bears'. When using musical instruments spontaneously, children experiment with the sounds made and play successfully as part of a group. The children know the name of common percussion instruments such as triangle, tambour and maracas. Children respond to the taped music played which is used very effectively to indicate that it is time to tidy up their materials and equipment.
- 88 Children enthusiastically adopt roles of the different characters in a story, demonstrating increasing ability to use their imagination. In dance and movement they exhibit good ability to mimic the actions shown by an adult, and begin to incorporate their own ideas by introducing their own actions.
- 89 They can match the shapes when making jigsaws and make models using dough, cardboard boxes and other reclaimed materials. They observe and discriminate in smell, touch and feel, for example, when making porridge, noticing the texture before and after liquid was added: and before and after it was cooked. They recognised that it was hot because there was `steam` and noticed that you could smell the porridge cooking.
- 90 Children participate enthusiastically and with enjoyment. They demonstrate very positive attitudes and behaviour in creative activities. They become engrossed in their role play, and show a sense of joy when playing instruments, and interest and pride in their finished pictures.
- 91 Relationships amongst children are of very high standard and they co-operate well in groups, helping each other and sharing equipment.
- 92 The quality of teaching is very good, and staff have very good subject knowledge and a deep understanding of how children learn. Staff motivate children through careful planning of the topics and have developed very supportive relationships with children. Very effective use is made of resources and space both in the nursery and outdoor area.

### **Physical development**

- 93 All children build successfully on their previous physical attainments during their time in the nursery and make good progress. Children with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in running and moving with increasing confidence. When they leave the nursery most of the children are likely to exceed the national expectations for their age in their physical development.
- 94 Children move confidently and imaginatively in dance and movement, showing increasing control and accuracy. Good levels of skill are demonstrated as they run, jump, balance and climb. They follow directions well and demonstrate a good awareness of space, making sure that they do not touch or bump into others. In an activity involving miming movements they pretended very successfully to tiptoe, squelch, splash in mud, and say these words as they moved. Children handle a range of tools such as pencils, crayons, brushes and scissors well, and with increasing control, in an extensive range of construction activities.

- 95 The children's response to physical challenges is very good. Frequent laughter is a mark of their obvious enjoyment and pleasure in the exuberance of physical activity. They participate with total concentration and enthusiasm, co-operating well with each other and with teachers. Children learn to take turns, they accept simple rules as fair, and support and help each other. Even when they find the task difficult, children persevere with positive attitudes and excellent behaviour at all times.
- 96 The quality of teaching is very good and, on occasion, excellent. Teachers have high expectations for the children's attainment. Work is very well-planned with clear objectives which are often shared with the children. Teachers organise activities carefully to take into account the need to use interesting material and to introduce different small tools. The quality of the teachers' leadership is very good and imaginative; for example, where the instructions were sung to motivate the children. Adults inspire and encourage children; they intervene in activities using appropriate questions to challenge children to higher standards. Assessments of the children's achievements are made frequently and used effectively to inform future teaching.
- 97 A rich programme of work is planned and excellent and extensive use is made of the large interesting and stimulating outside teaching area. This area is an outstanding, natural and rich resource which is used very successfully for the children to investigate the mysterious, secret, but safe places. Here, they develop their skills of exploration and their physical skills of swinging, balancing and rolling to a good standard. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully promoted in this area of learning. For example, in creative dance, and when exploring the exciting environment, children reflect very effectively about their experiences. Cultural development is very successfully promoted in a range of dance activities. Excellent large equipment, and an extensive range of small tools, are used to very good effect enabling children to develop physical skills to a good standard.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **Summary of inspection evidence**

- 98 The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors, including the lay inspector, for four inspector days. The time spent inspecting lessons, sampling children's work, talking with children, and other inspection activities was more than twenty five hours. Thirty-nine inspection observations of teaching and learning were made and twelve other types of activity were carried out to provide inspection evidence. Meetings were held with the governing body, staff and parents prior to the inspection. The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school development plan and policy documents.
- 99 Activities were observed in all areas of learning within the nationally agreed curriculum for the under-fives. The behaviour of the children was observed inside the nursery and during outdoor activities. Discussions were held with the headteacher, teaching staff, nursery nurses, the site supervisor, the school clerk, members of the governing body and some parents.
- 100 Samples of past and present children's work representing the full ability range were scrutinised. Many discussions were held with children about the work they were doing. Planning, pupils' records and reports were also inspected. Photographs of previous work and activities were examined.
- 101 Attendance registers, budget figures and the audit report of school funds were examined. The internal accommodation, outdoor activity area and resources were inspected and reviewed by the whole team. The responses from forty-seven questionnaires (58.8% of those issued) were analysed in conjunction with comments made by parents. Ten parents attended the pre-inspection meeting, and their comments were taken into account and considered during the inspection.

## Data and indicators

### PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Nursery Unit/School	40	1	12	n/a

### TEACHERS AND CLASSES

#### Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

2

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

20

#### Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff

3

Total aggregate hours worked each week

97.5

Average class size:

20

### FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:

1996/97

£

Total Income (including money from fund raising)

9194

Total Expenditure

6189

Expenditure per pupil (full-time equivalent)

155

Balance carried forward to next year

3005

**PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:

80

Number of questionnaires returned:

47

**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	31	16	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	34	13	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	13	18	8	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	28	17	1	1	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	23	23	0	1	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	26	19	1	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	26	19	1	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	22	22	2	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	30	16	1	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	31	15	1	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	36	11	0	0	0