

INSPECTION REPORT

GILL BLOWERS NURSERY SCHOOL

Hockwell Ring Court, Levendale

LEA area: Luton

Unique reference number: 131175

Headteacher: Maxine Low

Reporting inspector: Robin Wonnacott
2787

Dates of inspection: 27 - 29 March 2001.

Inspection number: 170562

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery School
School category:	Other
Age range of pupils:	2 - 5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mossdale Court Levendale Luton
Postcode:	LU4 9JL
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Appropriate authority:	Luton
Name of chair of governors:	S. Roden
Date of previous inspection:	N/a

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2787	Robin Wonnacott	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it?
			Equal opportunities	The school's results and pupils' achievements
				How well are pupils taught?
				What should the school do to improve further?
				How well is the school led and managed?
9787	Vivienne Ashworth	Team Member		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12815	Andy McDowall	Team Member	Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Gill Blowers Nursery School was established in April 1999 when two nursery units gained school status and came under the management of one governing body. A headteacher was appointed who has been in post for just over a year. The two classes are situated in converted ground-floor flats of two high-rise blocks of flats, one in the Marsh Farm area and the other in the Hockwell Ring area of Luton. All the children come from the flats or the surrounding area. The school provides education for the equivalent of 50 children on a full-time basis. However, the majority attend on a part-time basis for either a morning or afternoon session, whilst seven children attend full-time. All the children are entitled to free school meals; this is a very high figure. Two children have statements of educational needs. Children enter the school as three-year-olds with levels of attainment that are much lower than that typically found for the age group. Just under a half of the children are not of United Kingdom heritage, over a quarter of the children are from the Caribbean community. The Hockwell Ring site has a small unit for children age two years, children who have had the advantage of this provision enter the school with levels of attainment that are higher than other children. This provision did not form part of this inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. The excellent leadership of the headteacher, supported by a very good and dedicated team of teachers and nursery nurses, has meant that a very successful school has been established in a relatively short period of time. High quality learning experiences are provided for children, and as a result they make at least very good, and often excellent, progress. The extensive range of adult help provided for children is used to very good effect. Many of the governors are new to the role but they are keen to be fully involved in the general management of the school. The governing body has established good procedures that enable it to fulfil all aspects of its role. As the school governors do not have responsibility for the school's total budget, no judgement is made about the value for money provided by this school.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Children make at least very good and often excellent progress as they move through the school.
- The headteacher provides the school with excellent leadership. All staff share her clear vision for the school.
- Teachers make excellent assessments of children's learning. These are used to very good effect to plan new learning.
- The school staff forms a very effective team, they are all clear about the school's aims and their consistent approach to children's learning is a major factor in the very good progress made by children.
- Relationships in the school are very good. Children from different cultures are successfully integrated.
- The school provides children with an atmosphere of love, care and hard work.
- Overall, behaviour throughout the school is very good. In sessions this has a positive impact on the way children learn.
- Excellent relationships have been established with parents. This adds to the children's learning, as parents feel included in the learning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

No major aspect of the school's work was identified as being in need of improvement. However, the report identifies a minor issue this is the need for further improvements to the outside play area on the Marsh Farm site.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the school's first inspection following its recognition as a school in 1999; hence no judgements have been made about its improvement.

STANDARDS

Children enter the school with standards that are considerably lower than those typically found for children who are three years old. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage of education, many children will reach the standard typical for the age group. A small number of the highest attaining children should reach a standard above that typically found for the age group. Children make at least very good, and often excellent, progress as they move through the school.

Children make excellent progress in developing their skills in reading and writing. Many of the children enter the school with very little experience of books. By the time they leave, the majority have a clear idea about the way that words in a book tell the story; they can point out where to find the name of the author and the title of a book.

In other aspects of their development, children make at least very good, and often excellent, progress. When they arrive at school many of the children find it difficult to play together and share materials. The many opportunities provided for this aspect of their development enables children to develop good social skills so that they learn how to work and play together. A small number of children enter the school with some limited understanding of numbers, the majority have no knowledge of the way numbers are used in life. Through careful teaching, including the very good use of number songs, children make excellent progress so that children can identify numbers up to 20; the highest attaining pupils are beginning to complete simple sums.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children's attitudes to work are excellent. In sessions children are keen to be involved in activities and they want to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in the school is very good. The children understand the school's simple rules. When children's behaviour is unsatisfactory it is well managed by teachers.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of children is very good. Relationships in the school are excellent. Children from different cultural backgrounds work well together in lessons. Children are encouraged to be very independent.
Attendance	Patterns of attendance at school are too variable. Children make the best

	progress when their attendance is regular. Late arrival of a small number of children also affects their learning.
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The positive relationships in the school play an important part in helping children to develop excellent attitudes to their work.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Not applicable	Not applicable

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

Overall, the teaching observed in the inspection was very good. During the inspection, twelve sessions or part sessions were observed. In all sessions teaching was judged to be good or better. In seventy-five percent of the sessions teaching was judged to be very good or better, that is in nine out of the twelve sessions. These are exceptionally high numbers. Evidence collected from the teachers' planning and from examining the children's folders indicates that over the longer period teaching is very good. Very good teaching was observed in both classrooms.

Observations were carried out in both a morning and afternoon session, these lasted for up to two and half-hours. In all sessions the teaching was excellently planned and adults were very clear about their different roles. Adults used very good questioning techniques to help pupils think carefully about answers. Careful evaluation of each session enabled teachers and support staff to use the information gathered about individual children to plan the next stage of learning. This approach works really well and has a major impact on the high levels of progress made by children.

All staff use agreed procedures in a consistent way, so that children understand how to behave in school. This has a major impact on their progress.

Evidence collected through examining the children's profiles and through examining teachers' records shows that children make at least very good progress as they move through the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provided by the school is very good. The teachers' planning makes very good use of new national guidance for nursery schools. The planning takes very good account of the needs of children in this school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall, provision is very good. Teachers and nursery nurses who help individuals with aspects of their work provide children with very good support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is very good. Opportunities for social development are excellent. Opportunities for spiritual, moral and cultural development are very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The arrangements for monitoring aspects of children's well-being and academic development are excellent.

Excellent records are kept on all aspects of the children's development. These records are used to set half-termly targets for each child. The information in the records is available to parents and this ensures that they are fully involved in their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides the school with excellent leadership. Her clear vision for the school has been effectively communicated to all staff and they share in the positive approach to children's learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Many of the governors are new to the role. They are developing good procedures that will enable them to hold the school to account for its actions. They are totally supportive of the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are excellent procedures for the school to evaluate its work. Staff undertake detailed evaluations of each teaching session and the information gathered has a positive impact on the next session of learning.
The strategic use of resources	The school governors make good use of the financial resources available.

The level of staffing in the school is very good. As well as good levels of teaching staff, the school has an extensive range of support staff. The school has a satisfactory range of suitable accommodation. However, the outside play area on the Marsh Farm site is too small and does not provide children with the range of opportunities required to develop their physical skills. Resources are generally satisfactory. The governors have not yet taken responsibly for the school's budget, but they have established effective procedures that will enable them to manage the school's finances efficiently.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are encouraged to do their best and they make progress in their learning. • The teachers and other adults are very friendly and always available to help. • Children with special educational needs are given very good support. • Children are helped to understand the appropriate way to behave; this helps with behaviour outside school. • Parents feel totally involved in their children's education. • Parents were totally supportive of the new headteacher and the improvements since her appointment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions should start on time. • The school should be open in the school holidays.

Parents returned 32 questionnaires. Twenty-eight parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector.

Evidence gathered during the inspection supports the very positive views identified by the parents. During the inspection sessions started on time, however, children were not always punctual.

OTHER INFORMATION

As no major weaknesses were identified through this inspection there will be no need for the governors to draw up an action plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. ***Overall, children enter the school with attainment that is much lower than that found nationally for children aged three years. Many children have very poor language skills and find it difficult to communicate with adults. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that by the end of the Foundation Stage (the Reception Year in school), all but a small number of children should have reached the expected level of attainment. A small number of higher attaining children will have reached a level of attainment above than that typically found for the age group. Children make at least very good and often excellent progress in their learning.***
2. When they enter school, the majority of children lack the self-confidence to explore their surroundings and they need the help and support of the school staff. The children's communication skills are underdeveloped; they find it very difficult to communicate even through gesture. Children have little understanding of number and no idea about counting. The limited experiences children have before they join the school restricts their ideas about their environment. Although a small number of children are able to use the outside play area effectively, their lack of self-confidence restricts their ability to explore the way they can move. Children have little knowledge of the songs often sung by three-year-olds and they have little understanding of popular nursery rhymes. Children who have had the benefit of being in the unit for two-year-olds on the Hockwell Ring site enter the school with higher levels of attainment than other children.
3. Children make excellent progress in developing their personal and social skills as they move through the school. All staff consistently develop independence in all children. Children are expected to clear away after an activity, they do this with little direct support from the adults. The adults encourage children to complete tidying up tasks and then praise them when they have been completed. The very youngest children are expected to care for themselves. When a new entrant threw her coat on the ground she was immediately asked by an adult to hang the coat on its hook; she did this with no fuss. During the inspection, children were consistently very enthusiastic about the activities they were undertaking. For example, a small group worked hard to produce a fruit salad for all the children. The group talked enthusiastically about the different fruits and were able to talk about fruit salads they had eaten at home.
4. Children make excellent progress in developing their speaking skills. When they first enter the school many of the youngest children respond to questions with one-word answers. During the inspection, all adults made use of every opportunity to help children extend the range of their vocabulary and encouraged them to respond in sentences. For example, following a snow storm children were asked if they had played in the snow. When a child said that she had worn her gloves in the snow, the adult asked why. The child responded by explaining: *'I wore my gloves to keep my hands warm'*.

5. Children make excellent progress in developing their knowledge about and love of books. The majority of children enter the school with no knowledge of the way books can be used to give meaning or pleasure. Through well-planned experiences children attain standards that are typical for the age group. During the inspection, teachers and nursery nurses used well-known stories to help children understand the way a story is constructed. For example, a range of resources were used to very good effect to help children retell the story, *Dear Zoo*. The children showed that they could remember the sequence in the story and the highest attaining children could read some of the text.
6. Children make excellent progress in developing their understanding of numbers. Although a small number of children have some knowledge of numbers when they enter school the majority have no knowledge of this aspect. The staff prepares very good activities that help children develop their learning. During the inspection, children worked in the Vet's Surgery charging clients for care given to pretend animals and writing down the amount charged. This work showed that the children had a growing awareness of numbers and their use. All the adults make excellent use of simple number songs and rhymes to help children's appreciation of number.
7. Where the children live limits their knowledge of their world, many live in high-rise flats and so do not have opportunities to explore outside. During their time in school they make excellent progress in this aspect of their learning, the indications are that by the end of their Reception Year in school they will have attained the standard expected for the age group. The school makes very good use of visits and walks to enrich and extend this aspect of the children's development. Children have a very good understanding of the way the computer mouse can be used to control objects on the screen. The highest attaining children are able to click on the necessary icon to print their work. Children are developing a very good level of understanding of the natural world. A higher attaining child was able to explain that seeds were used to grow new plants. He could identify seed in a number of fruits, including a strawberry.
8. Children's progress in developing their physical skills is good overall, with variations. Most children enter the school with typical levels of attainment in running and jumping, their attainment in activities such as using scissors is less well developed and lower than that typically found. Well-planned activities enables the children to make very good progress in aspects of their physical development that are concerned with indoor activities. However, the lack of appropriate outside provision on the Marsh Farm site limits progress in the children's overall physical development; there are too few opportunities for them to develop skills in running, jumping and climbing. The governors are aware of this and a government grant should help to overcome this difficulty.
9. Children with particular learning difficulties achieve standards appropriate for their age and ability. The children are well supported in lessons by adults who are clear about children's needs and provide opportunities for them to develop their self-confidence in their learning. The observations made during the inspection showed that the adults were never intrusive with the support they provided. Children with particularly challenging behaviour are well supported.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. ***Children's attitudes to learning throughout the school are excellent. Behaviour in lessons and during play is predominantly very good. The school has an extremely friendly and positive ethos, enhanced by the excellent quality of relationships. Children know what is expected of them and respond very well to the encouragement and praise given to them. Attendance is satisfactory.***
11. The children are very enthusiastic about coming to school and show great interest in their work. In class discussions they were willing to answer questions and some were able to voice their ideas and opinions. One child at the snack table observed: *I'm drinking my milk, these apples and plums will give me tummy ache!* They take pride in their achievements and enjoy pleasing their teachers.
12. Behaviour across the school is very good. The children quickly learn to listen to teachers and respond to instructions. They are encouraged to be sensible in handling resources and are beginning to understand that they are responsible for their own actions. There are no exclusions and there was no evidence of bullying or racism during the course of the inspection. Children of different cultural backgrounds mix very happily together.
13. The children are starting to learn and understand the results of their actions on others. As they progress through the school their awareness increases and a respect for other values and beliefs begins to appear. Children demonstrate the level of development expected for children in a nursery school; it is very good. There is an obvious love and affection shown by the staff for all the children in their care, and relationships are excellent. The children are taught by example how to respond towards each other, and even the slightest misdemeanour is halted with an opportunity to reflect and to give a reminder that an apology is due. Children are encouraged to show initiative by dressing themselves for outside play and assisting in practical activities like making cakes.
14. Attendance is variable. Not all parents are quick to advise the school if their child is not well or is going on holiday. The school makes it clear that the place is at risk if the child is absent for a period of two weeks without explanation. Not all pupils arrive on time at the start of a session. Absence does affect the children's progress. The school needs to think of ways of encouraging regular attendance and punctual arrival at the start of sessions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. ***Overall, the teaching observed during the inspection was of a very good standard. All the teaching observed was judged to be at least of a good standard, the majority of teaching was judged to be very good. Evidence gathered by examining children's past work and teachers' planning supports the judgements made about the quality of teaching through classroom observation.***
16. There are two classes in the school; one class is situated on each of the two sites, Marsh Farm and Hockwell Ring.

17. During the inspection, 12 lessons or part lessons were observed. In total 19 hours of teaching and learning was inspected. Observations were made about the quality of teaching for the six areas of children's development identified in the national guidance for nursery schools. They are:
 - personal, social and emotional skills;
 - communication through language and their understanding of literacy;
 - mathematical skills;
 - knowledge about the world in which they live;
 - physical skills;
 - creative skills.
18. Teaching was judged to be at least good in all lessons. In two lessons teaching was judged to be excellent. In eight lessons teaching was judged to be very good. In the remaining lessons teaching was judged to be good. Very good teaching was observed in both classes.
19. Common strengths that were identified in the majority of lessons observed were:
 - the detail in the teachers' planning;
 - the way in which teachers used assessments of children's learning to make sure the next session built on past learning;
 - the way teachers used questions to help children develop their ideas;
 - the use made of support staff, who were always clear about their role and provided children with excellent support.
20. These strengths played a major part in the very good, and often excellent progress made by the children.
21. Excellent and very good teaching was observed when children were developing their social skills. All the adults in the school are committed to developing children's social skills. During the inspection, they were observed helping children to understand the use of the school's 'Golden Rules' for behaviour, so that children could work together. For example, when two children argued about the use of an iron, the nursery nurse took the children to the board containing the rules and asked them which one they were breaking. The children responded quickly and were soon able to reconcile their differences.
22. The development of children's skills in communication is a central element of the school's work. Teachers and support staff make excellent provision for this aspect of the children's development and use very effective questioning to help children develop skills in speaking, reading and writing. During the inspection, children were encouraged to retell the story *Dear Zoo* using a number of small soft toys. Excellent questioning by the teacher enabled children to develop their skills in sequencing the story. They were able to remember why different animals had been rejected as pets. The highest attaining children could identify many of the words relating to the story. During the session they made very good progress. Although the teachers do not rely on the national guidance for improving standards in reading and writing, their teaching show a clear understanding of the guidance and many of the teaching techniques they use are in line with those set out in this document.

23. Very good teaching was observed when children were developing their knowledge of numbers. Every session ends with work on number. Children are encouraged to sing number rhymes and the majority can count to ten and recognise the numbers to ten. A major strength of the teaching is the way adults relate number work to other aspects of the children's development. For example when two children were role playing in the 'Vet's Surgery', one child was responsible for being the receptionist and she was expected to charge the other child for the care of her pretend dog. Both children understood the importance of money in this situation. It is adults' use of mathematical ideas in other situations that helps the children to make excellent progress in this aspect of their development.
24. Very good teaching was observed when children were developing the understanding of their world. Careful and well thought out questioning by the adults provide children with the chance to think about their responses and to relate them to their present knowledge. When a parcel arrived containing some very small caterpillars, the children were encouraged to look carefully at the animals and to relate them to the story of *The Hungry Caterpillar*. Children were then encouraged to examine the caterpillars using a hand lens. As a result of careful observation one child made a model of a caterpillar in clay showing the segmented nature of the body. The observations were of a high order. Children are provided with very good support when developing their use of the computer. Teachers and support staff do not perform tasks for the children, but through careful prompting the children soon learn how to use the computer mouse to control images on the screen.
25. Very good teaching was observed when children were developing those aspects of their physical development connected with the use of scissors and pencils. For example, a visiting artist encouraged children to use scissors to cut out the eyes and mouth for a model caterpillar. None of the adults carried out the task for the children; they provided them with a clear role model by making their own caterpillars. This approach worked really well, and by the end of the session children were more confident in using scissors. Similarly, children used scissors to cut out a pancake on Shrove Tuesday. The nursery nurse working with the group showed the children what to do; she then made careful observations of the children's attempts and made very good observational notes on the outcomes. Teachers provide opportunities for children to develop skills in running, jumping and climbing. On the Marsh Farm site the opportunities are restricted by the unsatisfactory nature of the play area.
26. Very good teaching was observed in many situations where children were developing their creative skills. Very good planning and the provision of suitable resources enhance this aspect of the children's work. For example, when a child was painting a picture of her dog, she was provided with a very good range of paints and given the opportunity to mix them before deciding what colour to use. The adults provide children with every opportunity to develop their musical skills. A good range of musical instruments is always available to the children. They use these with enthusiasm and teachers intervene to help the children's development. When a small group of children were attempting to keep to the rhythm of some music the teacher helped them by clapping the rhythm for them. As a result they quickly got the beat and were able to continue with no support.

27. Teaching over the longer period of time is consistently very good.
28. *An examination of the teachers' detailed planning, together with the scrutiny of the children's development profiles, indicates that children are making very good progress as they move through the school. The profiles contain examples of children's work, much of which is photographic evidence, is an accurate record of learning over time. When these records are examined alongside the teachers' detailed planning of the curriculum it is clear that the teaching observed during the inspection is typical of teaching over a longer period of time.*
29. In the sessions that were observed, children were judged to make very good progress. Their growing confidence in exploring the opportunities provided for them was a major factor in their high rate of learning. Children are able to make a positive contribution to their learning. Every session ends with children talking about what they have learnt, and then giving ideas to the teacher about what they might do in the next session. This approach is very effective. On Wednesday, children remembered what they had suggested at the end of Tuesday's session and were delighted when work was provided to meet their ideas.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

30. *The school provides a very good range of worthwhile learning opportunities for the children. The headteacher and the staff have worked very hard to take into account the demands of the new national guidance for the Foundation Stage of education. They have been very successful in creating a high quality curriculum in a very short period of time. The curriculum is broad, balanced and rich in opportunities for children to learn from the experiences provided by the school. The provision for children's physical development varies between the two classes; it is unsatisfactory on the Marsh Farm site.*
31. Teachers' planning of learning experiences is excellent. The curriculum is planned very carefully and continually refined and amended to meet the needs of the children. This continuous evaluation is a strength of the school and contributes significantly to the success of the curriculum, as it clearly reflects the needs and interests of the children. The staff provide activities of the highest quality for the children in all areas of learning, with the exception of outside play, where the quality of the space available limits the work of the school. The activities the school provides for the children are practical and investigative and successfully promote children's independence. The richness of the curriculum and the way in which children are involved in their learning are key factors in the school's success. These features contribute in a major way to the very good and excellent progress the children make in the six areas of learning.
32. The curriculum is well balanced. Time is used very effectively to provide a very good mixture between teacher-led activities and times when the children can make choices for themselves. Very good use is made of the immediate area surrounding the school. The school takes the children out to visit the local area and goes further afield to visit museums and parks in order to extend their understanding of the world. Visitors who come to the school to work with the children also enhance the children's learning.

33. The school is particularly good at providing activities that meet the needs of children of all levels of attainment. The planning takes very good account of the needs of both higher attaining children and those with special educational needs. Children from different cultural backgrounds are well integrated into the school; the different backgrounds within the community are celebrated in the work of the school. At all times the learning experiences are very well matched to the needs of the children. This is clearly seen in the work contained in the excellent Records of Achievement completed for each child, and in all the lessons observed during the inspection.
34. The school gives a high priority to the development of the children's communication, early literacy and mathematics skills. The staff are very successful in encouraging the children to see themselves as readers, writers and mathematicians. This is achieved through very effective teaching of individuals and groups of children within a session. Excellent opportunities are provided for the children to practice and apply their skills in a wide range of play situations.
35. The school also gives personal development a high priority. The structure of the day offers all the children many opportunities to make choices; the staff have very high expectations regarding the levels of independence they expect the children to attain. This is a strength of the school. The children respond very well to these expectations and quickly become responsible and independent. Personal hygiene and healthy eating are promoted within the curriculum and most children manage their personal needs effectively.
36. The school works hard to involve the parents in the work their children are doing at school. The present arrangements are good and are developing as the school becomes more established. The school shares the targets it sets for the children with the parents, and the Records of Achievement are available at all times for the parents to see.
37. The links with other schools and agencies in the area are very good. The school is involved in the induction of children into neighbouring primary schools. Very good relationships have been established with other child-care agencies in the borough.
38. ***Provision for the children's social development is excellent. Provision for children's spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good.***
39. Provision for children's spiritual development is very good. The school carefully plans opportunities for the children to experience awe and wonder relating to the world they live in. During the inspection, a parcel arrived containing caterpillars. The teacher used this opportunity very well to promote a sense of wonder in the children about these creatures. At other times the school plants seeds and allows the children to experience the joy of growing seedlings, these opportunities provide children with a glimpse of the world that they may not experience. The creative work in the school offers many very good opportunities for the children to experiment with colour and media to produce some excellent pieces of art work. The staff use stories very well and many children are absorbed by the lively story-telling in the classroom. In addition to the planned events, the school is very successful in the way it celebrates these *magic moments* as they arise in the classroom. A good example of this was in an impromptu music session, when at the prompting of a nursery nurse, a little boy discovered the joy of playing a xylophone quietly, he

greatly appreciated the improved quality of the sound.

40. Provision for children's moral development is very good. The school expects the children to be kind to others and take responsibility for their actions. The staff take a sensitive but firm approach when children fail to do so. This is very effective in both supporting the child and promoting very good behaviour in the school. The children are encouraged to talk about their feelings and to put things right when they fall out with each other. The "Golden Rules" for the school are very effective and used consistently by all the staff to reinforce the high expectations in this area. There were several occasions during the inspection when adults and children were observed discussing these rules, talking about what had gone wrong and how to put it right.
41. Provision for children's social development is excellent. In lessons, the children work very well together and quickly learn to consider the needs of others and to begin to share toys when playing. When they enter the school most children have considerable difficulty in responding to the materials provided and do not participate effectively in a group. This quickly improves and most children develop very well and show increasing confidence in making choices and sustaining concentration. The structure of the day is instrumental in successfully promoting social development in the school. The Children's Parliament gives all children the opportunity to take turns, children have their say and very successfully reinforces the need to listen as well as talk. The relationships with each other and the staff are excellent, and the children respond very well to the love and care they receive from the staff at the school.
42. Provision for children's cultural development is very good. Throughout the curriculum the school creates opportunities to celebrate and share the cultural diversity of the community. During the inspection the children were seen making pancakes and the one classroom had a very good display celebrating the Chinese New Year. The children are exposed to books and images that represent a wide range of cultures and traditions. The ongoing curriculum programme is supported by focused events. An example being the very successful Caribbean celebration held last summer that attracted over one hundred visitors to the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. ***The school provides an excellent level of care for the children. Teachers and support staff provide extremely thoughtful and caring support. They are totally accessible and responsive to the children's needs. Information is collected throughout the day by the staff, from assessment of work and observation of personal needs and ideas from the Children's Parliament. All of which is put to excellent use in developing the children both personally and academically.***
44. The health, safety and well being of the children are given a very high priority. Child protection procedures are excellent and the school has been very successful in the introduction of the involvement of other agencies such as social services and health visitors. The area health visitor and social worker are prepared to visit as soon as a concern is reported to them; they both speak very highly of the work the school is doing to assist those children and families who need extra help and guidance. Health and safety inspections are carried out regularly by the local authority, and the housing authority is responsible for fire safety in the buildings. There are school fire drills each term

and an appropriate provision of fire extinguishers and first aid equipment is in place. Although there is a comprehensive draft Health and Safety policy, other documentation and recording are in the process of being developed, reflecting the relatively short time the school has been established.

45. Some children are not able to give of their best because they are tired or hungry when they arrive at school. The school recognises that available food and somewhere to rest are very important for these young children. A snack table of nutritious food is always available and replenished throughout the day. In order to help needy children and their families, school dinners can also be provided at the end or beginning of a session.
46. The school has very high expectations of behaviour and a detailed behaviour policy is in place. From the moment the children enter the school they are made aware of the school's 'Golden Rules' for behaviour. The staff introduces these rules gently but firmly, and the children are usually very quick to respond. The behaviour policy is applied consistently across the school and greatly assists the teaching and learning process.
47. Throughout the day, staff complete short assessment slips that record any achievements made by children. In addition comments on behaviour and health are recorded and discussed by all staff concerned. Complete records on each child are compiled throughout their time in school and personal profiles of excellent quality are built up. These are further enhanced by the addition of digital photographs recording achievements both in learning and play. A complete summary is available by the time the child leaves the school; a separate full assessment is sent to the primary school. The school holds a Record of Achievement Day when each child gets a certificate. Achievements are written on a leaf, which is then joined to a tree. All the leaves are kept by the school as a record of individual success.
48. Attendance is appropriately recorded at both sessions. The registers remain on site. Although procedures are consistently applied, the school could do more to monitor and improve attendance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. ***Parents are very positive about the standards achieved by their children, and the encouragement given to children by the school staff. Parents are kept very well informed about the daily life of the school and their children's learning and development. All the parents who responded to the questionnaire felt comfortable about approaching the staff with any concerns and all agreed that the school works closely with parents.***
50. Very strong links are established with parents from the first home visit before the child enters school. The staff and parents find this a valuable exchange of information upon which to build. More home visits follow if required and parents are encouraged to speak about problems they may have. The school is located in an environment where the housing is often not suitable for young children and family tensions can soon arise. The school offers advice on parenting and encourages mothers or fathers with young children at home to visit the very successful weekly Play and Talk Group, where parents and children can mix freely. During the summer, the school held a highly successful Caribbean evening. The school was overwhelmed by the very high level of attendance by families and friends.

51. Some parents become involved with the work of the school and assist in the classroom or on organised visits. The head teacher has formed a small *Growing Together Group*, which includes three parents. The group considers aspects of forward planning and shares a vision for the future. One important issue for parents is a plan to keep the nursery open during part of the school holidays. Partial funding from national sources has already been obtained. The staff are working hard towards increased parental involvement in all aspects of school life, this should help to raise standards attained by children. Further support for families and parents is part of the nationally sponsored Sure Start programme, which will also provide the Marsh Farm site with additional facilities and outdoor play space.
52. Although the prospectus is bland, the quality of information given to parents is very good. There are regular high quality newsletters, which are very informative. The school does not view the letters as the most effective means of communication. Parents prefer to receive information by word of mouth or by reading the notice board. Reports on progress are given to parents at meetings held each term and parents are free to examine the children's profiles at any time. The profiles are very detailed and of outstanding quality.
53. It is not easy for some parents to contribute to their children's learning, but overall this aspect of the school's work is satisfactory. Homework is given but not consistently, and responses on the parents' questionnaire reflect this. Parents are not sure about the school's approach to homework. The school staff take every opportunity to encourage parents and carers into the two classrooms. This approach works well and provides very good opportunities for discussions about children's welfare and progress. This is a new school and one that can enjoy future development in this important area.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. ***Overall, the leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides the school with excellent leadership. She has undertaken a detailed analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has clear plans to help raise standards to an even higher level. The governors and parents are very supportive of the headteacher and staff. The governors have clear procedures in place that helps them to manage the school effectively.***
55. The headteacher is very well respected by all those connected with the school. In a short period of time she has provided the school with excellent leadership that has led to it giving children a very good standard of education. A very effective team of teachers and support staff supports the headteacher. The staff have undertaken a very detailed analysis of the children's attainment; this information is used in a very effective way to plan learning for individual children. All the staff take their responsibilities seriously and carry out their duties efficiently.
56. The newly formed governing body has established an effective committee structure. This will enable it to undertake its work in an efficient way. The governing body was involved in a satisfactory way in the writing of the plan for the school's further development. The priorities it has identified are appropriate for a nursery school. The plans show how the priorities are to be

addressed in a given time scale. Governors have set clear goals for the school's development and they have established a range of informal procedures that will enable them to monitor this. At the time of the inspection the governors did not have responsibility for the school's budget. Nevertheless, they are aware of the need for them to establish clear procedures for setting the school's budget, when they become responsible for it later this year.

57. ***Staffing levels in the school are very good. The range and size of the school's accommodation are satisfactory. The school has a satisfactory range of learning resources.***
58. The teachers are suitably qualified to teach the nursery age group. Their work is enhanced through effective team-work and very good support staff. All the adults show a good understanding of the way young children learn, this knowledge is having a positive impact on standards in the school. The classrooms are of a satisfactory size and enable teachers to provide children with a good range of learning experiences. The play areas outside the school are small and on the Marsh Farm site the area is unsatisfactory. The governors are aware of this weakness and have detailed plans in place to overcome the difficulty.
59. The two sites are well maintained and very clean. Although the outdoor areas are small they are used to good effect to give the children opportunities to take more vigorous exercise.
60. Resources in the school are at a satisfactory level. There are a good number of books and these are used to very good effect by adults. As a result, children are developing a love of their favourite stories. For example, a small group of children were very keen to talk about a book that included a number of animals in a zoo. The computers available in the school are used well to help children with the development of their computer skills.
61. The ethos in the school is excellent. The school provides an atmosphere of love, care and hard work.
62. In all classes, the teachers and support staff encourage and support children to work very hard. As a result the children show positive attitudes to their work; this enables them to make very good progress in learning. There are a number of children with challenging behaviour. The staff show a consistent approach to managing this behaviour through praise. During the inspection no adult raised his or her voice to chastise a child. This approach underlines the school's excellent ethos of caring for everyone.
63. The day-to-day management of the school is very good, being both effective and efficient. The school secretary is making good use of information technology to support her in her work. Routine day-to-day budgetary, administrative and organisational procedures are very good.
64. The school complies with all statutory requirements.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. No major aspect of the school's work was identified as being in need of improvement. However,

the report identifies a minor issue: this is the need for further improvements to the outside play area on the Marsh Farm site.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

66. There were no other specified features.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	13
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
15	46	38	0	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	50
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	9,000
Total expenditure	211,499
Expenditure per child	n/a
Balance brought forward from previous year	n/a
Balance carried forward to next year	n/a

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	50
Number of questionnaires returned	13

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	10	2	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	10	3	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	11	2	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	3	2	2	2	0
The teaching is good.	8	5	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	10	2	1	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	10	3	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	8	5	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	10	3	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	10	3	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	10	3	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	8	2	0	1	2

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal, social and emotional development

67. *Children enter the school with standards in personal, social and emotional skills that are very much lower than those typical for three-year-olds. The evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that by the end of the Foundation Stage of education the majority of children will attain the standards typical for the age group. Children make excellent progress in this aspect of their development.*
68. Excellent and very good teaching was observed when children were developing their personal and social skills. Teachers make excellent, detailed and accurate assessments of this aspect of the children's development. Detailed photographic evidence is retained in a separate folder for each child. These folders are used to very good purpose when teachers are planning the next stage in an individual's development. Children are encouraged to work together and share resources. A simple but effective set of rules, 'The Golden Rules', is used to very good effect to help children with their social development.
69. When children enter the school they do not show the usual level of curiosity seen in children aged three years. The majority of children are very nervous and stand and watch others. This reluctance is soon overcome. During the inspection children who had been in school for just three weeks were beginning to explore the opportunities provided for them, and were keen to be involved in new activities. Every session starts with children saying hello to the adults in the group. This approach works very well and ensures that all are included in the group from the start of the session. Observations made during the inspection provide clear evidence that children are on track to meet the standard expected for pupils at the end of the reception year. Children were observed making a fruit salad for the group. They were fully involved in the task and were asking the teacher about the different fruits she had provided. Excellent progress is made in this aspect of the children's development.
70. The majority of children enter the school having had little contact with other children. For many it is their first experience of being away from their parent or carer. The loving and caring atmosphere created in the school enables all children to overcome their anxieties very quickly. Children greet adults in the room and are keen to be part of the class. Children who have been in the school for over a year are very confident and can work effectively with others. They are encouraged to help each other and do so with no fuss. For example, when one child found it difficult to fold cardboard to make a caterpillar, another child, who had finished the task was delighted to be asked to help. The adults encouraged and praised the kindness. On the Hockwell Ring site some children have been part of the unit for two-year-olds. The benefit of this is clear. When small numbers of the group joined the older children of part of the session they were immediately at home and prepared to undertake similar activities.

71. Children are encouraged to develop skills that will make them independent of adults. They are encouraged to look after their own clothes and adults use every opportunity to help them understand the need for personal hygiene; they are expected to wash their hands when they have been to the toilet.

Communication, language and literacy

72. *When they enter the school the children have communication and language skills that are substantially below that expected of three-year-olds. They make very good progress in this aspect of their development and the majority are on line to meet the typical levels of attainment by the time they complete the Foundation Stage of their education.*
73. Teaching in this aspect of the children's development is always very good and often excellent. When they enter the school most children have very limited skills in speaking and listening and are quiet in the classrooms. Communication is central to the aims of the school and much is done in a short time to promote and encourage the children to talk. The school offers the children many interesting and exciting things to do and through this process the staff at the school promote very good progress in the way the children learn to talk and listen. These include large group times where most children choose to speak about events in the day or week. Throughout the day there are many more intimate moments where the children have the opportunity to speak one to one with an adult. This teacher-led approach is complemented by the creation of many very good play opportunities the school offers the children. The quality of the curriculum and the consistently high standard of teaching from all the adults working in the school have a very positive impact on the rate of progress the children make in this area. By the time they leave the school many of the children can use talk constructively in play, speak in phrases and in some cases take part in extended conversations with adults. This was clearly illustrated by a group of six children working with an adult retelling the story of *The Three Bears*. The teacher used the book and props very successfully to promote and extend the language. The children who have been in school longest clearly demonstrated the progress they had made since starting school, in the way they enjoyed the chance to talk about the book.
74. Books play a very important role in the curriculum at the school. All the staff are very good at reading stories and bringing the stories to life for the children. The school has a developing collection of story sacks that provide first class stimulation for the children. Books are freely available and many children show very positive attitudes to books and will often choose to look at books alone or with an adult. When they join the school, children have little experience of handling books. Children soon learn that it is the print in the book that you read; they show a real enthusiasm for stories.
75. On entry to the school most of the children have poor control of a pencil. They make excellent progress in their writing. By the time they leave, many of the children know many of the letter sounds, some are beginning to write and often choose to do so. Pencil control and early handwriting also improve very quickly and the older children can write carefully and form many letters correctly.

76. All the staff give a high priority to the development of children's knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent. Each session begins with the children finding their name, followed by first class teaching of initial sounds. The children enjoy this work and they make excellent progress. The older children can readily identify sounds at the beginning and end of words. These phonic skills are consolidated throughout the school; all the staff take every opportunity to use what the children know in play. For example, older children were seen writing about fruit, whereas the younger children were encouraged to draw the fruits. On another occasion some children were seen using their writing in play when taking down notes during an imaginary phone call.
77. The staff work collaboratively to produce excellent assessments on each child's development. This information is used very well to plan the next steps in learning for the children. This high quality assessment and teachers' planning, along with the very good teaching, are the reasons the children do so well.

Mathematical development

78. *Children enter the school with standards in mathematical development that are very much lower than those typical for three-year-olds. The evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that by the end of the Foundation Stage the majority of children will attain the standards typical for the age group; a small number of higher attaining children reach a standard above that found for the age group. Children make excellent progress in this aspect of their development.*
79. Teaching in this aspect of the children's development was always very good and at times excellent. Teaching in this area of children's development is very good. Teachers make excellent, detailed and accurate assessments of the children's mathematical development. These assessments are used to very good effect to plan future learning for the children. Teachers and support staff use the planning to provide teaching of a very good quality. Number songs and rhymes are used to provide children with the opportunity to develop their understanding of the way numbers operate. For example, during the inspection children sang the song *One, two, three, four, five once I caught a fish alive* with enthusiasm, showing that they were able to count to ten. Other number games enabled children to count back from ten. Children joined in these activities with enthusiasm.
80. Children enter the school with little understanding of the way numbers are used in their world. A small number of higher attaining children do know the names of some numbers, however, none can recognise numbers and give them the correct names in a consistent way. During their time in the school children make excellent progress in developing their knowledge about numbers. The oldest higher attaining children can recognise numbers up to 20 and a small number of children can do simple addition sums.
81. Children cannot name common everyday shapes when they enter the school. However, they quickly come to recognise squares and circles and can name these shapes. For example, when making cardboard models of a caterpillar, children were able to say that the eyes were circles. In the same way, children who were making cardboard models of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, knew that the shape involved was a circle.

82. Children are encouraged to understand the importance of pattern in the development of mathematical thinking. For example, very good use was made of the height of the group of children. They were organised in order from tall to short and were asked to predict the next in the pattern. With careful questioning by the teacher, the majority of the group were able to complete the task.
83. Excellent planning of activities identifies opportunities for children to think about mathematical ideas. For example, in the area identified as a ‘Vet’s Surgery’ children who were playing the role of the receptionists were encouraged to charge clients for the pretend care of their animals. The till contained real money and children were clear about the way it could be used to keep account of the money collected.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

84. *Children enter the school with standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world that are very much lower than those typical for three-year-olds. The evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that by the end of the Foundation Stage the majority of children will attain the standards typical for the age group. Children make excellent progress in this aspect of their development.*
85. Very good teaching was observed when children were being encouraged to think about the world in which they live. Teachers make excellent, detailed and accurate assessments of this aspect of the children’s development. These assessments are used to very good effect to plan high quality learning experiences for the children. The experiences provide children with opportunities to find out more about the world in which they live. Children are encouraged to investigate, be curious and enthusiastic about their learning.
86. When children enter the school they are reluctant to explore their surroundings. Because the staff are totally supportive of the children they make excellent progress in this aspect of their development. During the inspection, children were excited when a parcel arrived containing some tiny caterpillars. The children were keen to use magnifying glasses to look more closely at them. They used their observations to make clay models of the tiny creatures.
87. Observations of children using the computer showed that they were developing their skills to control objects on the computer. Children were able to use a simple program to paint patterns on the screen. Higher attaining children can change the colour of the paint and can erase parts of the pattern they did not require. A small number of children know how to use the mouse to click on the icon to print their work. The standards attained indicate that children have made excellent progress in developing these skills.
88. Children are provided with very good planned opportunities to develop their knowledge of their local environment. Many of the children live in the high-rise flats and do not have many opportunities to investigate their surroundings. As a result they join the school with standards much lower than that typical for the age group. The planned visits enable the children to understand how their environment can be affected by their actions. For example, visits to local parks are used to

very good effect to help children understand how plants change through the seasons. This work is very effective in broadening the children's understanding.

89. The teachers' planning shows how children are given opportunities to use a range of construction equipment in a creative way to represent their environment. Photographic evidence examined during the inspection shows how the children develop these skills over time. The range of construction equipment available for this type of work is limited and is in need of further development.

Physical development

90. *When the children start the School their physical skills are generally below the average for their age. They make good progress and most pupils are on line to meet the national targets in this area of learning by the time they complete their time in the Foundation Stage.*
91. The teaching of physical development is very good. The staff at the school offers the children a wide range of opportunities to practise and improve their skills in handling a range of small tools. For example, during the inspection a group of children were observed cutting out ears to go on a cat headband they were making as a follow-on activity to a story they had heard earlier in the day. The member of staff leading this activity was very effective in the way she encouraged and supported the children to cut for themselves and improve on their first attempt. This very good teaching resulted in real improvement in the cutting skills of the children in the group. At another time, a member of the staff was observed working with a small group who were looking at, drawing and writing about fruit. This activity offered all the children a very good opportunity to develop their pencil skills, the fruit was of interest to the children, who consequently worked hard to do their best. The higher attaining pupils demonstrated good pencil control and formed their letters correctly.
92. When they enter the school many children have had limited experience of modelling, using dough or building with construction kits. The school offers a rich set of experiences that quickly enables the children to improve their skills in this area and most make good progress and reach the expected level for children their age. This was well illustrated by the work of a group of children who were observed building with large blocks to represent houses. This group demonstrated good manipulative skills in the way they managed these large blocks and succeeded, with the support of a member of staff, to make a good quality model.
93. The quality of assessments made by the staff has a positive impact on the progress the children make. A detailed observations of every child clearly informs the school about what each child can do. This evidence is then used to set targets for the next stage in their development.
94. The provision for outside play on the two sites is uneven. The Hockwell Ring site has a satisfactory space for the children to play and the school has made some progress in making this an interesting play environment for the children. At Marsh Farm the space is much more limited and the provision for outside play is at present is unsatisfactory. However, plans are in place to secure funding through the nationally funded Sure Start initiative to address this and provide a more

appropriate and stimulating play area for the children. The staff do all they can to use the limited space they have to best effect and whenever possible the children are taken outside to play. They make satisfactory progress in the development of their skills in running, jumping and climbing. Some opportunities are provided for them to play with a range of small apparatus and to climb and scramble on bigger apparatus. During the inspection a small group was observed playing with a large pull-along toy, they were pretending it was a train and were taking it in turns to pull each other around the playspace. They demonstrated good control of the cart and took great pleasure in waiting their turn and having the ride. This activity was well supported by a member of staff who skilfully intervened where necessary to maintain and improve the quality of the play and promote collaboration.

Creative development

95. ***Children enter the school with standards in creative development that are very much lower than those typical for three-year-olds. The evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that by the end of the Foundation Stage the majority of children will attain the standards typical for the age group; a small number of higher attaining children reach a standard above that found for the age group. Children make excellent progress in this aspect of their development.***
96. The teaching in this area of learning is very good. The school provides a rich set of learning experiences for the children who respond very well to the activities and gain great satisfaction and enjoyment from the work. The learning environments are very stimulating and contain some examples of excellent large-scale three dimensional work based on weaving and planets. All staff work tremendously hard to display the work produced by the children in an attractive and interesting way.
97. When they enter the school many of the children show little understanding of how to play imaginatively or how to explore with paint, collage or construction equipment. The range of experiences offered by the school very quickly improves this. Within weeks many of the children are showing much increased confidence in all aspects of their creative play.
98. During the inspection the children were observed taking part in role-play in the 'Vet's Surgery'. The adult supporting this activity was very perceptive in the way she encouraged the children to dress up as animals and vets in order to develop their creative skills in this imaginary situation. The good resources and skillful teaching resulted in the group making very good progress in the session; they learned and used the vocabulary of the vet in their play. At another time a group was singing nursery rhymes with an adult. They knew a range of songs and rhymes and were able to play along with untuned percussion with enthusiasm. Here again the quality of the experience for the children was very positively influenced by the high quality of the teaching. The member of staff had high expectations of the group and they responded well to the teaching points she made as they played along together. One boy learned that by playing the xylophone softly the quality of the sound it produced was much improved.

99. The school is making very good use of a visiting artist to extend the opportunities for creative work in the school. This input has involved the children in working directly with the artist to discover new ways of working and new materials. This initiative is having a clear impact on the creative work in the school. The staff speak positively about how the artist's perspective has encouraged them to be even more ambitious in what they provide for the children.
100. The key strength of the work in this area of children's development relates to the way in which all the staff understand how young children learn, and consequently encourage them to make the decisions about their work; they are then expect to do it for themselves. This was clearly illustrated by a group of children observed mixing colours to paint large cats for display. The children organized the paint for themselves and made choices about the colour and amount of paint to use before they started to paint. The adult supporting this activity gave them time to experiment and share ideas before she moved them on to the painting itself. The timing of this intervention and the fact that the children were given time to experiment, improved the learning in the session and added much to the experience for the children. The high expectations the school has for each child are informed by an excellent assessment system. All adults add to the regularly records that monitor progress being made by each child and this information is used to sets targets for improvement.