

INSPECTION REPORT

SELHURST EARLY YEARS CENTRE

Croydon

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 131724

Acting Headteacher: Mrs V Seddon

Reporting inspector: Jennifer Nicholson
23036

Dates of inspection: 17 – 19 June 2002

Inspection number: 245353

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Early Years Centre

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 2 - 4 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: 23 Dagnall Park
South Norwood
London
SE25 5PL

Telephone number: 020 8684 3777

Fax number: 020 8664 8223

Appropriate authority: Croydon Education Authority

Name of chair of governors: Marion Smith

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23036	Jennifer Nicholson	Registered inspector	Communication, language and literacy	Standards Teaching Leadership and management
			Knowledge and understanding of the world	
			Physical development	
			English as an additional language	
11094	Ian Blair	Lay inspector		Care Partnership with parents
23761	Fiona Bridger Wilkinson	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development	Attitudes, values and personal development Curriculum
			Mathematical development	
			Creative development	
			Special educational needs	
			Equal opportunities	

The inspection contractor was:

Open Book Inspections
6 East Point
High Street
Seal
Sevenoaks
Kent TN15 0EG

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 12
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	13 - 14
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14 - 16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16 - 17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19 - 21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21 - 22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23 - 25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26 - 31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Selhurst Early Years Centre is situated in the London Borough of Croydon. The centre, opened in 1993 under social services control, was transferred to the education authority in 1998. The remit of this inspection, the centre's first inspection under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996, is the education and provision for children in the Foundation Stage. (This stage of education begins the term following third birthday and extends into primary school to the end of the reception year and the start of National Curriculum in Year 1.) As an Early Years Centre, Selhurst offers other services that are not subject to this inspection. These include care for two-year-olds, family work, holiday clubs and sessional day care, funded from a variety of sources. Most children come from the immediate locality, an established urban district comprising mainly rented and social housing, and designated by Croydon as an area of social need. Over half of the children are referred to the centre by social services for differing individual needs. Forty-three children in total attend the centre, 63 per cent of whom are black. Thirty-four children are in the Foundation Stage, mainly in the nursery class. At this stage in the year, younger Foundation Stage children form about half the class for two and three-year-olds. Two-thirds of the Foundation Stage children attend full-time with the remaining third attending for morning or afternoon sessions. The centre is under-subscribed at present. Children are generally admitted into the centre in the September following their second birthday and stay for two years before transferring to a variety of primary schools. Thirty-two per cent of the full-time Foundation Stage children are eligible for free school meals, a high proportion in comparison with schools nationally.* Eighteen per cent of the Foundation Stage children come from homes where English is not the first language, more than in most schools.* Almost all of these children communicate confidently in English. Twelve per cent of Foundation Stage children are on the centre's register for special educational needs, mainly for emotional, behavioural, or visual difficulties. Although there are no children with a Statement of Special Educational Need, two children are receiving extra (funded) support. The attainment of most children when they start coming to the centre is below what is to be expected, in language development in particular. Many children have little experience with books or writing materials. A few children are identified as having the potential to attain highly.

** National comparators are for primary schools; they are not available for early years centres.*

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Most children achieve satisfactory standards in knowledge and understanding of the world, in creative development and in physical development. Standards in personal, social and emotional development are broadly in line with expectations. Many children do well in information and communication technology (ICT). Standards are below national expectations in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with good features. Staff provide a wide range of stimulating and practical activities to interest and motivate, which children approach with interest and enthusiasm, eager to participate. The acting headteacher provides very good leadership. She has a very clear view of what needs to be done, and has worked with energy and success, during her short temporary appointment, to lead the centre forward. She leads the committed staff team strongly. The governing body is still being established. Good levels of expertise amongst the governors are enabling a sound start to their work to be made. The centre is satisfactorily effective.

What the school does well

- Standards exceed expectations in the ICT aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Children are enthusiastic, keen and interested in the wide range of stimulating activities provided.
- The acting headteacher provides a very strong educational lead.
- Committed, experienced staff have a good understanding of the active way that young children learn.
- The centre looks after the children very well; Child Protection arrangements are very good; provision for children with special educational needs is good.
- The centre makes good provision for children's spiritual, moral and social development; provision for cultural development is a strength of the centre.

What could be improved

- Standards in communication, language and literacy are below national expectations.
- Standards in mathematics are below national expectations.
- There are not enough adult-led activities for older children.

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 first inspection of Selhurst Early Years Centre under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996. It is not possible therefore to make judgements about improvement.

STANDARDS

Older children, aged four-and-a-half, are on course to attain the early learning goals that are set nationally for the end of the Foundation Stage in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Standards in personal, social and emotional development are broadly in line with expectations. Many children do well in ICT. Standards in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development are below what is to be expected for their age group.

Three-year-olds are making a satisfactory start in their learning. They are confident and well settled, having attended the centre since they were two. They are well supported by a nurturing and secure environment.

Children, including those for whom English is an additional language, are making satisfactory progress in their learning overall. Children with special educational needs are making good progress towards their particular learning targets with effective support. Children make steady progress across the breadth of their learning during their time at the centre, although the few children identified with the potential to attain highly do not always make rapid enough progress. Useful personal targets are set. Overall, children are prepared appropriately for the next stage in their education, in reception classes in primary schools.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; children are keen to come to the centre. They are enthusiastic, keen to participate and enjoy their learning. They are interested in the wide variety of activities on offer.
Behaviour	Satisfactory; most of the time, most children behave well. Occasionally, however, children become restless, noisy or boisterous. Sometimes the behaviour of a small group of children is challenging.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory; some children get on well together and play happily; some four-year-olds still find it hard to take turns and share.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory

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.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory with good features, especially evident during sessions when children were working directly with teaching staff. Children, including those with English as an additional language, are enabled to make satisfactory progress in their learning overall as they engage in the wide variety of relevant, practical and interesting activities provided. Children with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets with regular specialist input. Those older children with the potential to move forward more quickly in their learning are not always challenged well enough, for example in reading and mathematics. Occasionally teaching is very good, as in a dynamic story session with younger children, when artefacts were used to very good effect to capture attention and enjoyment, and stimulate good learning. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. The main strengths of the teaching lie in the way staff foster children's personal, social and emotional development. Staff manage children in a consistently calm and positive way, encouraging them to be aware of their actions and responses, to other children in particular. Children are progressing well in this area of learning. Teaching in communication, language and literacy is good overall, with good attention to encouraging children to talk, and a high daily profile given to books, although writing and the awareness of sounds and letters do not always receive the same regular emphasis. Teaching in mathematical development is satisfactory. Staff capitalise appropriately on children's chosen tasks, to practise counting for example. They reinforce incidental mathematical learning suitably, as during story sessions. In general, however, there are not enough regular activities with a specific mathematical focus for older children. As the centre is aware, mathematics does not have a high enough profile.

Other teaching strengths lie in the way the teacher and nursery officer encourage children to make links between different experiences to reinforce learning. They have a good understanding of the active way that young children learn and as a result provide a wide variety of relevant practical and stimulating activities. They use a good range of teaching

strategies to motivate and interest the children. They intervene effectively in children's chosen activities to extend learning. They join in and effectively foster children's imaginative play. As a result of recent training, staff promote learning in ICT well, providing purposeful support for individual children or small groups.

The main shortcoming in the teaching lies in the balance, for older children, between activities they select for themselves and those that are directed by an adult for particular learning purposes. Overall these children do not participate enough in such adult-led, focused activities, which hinders the rate of progress. Other shortcomings in the teaching lie in the way time is used. Sometimes sessions are slow to start or are overlong, and as a result children's interest wanes and they become restless. Sometimes too much noise, such as over-loud voices, is tolerated.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; staff provide a wide range of relevant practical activities and good opportunities for children to select their own tasks. On balance, however, there are not enough adult-led tasks for older children, and mathematics is not given a high enough focused priority.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good; children are well supported to enable them to make good progress towards their relevant individual targets.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good; the centre provides good opportunities for these children, including home language support and the provision of books and tapes in the home language. Sometimes, however, the children's erratic attendance hinders potential progress.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall; staff foster well children's sense of delight and amazement, especially about the natural world. Staff are clear and consistent in encouraging children to behave well and to work and play in harmony with each other. The way staff celebrate the centre's rich cultural diversity is a strength.
How well the school cares for its children	Very well; the centre provides a safe and secure environment where children feel valued and can settle to enjoy their learning. The high standard of care includes offering good quality breakfast and after-school facilities. Assessment is satisfactory, based on careful observations of children's achievements.

The centre provides well for parents through its family work. It is aware of the need to develop the partnership by encouraging parents to be more involved in their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall; very good in the way that the acting headteacher has tackled priorities in a measured and purposeful way, providing a strong lead to the committed staff team. The newly established senior management team is supportive and fully involved in addressing issues for improvement. Other roles and responsibilities have yet to be established.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory; individual governors' experience and expertise are significant strengths, although not all governors are actively involved with the work of the centre. The governing body is not yet complete, pending the arrival of the substantive headteacher. Systems are still being established.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory; the acting headteacher has a clear view of the daily work of the centre. A suitable start to formal monitoring has been made, following constructive and helpful preparation.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall; the wide range of practical resources is used effectively to support children's learning. Nursery officers are deployed to very good effect. They make a strong contribution to children's learning. The garden is used appropriately every day, although younger children do not have the same access to adventurous and energetic play equipment as older children. The centre seeks to achieve best value for money when buying goods or services although systems to monitor spending are newly established.

The centre is generously staffed with experienced and skilled nursery officers, who are all trained nursery nurses. The one qualified teacher is in charge of the nursery class. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The centre is seeking to overcome the drawback of the small linked teaching areas. The outside area for younger children is too small. Learning resources are satisfactory overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The children enjoy coming to the centre. The children behave well. Teaching is good and the children are making good progress in their learning. Staff expect the children to do well. Parents feel that staff are approachable and helpful with queries and concerns. 	<p>The few concerns raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parents would like to know more about how their children are getting on. It is not always clear what is being taught. Sometimes it is hard for working parents to arrange a time to talk about their child's progress. It is hard also for parents whose children attend the morning sessions to get to know the acting headteacher as she works in the centre only during the afternoons.

The acting headteacher is part-time, working during the afternoon sessions, a temporary arrangement which will cease when the substantive headteacher takes up her post, full-time,

in September. The deputy head of the centre is currently in charge during the morning sessions and is fully available to speak to parents. Staff are available daily for parents to talk to informally about their child's progress. Other times are arranged termly, although, because of staffing changes, the spring meeting this year was overlooked. Inspectors agree that the children enjoy coming to the centre. They find the teaching to be satisfactory with good features. Some older, higher-attaining children, however, are not always doing as well as they could. Most children behave well but a significant minority present challenging behaviour. Inspectors consider information for parents about the curriculum to be satisfactory with plans displayed and regular newsletters.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entering the Foundation Stage of education the attainment of most children is below what is to be expected, in language development in particular. By the time they leave the nursery, at four or four-and-a-half, standards are lower than is to be expected nationally in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. In all other areas of learning, attainment is satisfactory. Most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals set nationally for the end of the Foundation Stage in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Many children do well in ICT. Children at the early stages of learning English communicate sufficiently to make their needs known, encouraged by sympathetic support. Children with special educational needs are progressing well towards their individual targets. Children are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education, in reception classes in primary schools.
2. Standards for four-year-olds in personal, social and emotional development broadly meet expectations. Children are keen to come to the centre and join the wide variety of activities on offer. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, although sometimes the behaviour of some children is challenging. Sometimes children play amicably together, or alongside each other, although some four-year-olds still find sharing and turn taking difficult.
3. Standards for four-year-olds in communication, language and literacy are below national expectations. Children are keen to talk but their vocabulary is limited, and speech is often unclear. When motivated well as by stories, children listen well. They are interested in books and handle them correctly. They are aware of the difference between print and pictures. Most children recognise their name and some children are beginning to use initial sounds appropriately to try and read other children's names. Few other familiar words are known. Children use letter-like shapes in their developing writing; only a few write their names correctly.
4. Standards for four-year-olds in mathematical development are lower than is to be expected. Children count to five and some beyond. They are beginning to write recognisable numerals and are becoming aware of basic shapes.
5. In relation to what they could do when entering the Foundation Stage, children achieve satisfactorily overall. Patient, kindly and consistent, positive behaviour management enables many children to achieve well in personal, social and emotional development as they progress through the centre. Children are making good gains in ICT skills through effective individual support and good access to computers and other technological equipment. Interest levels are high in this area and children often work at the computer for extended periods. Overall, children are enabled to progress effectively by the way staff encourage them to make links between aspects of their learning and through the wide variety of relevant and interesting activities provided. Older children, however, including those with the potential to achieve highly, do not always make enough gains in their learning because they are not involved frequently enough in adult-led activities, for example in mathematics.
6. The younger three-year-olds are well settled into the routines of the class through the staff's sympathetic and caring approach. Children clearly benefit from the high level of

adult support and the secure environment. Staffing ratios are high in this class on account of the presence of two-year-olds.

7. Through careful observation and the sharing of information, staff know the children very well, especially those in their key worker group. They set useful targets for each child's learning, which they are beginning to share with parents and the children themselves, a positive step.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Children are keen to come to the centre. When they arrive at the beginning of a session they are eager to see what there is to do. They explore the rooms enthusiastically, looking at what is on offer and deciding what to do first. Children are interested in the wide range of practical activities that the centre provides. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, with the majority of the children behaving well most of the time. Children are generally courteous, kind and friendly towards adults and each other. However some children shout out loudly, or react physically when trying to resolve differences. Instances such as these are dealt with effectively by staff. The personal and social development of the children is satisfactory, with children generally getting on well together and playing happily. Children co-operate appropriately, for example to play a picture lotto game or help staff by putting sand toys into a crate when it is time to tidy up. Most children attempt to put on their own coats before playing outside. Some four-year-olds still find sharing and turn taking difficult. At times children squabble over equipment. Staff respond well on these occasions, talking events through with the children and helping them to begin to understand how their words and actions affect others. Children are actively encouraged to celebrate and respect individual differences and cultures. They respond well to this positive ethos.
9. Overall, attendance is satisfactory. Most children attend the centre regularly. Parents generally get their children to the centre punctually so that the day's activities can start on time. A few parents have a rather too casual attitude towards timekeeping.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

10. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with good features. In 62 per cent of sessions observed during the inspection, teaching was good or better, occurring mainly in sessions where children were supported directly by the teacher or a nursery nurse. Teaching in 38 per cent of sessions was satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. In the one very good session, in the younger class, children were particularly well motivated by dynamic story telling. The staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development well. Their calm, positive and consistent approach to managing behaviour is effective in enabling most children to acquire appropriate social skills. Staff show genuine care for the children, and as a result, trusting relationships develop. Teaching is good in aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world and in aspects of creative development. Teaching in communication, language and literacy is good overall, although it is not yet able to compensate fully for the low starting points of most children. Staff effectively encourage children's talk in a variety of situations. The high profile given to books is successful in cultivating children's interest and familiarity with books, although opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge higher attaining children further, for example in recognising simple basic words. Although staff appropriately encourage children to write, especially their names, this aspect receives less regular emphasis than early reading.

11. All staff are well qualified and committed to the education of young children. Their good knowledge and expertise in the active way that young children learn is evident through the wide range of relevant, practical and interesting activities on offer. The one qualified teacher leads a team of nursery officers in the nursery class, for three and four-year-olds. A senior nursery nurse leads the team of nursery officers in the class for two and three-year-olds. The teacher and senior nursery nurse suitably plan together over the longer term, and share daily plans. The teaching team has only been settled for one and a half terms. Newly-introduced systems are still evolving.
12. Strengths in the teaching occur when staff are working on a specific task with small groups or individual children with good quality interactions to lead thinking on. They enter into the children's play to good effect, to inject or extend ideas, in imaginative and role-play for example, or to sustain concentration. Further strengths in the teaching lie in the way staff encourage children to make links between different experiences. A holiday topic was being used effectively to link learning across the curriculum, in role-play, making passports and sunglasses, and singing relevant songs, for example. Questioning skills are used to good effect, to develop children's ideas about how to build a bridge for example, or to reinforce skills such as correct ways to handle a book. Through effective questioning, a nursery nurse enabled younger children to recall previous learning about things needed for a seaside holiday. Staff sometimes question skilfully in patient small steps, to encourage a three-year-old to count five dinosaurs accurately, for example. Staff make good use of cultural diversity, their own and the children's, by providing authentic Ghanaian dressing-up clothes for example, by teaching rhymes from Ghana or Jamaica, or finding countries relevant to the children on the globe. In this way staff motivate children well and foster self-esteem effectively. Everybody's contribution is valued.
13. The main shortcoming in the teaching lies in the balance, for older children, between the provision, indoors and outdoors, of activities with a specific focus, led by an adult, and those that they can select for themselves. Although staff provide a wide range of relevant and interesting activities, overall, older children do not participate in enough adult-led activities, especially to promote mathematical development and writing. Planning is satisfactory, with clear expectations for learning from focused activities, although targeted children for inclusion in activities are not consistently identified. Effective daily planning meetings ensure that all staff are fully aware of their role. The children's participation and response to previous activities is usefully evaluated. Thorough on-going assessment of children's achievements and responses through careful daily observational notes enables staff to know the children well and to identify their next broad learning steps.
14. Other shortcomings occur when time is not used to best effect. The start to the teaching day is unclear and some children are slow to settle purposefully. Occasionally sessions are overlong. Sometimes they are slow to start and, as a result, children's interest wanes and their attention wanders. The expectant moment at the beginning is lost. Too much noise is sometimes tolerated, for example over-loud voices in role-play or excited screeching when coming down a slide.
15. As part of becoming an educational setting, staff are developing ways to extend learning in class at home. Suitable systems are in place for children to take books home but, although some parents and children keenly participate, not all join in as yet.

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

16. The quality and range of the curriculum offered are satisfactory overall. The curriculum is enhanced by the provision of a wide range of enjoyable, practical activities that are relevant to the children, for example, making sunglasses as part of a topic on 'holidays'. Overall, however, there are not enough adult-led focused activities for older children. Insufficient targeted adult input is hindering the rate of learning and impacting on standards. Some children, particularly the higher attaining, are not supported in making the progress of which they are capable.
17. Personal, social and emotional development has an appropriately high priority. It has rightly been a major focus for the centre over the past six months. It is apparent that it underpins work in all the other areas of learning. The communication, language and literacy area of learning is given a high profile throughout the centre, with numerous examples of print on posters, displays and notices. Children are encouraged to engage in conversations with adults and each other. They have plentiful opportunities to look at and share books and stories within the centre, and parents are able to borrow books to take home. Activities to promote early writing skills, whilst appropriate, are less frequent than activities to promote early reading. At present, mathematics is not visible enough within the centre and there are insufficient planned mathematics activities. Mathematics learning is happening mainly incidentally through, for example, number rhymes in the few minutes left at the end of a story time. Opportunities are being missed, for example counting the number of children present in a group, how many are away, how many more or less than yesterday, pairing children up to walk outside. The centre is aware that this is an area for development to be tackled as a priority.
18. Provision for ICT is good. Children have regular access to computers and use a range of appropriate programs. They also listen to taped stories on cassette recorders and with the staff use the digital camera. Creativity is used well across the curriculum with children encouraged to see the links, for example printing on 'tadpole' shaped paper of different lengths as a mathematics activity and role-play in a travel agency. For a high percentage of time children have access to the outside area and a good range of self-selected activities from which they are learning. More emphasis now needs to be put on adult-led activities in order to promote and extend children's learning still further. The centre is aware of the present shortcomings in the organisation in the outdoor area, particularly in the small amount of space designated to the younger class. Plans are in hand to review and reorganise the outdoor provision for the autumn term.
19. Provision for children with special educational needs is good. The special needs co-ordinator, who has only been in post since January 2002, has put in place a comprehensive and workable system, which is used and understood by all centre staff. A draft special educational needs policy is supporting the centre in its practice. The systems are currently being adapted to take account of the new Code of Practice. Communication between the co-ordinator and staff particularly involved with individual children is good. Provision is enhanced by regular input from a speech and language therapist and special needs support teacher who both visit weekly. Joint small-group sessions run by the speech and language therapist and centre staff mean that expertise is shared and therapy is continued throughout the week, leading to good progress. Regular reviews of children's progress are held and parents are involved. Children with special needs are well supported, have relevant targets and make good progress.
20. The centre makes good quality provision for children with English as an additional language, not least through the good emphasis placed on the settling and development of each child, and their full access to the wide range of activities provided. To meet the particular needs of these children, home language speakers are invited. Traditional stories are translated on tape and also in books into the relevant home language.

Unfortunately, however, children's absence means that these good facilities are not fully used.

21. The centre also makes good provision for children of minority ethnic backgrounds who may be in danger of underachieving. A specialist nursery nurse works with small groups that include these children, for example sharing carefully chosen books, questioning skilfully to check understanding. She is also involved in staff training to raise awareness.
22. Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Staff provide opportunities that are likely to foster children's sense of delight and amazement, especially in the natural world, for example studying tadpoles changing into frogs and looking at snails in the outdoor area. They capitalise on and seize the moment when unplanned events happen, for example a moth emerging from a chrysalis during breakfast club. All staff provide calm, consistent role models for the children's behaviour and set clear boundaries. Children are encouraged to take responsibility by helping to tidy up, putting equipment and resources back after they have used them, for example dressing-up clothes, and looking after their own belongings. The rich cultural diversity of the centre's staff, children, families and local community is celebrated through role-play, songs, musical instruments and visits, such as to a Chinese supermarket or Hindu temple. Children are supported in recognising that differences in cultural background are life enhancing. This is a very good feature of the centre.
23. There are good links with the local community and these bring substantial benefits to the centre. For example, at the time of the inspection sixth-form students from a neighbouring school, as part of their project work, were painting a brightly coloured mural on the outside wall of the centre, enhancing the environment and raising the centre's profile in the area. The children's artwork has been incorporated into the design, raising their self-esteem. Visitors to the centre, such as health visitors and the dental nurse, contribute to its provision of care for its children. The centre takes children on visits to a range of venues in the locality, such as shops, the library and a farm, enhancing curriculum provision. Links with the many primary schools to which children progress after their time at the centre are at present generally satisfactory. Contact has been made with all the schools, and staff from some of them visit the centre to meet the children before they transfer. However, there are as yet no curriculum links.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

24. The centre provides a very safe and secure environment for the children in its care. As a result, children can feel at ease and engage effectively in their daily activities. There are clearly signed emergency exits from all teaching areas, and fire drills take place regularly. An experienced member of staff undertakes frequent health-and-safety tours of the premises and any issues identified are dealt with promptly. There were no significant health and safety concerns observed by the inspection team. There is a fully trained first-aider on the staff and all staff have undertaken training in basic skills. Risk assessments are done as and when appropriate. The provision for child protection is very good. The headteacher, as the 'named person', is well trained, with extensive experience. All staff are well briefed, familiar with procedures, and vigilant.
25. There is a very high level of care, support and guidance available to both children and their parents. This contributes significantly to children's personal development by enhancing their social skills and their self-confidence. For example, as part of its family support role, the centre offers a twice weekly 'drop in' session for parents, including prospective parents. Family workers undertake home visits and provide individual advice as required. Care is provided throughout the whole day with breakfast and after-school clubs. At these, children engage in a range of purposeful activities which complement and reinforce those that take place during the school day. Nourishing meals are available and fresh fruit and drinking water are provided for snacks. Thus good eating habits are encouraged from an early age. A 'key worker' system, whereby each member of staff is responsible for a small number of children, ensures close monitoring of each child's progress and development.
26. All staff have been involved in drawing up a new behaviour policy. This is now applied consistently across the centre and is proving to be effective in establishing acceptable standards. Staff deal promptly and positively with individual lapses in behaviour. Children are well aware of what is expected of them. Thus the centre generally operates as an orderly community in which purposeful learning can take place. Attendance registers are generally well kept. Most parents inform the centre in good time if their child is to be absent. Where this does not happen, the centre makes enquiries. Usually a satisfactory explanation is obtained, though sometimes this is not recorded in the register, resulting in an apparently high level of unauthorised absence. Persistent absentees are de-registered and this provides a strong incentive for parents to ensure that their children attend regularly.
27. Assessment is satisfactory. At present there is no standardised baseline for children on entry to Foundation Stage so it is difficult for staff to be specific about how much progress children have made. However, assessment is ongoing and based on careful observations of children's achievements across all areas of learning. Children's needs are routinely evaluated and planning is modified daily to take account of individual needs and interests. In order to provide a clearer picture of children's strengths and areas for development these assessments now need to be developed to be more evaluative and linked to the 'stepping stones' that lead to the early learning goals in each area of learning. Half-termly targets for children, and the encouragement of parents to become involved in the building up of a 'record of achievement' by providing photographs and pictures from home, enhance the assessment system.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

28. Parents are generally well pleased with what the centre has to offer and the way in which it operates. In particular they like the environment, and the professional manner in which staff handle their children by controlling their behaviour and enabling them to make progress. They appreciate the improvements made by the acting headteacher. These they see as strengths of the centre. However, there are some minor concerns. As the acting headteacher works part-time, those parents whose children who attend only in the mornings feel that they do not have as much contact with her as they would like.
29. The centre keeps parents adequately informed about their children's progress. There is good rapport between parents and staff and this eases informal discussion, though sometimes opportunities for this are missed at hand-over and collection times. Parents receive a helpful annual written report on their children, but this could be improved by focusing in more detail on specific learning areas and by outlining the next learning steps. Both the prospectus for the centre and the governors' annual report to parents are generally satisfactory, though the former needs some clarification in the section describing next year's arrangements. There is a good regular newsletter that keeps parents well informed about the life of the centre.
30. Parental involvement in their children's learning and in the work of the centre is not extensive but is judged to be satisfactory overall. For example, parents contribute photographs for their child's record of achievement, some help children to choose books to take home, and some provide assistance by acting as escorts on visits. On the other hand there are no parents helping at present in the classrooms and there is no parent-staff association. The centre is aware of the need to develop the work with parents, which previously had a strong family and care emphasis. Effective family work is continuing, and indeed also expanding, as part of the centre's role, but a partnership with parents that includes the learning and education of the children is at an early stage. Parents are beginning to be encouraged to become more involved in the work of the centre and thus to make a greater contribution to their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

31. Selhurst Early Years Centre is well led and managed overall.
32. The acting headteacher, a retired, experienced headteacher, provides very good leadership. She has made a strong and effective impact on the work of the centre since her temporary, part-time appointment one-and-a-half terms ago, following a lengthy difficult and unsettled period for the centre. Many disruptions in staffing, including in leadership, delayed the development implicit in the transition, made four years ago, from a setting run by social services to an educational establishment. The appointment of a qualified teacher for the nursery class was delayed by recruitment difficulties that were resolved one-and-a-half terms ago also. The acting headteacher has used her extensive experience to good effect to identify and tackle, in a competent and purposeful way, relevant and immediate priorities that embrace all aspects of the work of the centre. She has worked hard to establish systems and procedures. She is keen to pave the way for the next stage in the centre's reorganisation next term, when the substantive headteacher takes up her post, and when most children will attend full-time. The centre is well placed to continue to develop and improve.
33. The acting headteacher leads the committed staff team effectively, encouraging teamwork. Staff share a common purpose in the care and education of young children and are keen to develop further the work of the centre. Relevant staff training is underway. The newly-established senior management team is fully supportive and

appropriately involved with all aspects of the work of the centre. Management systems are not yet established, however, to provide an overview of provision across the Foundation Stage. The teacher's experience and expertise are not yet being used to best effect in this respect. Plans are in hand for curriculum responsibilities to be established next term to ensure due emphasis for the development of each area of learning. The useful start being made with developing ICT is already impacting well on standards.

34. The governing body has not yet assumed its full responsibilities. It is not complete, pending the arrival of the substantive headteacher, and not all governors are actively involved or familiar with the work of the centre. However, some individual governors are very well placed, through personal professional expertise, to lead the group forward. Suitable systems and practices are beginning to be established. Appropriate and relevant aims are fulfilled effectively overall, especially with respect to providing stimulating experiences to foster children's learning. Everybody's contribution is valued. Cultural diversity is celebrated and embedded within the life of the centre. The partnership with parents is beginning.
35. Performance management arrangements are suitably on course, although delayed because of the changes. The acting headteacher is fully aware of the quality of the staff's work through informal monitoring observations and constructive professional discussions. Plans are now in hand to begin formal monitoring, with written feedback and developmental targets.
36. The centre has sufficient well-qualified and experienced staff to meet the demands of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The one teacher leads the nursery class team effectively whilst a senior nursery nurse competently leads the team for the class of younger children. Nursery officers are fully involved with the teaching process and make very good contributions to children's learning. Staff are deployed effectively. All staff, including family workers, administration staff and those who look after the building, as well as teaching staff, are committed to furthering the work of the centre.
37. Although the centre does not have a fully delegated budget, it takes reasonable steps to ensure that funds are used for their appropriate purposes and that expenditure is well linked to needs. The acting headteacher has taken responsibility for financial planning and this she does well. Her clear vision as to what needs to be done has been backed up by appropriate expenditure. Thus the budget is well understood and is on a sound footing, with appropriate procedures for financial control. Funds are clearly earmarked for future developments, for example the planned extension to the family room. The very large expenditure per pupil is no cause for concern as the income is used for all aspects of the work of the centre. The very high carry-forward in the previous financial year, now reduced, reflects monies allocated for planned building improvements and also a period with little spending on resources. Steps are in hand to increase the understanding and involvement of both the senior management team and the governing body in the finances of the centre. The most recent audit report listed a number of recommendations for improvement, most, though not all, of which have been addressed satisfactorily.
38. Accommodation is satisfactory. It provides a pleasing and welcoming environment, which is conducive to the well being and the education of the children, although it does have some drawbacks. The purpose-built centre is generally in a good state of repair and decoration. Although the internal play areas are of an adequate size, the linked classrooms are rather too small and this places restrictions on the easy movement of children and on their supervision. The barrier between the teaching areas and the main

entrance, although useful for health and safety purposes, tends to inhibit interaction between parents and staff at hand-over times. The very good toilet facilities for the children are kept scrupulously clean and well maintained, contributing substantially to children's welfare. The attractive garden is divided so that each class has its own space. However, the space allocated to younger children is too small and without free access to the exciting climbing equipment. Also, there is inadequate shade to protect children on hot, sunny days.

39. The ample quantity of appropriate learning resources, including for role-play and art work, challenging climbing frames, wheeled toys and large sand pits, enables children to be productively engaged indoors and outside. The listening centre, one of the popular resources for older children, is effective in encouraging them to work co-operatively, as several can use it together with headphones. Some resources, as the centre is aware, are in need of updating. Overall, the provision of learning resources is satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

40. In order to build on the existing good features of the centre's work with children in the Foundation Stage of education, and raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) Raise standards in communication, language and literacy by continuing to:
 - encourage talk and extend vocabulary;
 - provide regular focused activities to promote early reading and mark making;
 - extend children's ideas in imaginative and role-play.(Paragraphs 3, 10, 46 - 49, 64)
 - (2) Raise standards in mathematical development, as already identified by the centre as a priority, by:
 - providing regular focused activities
 - raising the profile of mathematics in the centre;
 - providing training.(Paragraphs 4, 51 - 53)
 - (3) For older children, review the overall balance of activities between those that are adult-led and those that they select for themselves, to include learning indoors and outdoors.
(Paragraphs 13, 16)

In addition to the issues above, the following recommendations should be considered for inclusion in the centre's action plan:

- (1) Find ways to provide an overview of children's learning across the Foundation Stage.
(Paragraph 33)
- (2) Review the use of the outside area, as already identified by the centre.
(Paragraphs 18, 38, 62)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	9	6	0	0	0
Percentage	0	6	56	38	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of sessions observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each session represents more than six percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils who are in the Foundation Stage

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	28
Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	6

	%
School data	2

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 for Foundation Stage pupils

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	283.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	3
--------------------------------	---

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
----------------	-----------

NB These figures refer to the centre as a whole.

	£
Total income	466,564
Total expenditure	437,260
Expenditure per pupil	8,409
Balance brought forward from previous year	82,962
Balance carried forward to next year	112,266

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	34
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.	75	25	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	33	8	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	33	8	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	33	22	11	11
The teaching is good.	58	33	8	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	58	0	17	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	25	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	50	8	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	42	0	8	0
The school is well led and managed.	58	33	0	8	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	33	0	8	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	33	0	8	0

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

41. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development is good, enabling children to make good progress from some low starting points. Attainment is broadly in line with expectations. Most children are on course to reach the early learning goals set nationally for this area of learning, by the end of the reception year in primary school. Most children are developing good attitudes to learning. They are interested in the activities that the centre staff provide and are keen to get involved. Many children can concentrate and maintain attention, particularly when supported by good teaching and resources. A story told with the use of props in the class for two and three-year-olds is an example of this. Children are developing confidence and building self-esteem. The younger three-year-olds can leave their parents and carers and are happy to approach the centre staff for help when needed, for example, to put their shoes and socks on after playing in the outside sand. Some four-year-olds are able to respond to significant experiences appropriately, for example when looking at tadpoles in a tank and discovering that some are developing legs.
42. Behaviour and self-control are satisfactory overall, although there are variations in both classes. Some children are clear about expectations and are happy to conform, taking part in activities and sharing equipment, whilst others are testing the boundaries regularly. The staff handle instances of inappropriate behaviour well. Their consistent, calm, firm and clear approach is generally effective. The centre's behaviour policy is supporting them in this. Most children have positive and trusting relationships with the staff and are beginning to make positive relationships with each other. Many four-year-olds find this area of their learning difficult and are quite immature in their development. The staff are all working hard to promote good relationships particularly through role-play activities and through the positive ethos of the centre.
43. Children are encouraged to be independent. Many of the three-year-olds attempt to put on their coats before going outside and children confidently help themselves and others to water from the 'water coolers'. Children respond well to the active encouragement from staff to celebrate and respect individual differences and cultures.
44. There is a scheme of work for personal and social development, but at present the area is not co-ordinated. In order for progress to continue this needs to be addressed.

Communication, language and literacy

45. When children begin the Foundation Stage, the attainment of most children in language, and also early reading and the beginnings of writing and mark making, is below expectations. By the time they leave the centre, aged four to four-and-a-half, despite good teaching overall, standards are below national expectations in this area of learning. The teaching team has not been established for long enough to significantly impact on standards. Staff are not yet able to fully compensate for children's low starting points. Children with special educational needs make good progress toward their individual targets. The progress of children with English as an additional language is sometimes limited by absence. Higher-attaining children do not always achieve as well as they could through some lack of challenge.

46. Standards for four-year-olds in speaking and listening are below what is to be expected. Children are keen to talk and offer relevant comments, for example at story times. Their simple sentences and phrases are not always grammatically correct. Speech is often unclear and vocabulary is limited. Three and four-year-olds listen well in direct teaching situations such as story times or when working individually with the teacher. At other times they listen less well, and the teacher and nursery officers work hard to maintain attention.
47. Standards for four-year-olds in early reading are below expectations. Older children handle books appropriately, turning pages and looking carefully at the pictures. Children are interested in books, and enjoy the stories. When choosing their own activities, one or two children are generally to be seen looking at books. They know the purpose of print and at story times they join in with repetitive words and simple phrases. They use their developing knowledge of initial sounds to make reasonable attempts to read each other's names. They recognise their own name but few other familiar words. Higher attaining children are not challenged well enough in this respect.
48. Standards for four-year-olds in early writing are below expectations. Older children make letter-like shapes in their developing writing but few can write their names accurately as yet. They use writing implements appropriately in self-chosen activities such as role-play, for example when booking a holiday in the travel agent's shop.
49. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good overall, enabling children to learn effectively. Staff encourage talk well, for example in spontaneous play and at story times. They give good emphasis to particular words such as 'forlorn' in a story for the older children. They join in role-play to encourage and extend conversations. They set careful guidelines to encourage attentive listening to stories, and as a result, three and four-year-olds generally listen well. Staff often work with small groups or individual children to ensure their active listening and attention. Staff place a high daily profile on books, for example through story times, good access to comfortable book corners, and stories on tape for children's use with headphones. Staff share books spontaneously with individual children. As a result, children's interest and learning about books are progressing well, although higher attaining children are not always challenged well enough to enable them to move forward at a faster pace. Teaching of sounds and letters, for example, does not have a high profile. The teaching of writing receives less daily emphasis than early reading. Writing activities are provided in a variety of situations. Staff provide a range of writing implements and suitably act as scribe to 'translate' the children's own 'writing'. A good emphasis is placed on writing names. Overall, however, there are not enough regular focused tasks for older children to develop mark-making skills or to increase their knowledge of sounds and letters. Staff make good home-language provision for children with English as an additional language with tapes, stories and home language speaking visitors. Children's absence unfortunately limits the effect of this good provision. Children with speech and language difficulties are supported effectively by regular frequent sessions with the visiting speech therapist.

50. Co-ordination of this area of learning is carried out through informal liaison between the nursery class teacher and the senior nursery nurse in charge of the younger class. Useful daily observations contribute suitably to an overall picture of children's achievements and guide future planning.

Mathematical development

51. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. Standards for four-year-olds, however, are below expectations, reflecting some low starting points and also a lack of regular focused sessions to promote mathematical development. Older children are not always doing as well as they could in this area. Four-year-olds count to five, some, as when counting dinosaurs, with support. They are becoming aware of basic shapes such as squares, triangles and ovals through printing activities. They look at pattern via stories such as 'Elmer the Elephant'. They begin to solve problems such as the best size of container for pouring water into the sandpit – a scoop is found to be too small, a bucket is better. Higher-attaining three-year-olds can count to five, pointing correctly to the items. Some are beginning to recognise numerals such as '6' on a tricycle in the outdoor area.
52. Teaching staff are good at picking up and extending children's learning through their interests. For example, a nursery nurse supporting younger children, who were looking at paper money, suitably drew their attention to the numbers, 'Look, this is £50 which is more than £20'. In the nursery class, a nursery nurse working with children playing with trains talked about a 'long train' and asked how many carriages there were. Staff reinforce mathematical learning incidentally in planned activities for example to practise counting in stories, or emphasise mathematical language when painting flags - 'across', 'small', 'medium', or 'large' as well as colour names. On too few occasions staff talk with children about putting numbers together, as in 'one more'. Opportunities to extend children's developing calculating skills through daily routines are sometimes lost.
53. The scheme of work takes account of the five broad areas in mathematics. Foundation Stage children in both classes are being offered appropriate activities to support their mathematical development across this range. Overall, however, there are too few planned focused activities in mathematics for older children. In addition, there is no consistent co-ordinated approach or policy as to how and when concepts and areas of mathematics will be taught, or systems to record which areas and concepts have been covered. This is impacting on the standards in mathematics and hindering children's progress. As the centre is aware, these are issues which have implications for staff training and which need to be addressed with some urgency. Resources are satisfactory. Good links are made to other curriculum areas such as art and role-play. Arabic and Ghanaian numbers are displayed on the walls, recognising and supporting children for whom these are familiar.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

54. By the age of four-and-a-half, most children are on course to attain the early learning goals in this area of learning.
55. In scientific aspects, children attain satisfactory standards. They are keen to explore and find out about living things. They use magnifiers appropriately to look closely, at flowers, for example, or seeds. They are stimulated effectively by a visit to a garden centre and continue to show high levels of interest in class and in the garden. They

observe tadpoles carefully, and are duly amazed as they change. Provision of good direct experiences has a positive impact on the children's learning.

56. In ICT aspects of this area of learning, children do well. Many children manipulate the mouse with confidence to move images on the screen as, for example, when moving shapes to complete a large outline shape, such as a house or a circle. They are beginning to use the directional keys. They play happily with technological equipment such as a digital camera in play situations, imitating the staff, who make good use of this form of technology. Three-year-olds are also making good strides with their developing ICT skills. Children are encouraged effectively in this aspect through the interest and expertise of staff. Outcomes of recent training and individual working with the children are impacting positively on standards.
57. Children are gaining a good appreciation of different cultures. The wide cultural diversity of children and staff is used to very good effect. Expertise and direct experience of other countries such as Ghana, stimulates and promotes children's learning well. Visits, for example to Brixton market, are valuable in furthering children's cultural understanding, as are books and pictures and authentic multi-cultural dressing-up clothes. Children are also gaining a good appreciation of other places, building effectively on their prior experience from home. Staff make good use of the globe to raise children's awareness of other countries. As a result children are very interested, and some are beginning to identify basic physical features such as the sea. The local area is used to good effect through visits, for example to the library or to a Chinese supermarket in preparation for Chinese New Year.
58. In design and technology aspects of this area of learning, children's attainment is below expectations. They build with construction equipment but need the nursery officer's support and careful questioning to draw out ideas, for example about how to develop the design of the layout or how to build a bridge. Children make simple items such as sunglasses, but some need considerable help, for example to use scissors effectively.
59. Teaching in this area of learning is good, enabling the children to make good gains in their learning overall. Staff capitalise well on children's interests and their natural curiosity. They encourage them to investigate and explore. The interest and enthusiasm of staff is infectious and stimulates learning effectively, for example about the natural world or about other countries. As a result children return to aspects of previous learning and experience, such as searching for snails in the garden, or requesting an action rhyme from a nursery officer's Ghanaian childhood.
60. Co-ordination of this area of learning is informal, with the nursery class teacher and senior nursery nurse liaising over long term plans and daily activities. Several staff members are taking on aspects of responsibility for the development of ICT following recent national training.

Physical development

61. By the age of four-and-a-half, children's attainment in this area of learning is broadly satisfactory. It is better in the way children use the whole of their bodies than in their fine hand and finger movements. Children move about the centre with confidence. They enjoy moving in a variety of ways on the climbing equipment, climbing up, hanging from their hands, or swinging on a knotted rope, for example. They make reasonable attempts at catching, throwing, and kicking balls. They ride tricycles with confidence, and some children, including younger children, can ride a bicycle. Children use their hands and fingers suitably, to roll and cut play dough, for example, or put construction

bricks together. They do not always hold implements such as paintbrushes well, and opportunities are sometimes missed to teach an effective grip. Some children find it difficult to use scissors and only do so with careful support. There was little evidence during the inspection of children's awareness of the importance of keeping healthy.

62. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is satisfactory. Little direct teaching in this area was observed during the inspection. Staff enter into children's chosen activities effectively to promote their physical skills, but planned physical activities that are led by an adult are less frequent. Staff provide a good variety of equipment to support children's physical development, particularly skills of bodily movement and control. Challenging climbing frames encourage children to practise physical skills, with scope to explore, be adventurous, or play imaginatively. The spacious garden provides good opportunities for older children to run and be energetic. Younger children do not have the same access to this equipment, to climbing and to adventurous play, and to space as children in the nursery class. The good selection of wheeled vehicles, especially tricycles, promotes children's balancing and co-ordination skills effectively. Through a variety of small apparatus such as hoops, bats and small balls, and footballs, staff provide suitable opportunities for children to play co-operatively, and practise manipulative skills. They enable children to practise hand and finger control, for example through the use of writing and painting implements, and small building bricks. Patient individual support is effective in developing children's use of tools although opportunities are sometimes missed.
63. Management of this area of learning across the Foundation Stage is carried out through informal liaison over long-term planning and daily activities. Guidelines are not yet in place to promote children's development across all aspects of physical development. Roles and responsibilities are not yet assigned, pending the arrival of the substantive headteacher.

Creative development

64. Teaching across the creative area of learning is good overall, especially in art and imaginative play. In music it is satisfactory. Standards in creative development are as expected except in imaginative play where they are below expectations despite the good teaching input, reflecting children's low starting points, particularly in language development.
65. Foundation Stage children in both classes experience a wide range of art activities, both two- and three-dimensional. They are encouraged to experiment with colour and texture and are introduced to a variety of techniques including printing, bubble painting and drawing. They are enabled to work individually and as part of a group, for example drawing round each other and then painting inside the outlines. Cross-curricular links are exploited well, for example children painting flags from different countries as part of the holiday topic. ICT is used to good effect, impacting well on standards. For example, a three-year-old child was observed competently experimenting using a drawing program.
66. Children enjoy singing and are keen to have a go at playing a musical instrument. The three-year-olds are beginning to join in with words and actions and the four-year-olds are beginning to develop a sense of rhythm. The teacher takes the opportunity appropriately to make sure that children know how to play the various instruments and are introduced to their names. Children with special educational needs are well supported by the use of 'Makaton' signing. Although some singing was seen in the few

spare minutes at the end of story times, opportunities for singing and music making were missed during the sessions.

67. Role-play is used well throughout the centre both indoors and out, in domestic play situations in the home corner and hairdressers, and in situations related to the topic, such as the travel agency and holiday villa. This area of the curriculum is well supported by good resources, for example clothes from other countries. Staff are good at playing alongside to support children act out scenarios but often have to work hard to maintain a story line particularly when children are needing to think imaginatively.
68. There is a scheme of work for this area of learning but as yet no co-ordination or policy. These would further support children's creative development.