

## INSPECTION REPORT

**REDCLIFFE EARLY EXCELLENCE/CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

Bristol

LEA area: City of Bristol

Unique reference number: 108904

Head of Centre: Mary Blight

Lead inspector: Georgina Beasley

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 265583

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE CENTRE

Type of school:	Early Year's Centre
School category:	Community
Age range of children:	1 - 4
Gender of children:	Mixed
Number on roll;	80
Centre address:	Spencer House Ship Lane Redcliffe Bristol
Postcode:	BS1 6RR
Telephone number:	0117 9030334
Fax number:	0117 3773323
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Tony Whatmough
Date of previous inspection:	12 <sup>th</sup> July 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CENTRE

Redcliffe Early Children's Centre is situated close to the centre of Bristol in an area of significant social deprivation. For this reason it became An Early Years Centre in September 2000, an Early Excellence Centre in April 2003 and an Early Children's Centre in September 2003. It provides a wide range of services to local families and the community, including a nursery, education and care for children under three, Toddler Group, crèche facilities, mother and toddler groups, family learning and community outreach facilities. A play scheme runs every holiday. Fifty-nine children attend the nursery or under three group. About half attend full time and half part time. There is a very wide diversity of cultures and ethnic backgrounds including Indian, Pakistani, Caribbean, African, Chinese, white and mixed heritage. Most are of white UK heritage. An above average number of children speak a language in addition to English. Many children start nursery with attainment much lower than average. Nine children, an above average proportion, are identified as having special educational needs. None have a statement of their needs. Thirty per cent, an above average proportion, are eligible for free school meals. A neighbourhood nursery is due to be opened this month. The Centre received an Achievement Award last year because the children made good progress, and an Inclusion Award in recognition of its commitment to ensuring all children are fully included in the Centre activities.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27899	Mrs G Beasley	Lead inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Communication, language and literacy Knowledge and understanding of the world Special educational needs English as an additional language
9577	Mrs E Parrish	Lay inspector	
21378	Mrs J Harding	Team inspector	Mathematical development Creative development Physical development

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This Centre is a very special place for children to learn and play. The very broad and rich provision is **excellent**. It creates an excitement for learning and enables children to thrive from the moment they step inside. An excellent range of services for education and health are provided and, as a result, everyone enjoys learning. Families look forward to coming regularly to the pre-birth group and drop in sessions for toddlers, courses and other activities. High quality provision ensures that the children consistently achieve very well. Teaching and learning are very good because all adults are dedicated to provide what the children need to help them grow into extremely confident young people. Leadership and management are very good. Leadership of the head is excellent. Effective practice based on innovation has brought about a transformation of the Centre's work in recent years, including excellent provision for families and the local community. The Centre gives **excellent** value for money.

The Centre's main strengths are:

- All children achieve very well because of consistently very good provision.
- The head has excellent leadership and vision, which she uses to inspire all those who work at the Centre to strive for the very best for all children.
- The children grow into extremely well rounded individuals because of the stimulating and carefree atmosphere in which they work and play and which is built on excellent care and relationships.
- Children learn very effectively because teaching is consistently of a high quality.
- Children relish learning because the things planned for them to do are rigorous and exciting, and built around their personal interests and choices.
- The Centre provides an exceptional range of services to families and the local community which it serves.

There are no significant weaknesses which affect the provision.

Improvement since the previous inspection is **excellent**. All areas identified in need of improvement have been dealt with extremely effectively. The range of services have extended so that families start coming to the Centre before their babies are born and can take advantage of the provision until their child starts school. This is because of the excellent range of services on site, which provides for health, education and care side by side. The Centre is now a 'One Stop Shop' for families and the local community in the provision for early learning and education.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children's achievement is **very good** overall. It is excellent in personal, social and emotional development. Just over half of the children start at the Centre with low levels of social skills. They all make excellent progress and are extremely confident and independent learners by the time they leave the nursery. Children question, plan, make choices and decisions and look after their own and others' needs extremely well. Nearly all of the children exceed the expected goals in this area of learning by the time they start school. Nearly all children have poor language skills when they first attend the groups, which take place in the Centre. Due to the consistently very well planned and organised opportunities combined with strong encouragement for them to talk and listen to adults and to each other, they make very good progress and are on track to reach the goals they are expected to by the time they start school in their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Small group activities are mostly very good. When the children work in small groups for targeted work at their levels of ability, they make excellent progress. On these occasions, those with special educational needs and those who are more able achieve extremely well. Similar very good progress is made in all of the other areas of learning so that by the time they start school nearly all children are reaching the goals they are expected to in their mathematical development, their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their creative and physical development. Due to the focus given to children's personal development, their learning speeds up the longer they stay at the Centre.

There is **excellent** provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and this ensures **excellent** attitudes to learning and **very good** behaviour overall. Children get along very well together. The very few squabbles that occur are soon sorted out, often by themselves. Attendance is **satisfactory**.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of provision is consistently **very good**. Some aspects are excellent. The Centre is a hive of activity from the moment the children come in the morning or afternoon, until the time they leave. Teaching and learning are very good overall. A significant amount of outstanding practice was seen during the inspection, especially during 'work time'. Well-timed interaction between adults and children challenges thinking and enables all children to try and find their own solutions to problems. This speeds up their learning. Questions are used particularly well to probe the children's understanding and extend their ideas and thoughts. Daily evaluations allow adults to share information and this is used very effectively to plan further activities to nurture the children's learning. The children are totally involved in organising their own learning, during planning time and work time and when they work in their key groups, and this means they have an acute knowledge of how well they are doing. This is outstanding for children of this age.

The curriculum is very good. It is innovative and highly effective. The new curriculum for babies and children under-three feeds seamlessly into the learning, which takes place in the nursery. This builds the children's confidence because when children move into the main nursery, the organisation is similar. Children receive excellent care and real concern for their welfare. Assessment procedures and the use of information are very good overall. When the information is used to plan work in very small groups with work that is targeted to particular needs, learning is excellent. Links with parents are very good. The Centre finds out what parents feel they need and tries its best to organise this. The Centre is at the heart of the community. Various professionals concerned with young children work in the Centre and this means that it is fast becoming the community's base for local health and education services.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership of the head of Centre is **excellent**. She inspires all those who come into contact with the Centre to strive for excellence. Everyone works extremely well together for the benefit of the children and this means that high quality provision is consistently in place. The leadership of key practitioners is very good. The management is **very good**. As a result, a lot has been achieved in a very short time. The Centre development plan outlines those areas it wants to develop further. This is not yet fully costed because funds have only just been delegated to the Centre to manage.

The governing body gives good support. It is very new and has been fully involved in determining the work of the Centre and has helped to establish the lovely atmosphere enjoyed by all extremely successfully. Governors' commitment to make sure the families who use the Centre get the best they can provide is evident. They are now in a position to challenge and question what is happening and in this way make sure that the Centre goes from strength to strength.

### **PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE CENTRE**

Parents hold the Centre in very high regard. They are very appreciative of what it does for them and their children. The children are very adamant that their nursery is the best place to be. They love coming and are busy all day every day.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

There are no significant areas that the Centre needs to improve. Possible minor improvements are already known and being put into place.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning**

Achievement is **very good** overall. By the time the children start school nearly all are on track to reach the goals expected in all areas of learning. More children than usual will exceed these in their personal, social and emotional development.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make excellent progress in their personal development.
- Children under-two make very good progress because they follow the same structure as those in the nursery.
- Children with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Children who speak a language in addition to English achieve very well.
- Achievement is often outstanding during 'work time'.

#### **Commentary**

1. Many children start at the nursery with skills, which are much lower than usual, especially in their social and language development. Achievement is excellent in their personal, social and emotional development so that by the time they start school, they are all confident individuals who are keen to learn and happy to make choices. Adults place great emphasis on developing the children as people first and this means they develop self-confidence and feel special extremely quickly. This approach to learning starts from the moment they step inside the Centre with their parents or carers. They soak up the busy atmosphere and are soon involved in activity. This could be as toddlers alongside their parents, as babies in the crèche or on their own in the under three group or in the nursery. Adults organise a range of activity areas, which enables them to decide for themselves what they want to do and try new activities without fear of failure because they know that they can learn by their mistakes. As a result, all children are on track to attain the goals expected in their personal, social and emotional development and a good number will exceed these.
2. The way the nursery is organised enables the children to develop their communication skills very well. 'Welcome Time' is an enjoyable time for all the family, as parents, carers, younger brother and sisters and grandparents join in with the day's starting activity. Familiar songs and hand signing is used very effectively to welcome the children to the session and each day has a different focus to develop specific areas of learning and skills. This structure makes the children feel secure and the well-established routines help them settle quickly to the day. Very good opportunities are planned for the children to talk to each other and adults, to negotiate turns and offer ideas. 'Planning Time' at the beginning and 'Review Time' at the end help all of the children in turn to make decisions about what they plan to do each day. Ideas are developed and extended and, as a result, all of the children put forward ideas and describe afterwards what they did and why. Achievement is very good because the children build on their low start very well to reach the expected goals by the time they start school.
3. Mathematical skills are developed very well and achievement is very good. Children learn through games and practical activities, which enable them to gain a good knowledge and understanding of numbers, shapes and measures. Children enjoy playing on the computer to count and find the matching number and they all join in with the games because they can see the excitement and fun others are having. By the time they start school, nearly all are reaching the expected goals for their age.
4. Activities are very well planned to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world and the immediate area in which they live. Achievement is very good. All children develop

a good awareness of their local area and of the full range of cultures and beliefs of the people they know. Creative and physical skills are developed very well and achievement is very good. Nearly all children are on track to attain the goals expected in these areas of learning by the time they start school.

5. Children with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve very well because the organisation of the day enables them to get the one to one support they need to succeed. Timely intervention and high quality interaction from adults ensure that all children are challenged and supported and this helps them to learn more from their chosen activity. 'Work time' is so well organised that at times achievement for all children is outstanding, for example, as they learn to climb to higher heights on the apparatus, ride the trikes using the pedals for the first time, noticing the shoots appearing on their bean plants or solving a problem to guide the remote control car around obstacles, or to build a bridge tall enough to let the children under.

### **Children' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Children have **excellent** attitudes to learning and behave **very well**. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **excellent**. Attendance is **satisfactory** and they nearly all arrive on time.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children love coming to the Centre and think that learning is fun.
- They show lively curiosity and enthusiasm in all they do because staff make everything seem so exciting.
- Children sustain interest and concentration for long periods.
- Children have a very good awareness of how they are expected to behave because staff manage behaviour so consistently and are scrupulously fair.
- There are excellent relationships throughout the Centre.
- Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and permeates every aspect of their learning.

### **Commentary**

6. Children's attitudes, values and personal development are excellent and this shows a commendable improvement since the previous inspection. The staff team works tirelessly to provide a rich and exciting environment for the children in their care, which ensures that children love coming to the Centre. Children's eyes light up with anticipation when they arrive in the morning because they know they are going to enjoy the day's activities.
7. Children settle down quickly in their group activities and are keen to take part, frequently showing remarkable powers of concentration and becoming totally absorbed in their task. This was seen, for example, when one group used paints to explore different skin tones and facial features and again when another group learned to fix the wheels on their trikes to make them safe. Exciting activities capture their interest and children are engrossed as they learn how interlocking pieces can be manipulated to make a range of models and how to operate a torch and make the light change colour. There are frequent smiles and laughter from the children as they join in eagerly and get such fun from their learning.
8. The children learn to behave very well because staff are consistent in implementing the behaviour policy in a clear, yet firm way. When children find it difficult to share, a member of staff will explain quietly what is expected and suggest ways in which they can take turns, sometimes using an egg timer to explain how much time is left. No child is made to feel awkward but encouraged to see things from another's point of view. Children were heard to apologise spontaneously when they had done something wrong and *"Stop it - I don't like it"* when someone interrupted them. They learn to walk away to avoid squabbles; *"I want to be*

*somewhere else - will you help me?*“ a child was heard to say. This gives them great confidence in their relationships and heightens their self-esteem. The way in which small groups of children were absorbed in their activities demonstrates just how well children work and play together.

9. Provision for children’s personal development is excellent and is the very backbone of the whole curriculum. All daily routines are carried out calmly, consistently and with absolute clarity so that no child is left in any doubt about what is expected. There are excellent relationships throughout the Centre and children rapidly develop high levels of independence, self-esteem and sensitivity to others. They show initiative, learn to make sensible decisions about how to spend their time and take responsibility for tidying up after themselves. Features such as the shells, plants and flowers in the garden and music at welcome time are used to engage children’s feelings. Each child is considered to have something special to celebrate and each of their contributions in group work is greatly valued. Moral development is encouraged very well as children are taught right from wrong and encouraged to reflect on how their actions affect others. They are taught to be patient, not only with each other, but also with themselves by persevering with a task. Children show very good levels of self-discipline and can be trusted to work on their own and to behave responsibly. Their social development is the key to everything the Centre does. Staff provide excellent role models through their teamwork, good humour and the way in which they help each other and children learn to follow this good example. Children are beginning to recognise the needs of others. When working, for example, at a group review time, they are willing to take their turn and listen to their friends’ contributions. They are given much praise and encouragement from staff and this serves to reinforce their very good behaviour very well. Their cultural development is carefully nurtured through celebrations of many religious festivals, by visits to the church and to the mosque. The welcome session offers an excellent opportunity to celebrate the diverse backgrounds of the children, for example, by singing in Spanish or Panjabi, by celebrating the Chinese New Year or tasting different foods.
10. Attendance is satisfactory. A member of staff greets each child as they arrive and notes their attendance in a register. There are good procedures for recording and reporting absences. Parents are encouraged to ensure their children attend regularly and, if this presents difficulties, staff will do their utmost to support the family to overcome any problems.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE CENTRE**

The quality of education is **very good** with outstanding aspects. Teaching and learning are **very good** overall. The way the Centre cares for the children’s health, safety and welfare is **excellent**. Parents’ contributions are valued and this ensures they provide **very good** support to their children’s learning at home and at the Centre. Links with the local community and other schools are **excellent**.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are **very good** overall. Outstanding practice is evident on many occasions. Assessment is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The focus on developing independent learning skills ensures the children make excellent progress in their personal development.
- The structure of the day supports the children’s confidence and they feel secure.
- Timely interaction between the children and adults as they work and play together enables learning to be built on individual needs very well.
- In some instances, planning for individual children’s learning within small group activities does not always meet the needs of all of the children in the group.
- When small group time activities take account of children’s previous achievement, learning is excellent.

## Commentary

11. The quality of teaching is very good overall. It ranges from satisfactory to excellent. The quality of learning during 'work time' is consistently very good and sometimes excellent. This is because adults regularly share information about how well the children are doing so they know all the children very well. They consequently use the information very effectively to interact with the children at just the right moment to guide their learning. In small group time, when activities are very well matched to individual children's needs and assessment information is used to make smaller groups to work on different tasks, learning is excellent and the children achieve extremely well. There has been excellent improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 sessions.

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	11	9	6	0	0	0

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

12. On first observation, it is very difficult to see the structure of the day. This is because the children are totally engrossed in planning their own learning and deciding for themselves what they want to do. Adults help them do this very well by responding to their needs and talking to them about how they can improve and extend what they are learning. When looked at closely, the day is extremely well structured and this helps the children settle quickly to their work and play. The under three group follows the same pattern to the day and this means routines are established early and they are very familiar with how learning takes place by the time they move through to the nursery.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### **Learning during work time and when the children work in smaller focused groups is often outstanding because adults join in with the children's play, leading through participation.**

The story of 'Blue Rabbit' set the scene for meaningful role-play in which the children developed a range of skills in all areas of learning. By splitting the children into two groups, the teacher was able to focus on specific skills according to their ability and experience. One group became totally involved in making the trikes' wheels safe for riding, developing their physical skills of tightening nuts, finding the words they needed to make an order for new parts, and counting the number of nuts they would need to fix the wheel, pedals and handle bars. The teacher used a toy telephone to order parts and which the children copied, acted out different parts of the story to enliven the children's imaginations and structured the activity by asking astute questions 'Are you sure the trike is safe? How can you test it out?' A second group were creating a different ending to the story by acting out their ideas with another adult. Their ideas were highly creative and imaginative due to the freedom they were given, being able to act out their ideas rather than talking about them and telling the adult what part they should play. Afterwards, because the children had all been so involved, they talked avidly about what they had done and the ideas they had created. As a result of this outstanding interaction, the children chose to carry on with the activity during work time, modelling the play for other children who joined in.

13. Questions are used very effectively at all times to find out what the children are thinking and to help them develop their ideas and find their own solutions to problems. During planning time, for example, the children are encouraged to consider what they will do when they choose to play with certain toys or take part in certain activities. This makes them think beyond play to what they can learn. This time is used very effectively to extend the children's vocabulary and establish good listening so by the time they start school most children have good listening skills. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, which found some children did not listen particularly well. While those who have just started nursery and attend part time find it

more difficult to listen, they are developing these skills well. The children's ideas are followed up very well during 'review time' to give the children chance to say how well they have done. This enables them to gain a very good understanding of what they have learnt during the session and helps them to build on this later in the day if they stay for the afternoon as well.

14. All children learn very well, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. During 'work time' the children benefit from the high quality and timely interaction from adults as they play alongside and with their friends. When this support is focussed in one to one activities, they make excellent progress because they receive the attention they need to succeed. When children work together in small group time, adults try to respond to the needs of everyone in the group and this doesn't always give the children the support they need to extend their skills. When activities are organised so the children work in smaller groups on tasks matched to their abilities, learning is excellent because they build on their previous knowledge and understanding extremely effectively.
15. Assessment is very good and the information is used very effectively in planning future learning. It is rigorous but easily workable. Very thorough checks on children's levels of skill, knowledge and understanding are made when they first join the nursery and their progress is measured against this until they leave. Professionals from health and social services are involved in assessments when appropriate. The curriculum is planned so that it is possible to evaluate how well individual children are doing and adjustments can easily be made if there is something that needs reinforcing. The staff have very regular meetings to discuss progress and this means that all the different professionals are familiar with how children are doing and whether further input is necessary. Good use is made of photographs to record children working and these are added to their records. Very good records of achievement are kept, however, these could be even better if all children's work kept was dated so that comparisons over time can be made. Children with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those who may be more able are identified very quickly and given support and work according to their needs. The assessment of their achievement is shared with parents and is detailed and useful to staff for future planning. The development of the curriculum to promote thinking skills is a current priority for the Centre's staff. The assessment of these skills has still to be refined.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **very good** and is enriched **very well** through a very wide range of visits and visitors. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for all areas of learning is planned very well.
- The work planned is innovative and based very well on accepted ideas about how young children learn.
- The curriculum provides very well for children of all abilities and backgrounds.
- The activities planned to promote children's personal, social and emotional development are excellent.
- Children are prepared very well to join reception classes in other schools.
- The Centre is well staffed and the accommodation and resources are good.

### **Commentary**

16. The very good curriculum is the bedrock of the excellent work done in this Centre. The staff know what the children need and how to give it to them. All the teaching is based on the belief that children need to feel secure and need to interact well with adults and each other to be able to learn effectively. The planned curriculum guarantees that any barriers to learning, such as shyness, lack of previous experiences, learning difficulties or emotional problems, are removed. It ensures that children become very competent learners. The staff have very good

knowledge and understanding of the well proven theories about how children learn, and have put these ideas into practice very well. There is an entirely appropriate emphasis on children's play, which is their work. There is a very good mix of more formal work in small groups, individual work, and self-chosen activities by the children, which ensures that they have some control over their own learning. All activities are rightly based on the format of planning, doing and reviewing what has been done. The detailed planning of the activities allows staff to assess how well children are doing and to plan for future learning.

17. The organisation of what is taught has been done very well. The learning intentions for all activities are clearly identified. Planned activities are organised in such a way to ensure that resources are used very well, that key vocabulary is taught and that key questions are asked. All parts of the curriculum are totally integrated with each other by planning topics and themes, but there is sufficient flexibility to follow the children's own ideas and interests as they arise. The only way that the curriculum could be better is to give more opportunity to follow up aspects of the planning that had not been sufficiently well developed because the focus of an activity changed. The curriculum has improved very well since the previous inspection as it now includes detailed information about how it can be monitored and evaluated.
18. There is an excellent emphasis on the provision for children's personal, social and emotional development with the result that, in this area of learning, children achieve extremely well and want to learn. Children understand what they need to do and feel understood. The curriculum is organised so that children use all their senses. The locality and community are used well to promote all areas of learning. These activities are fun, but challenging, and so children's attitudes to their learning are excellent. The outdoor areas are used imaginatively to promote children's physical skills as well as their intellectual and personal development. Children acquire self-esteem and an acceptance of difference because the curriculum is very broad and planned very well to ensure a wide coverage of aspects of cultural diversity. Children are given exciting opportunities to learn about cultures and faiths that may not be their own and this has ensured an acceptance that we are all different but all special. This is the very early basis of religious education in schools. Further development of this curriculum is planned for this year to strengthen what is already very good provision.
19. The planned curriculum starts very early and the staff have devised a very good programme for children from birth to three which is intended to provide a continuum of experiences for the earliest years until children go to school at four. This curriculum, quite rightly, is based on the key experiences and skills, which are promoted in the planning for the areas of learning for the under-fives. An important part of the curriculum planning is the way that parents and carers are involved as much as possible in helping their child. Parents are assisted in this by training programmes.
20. In this seamless planning talking is the most important factor. The curriculum is particularly effective in promoting children's communication and thinking skills. Thinking skills are taught in an organised way. Thinking begins with wonder so the children are provided with experiences that are full of wonder. The children love to talk about these experiences and the planned development of their language is also improving their enquiry and reasoning skills. This ensures that they have a secure base for learning in subjects such as mathematics and science when they join their primary school. The stimulating activities and skilful questioning by staff leads to children demonstrating very good creative thinking, which sets them up very well to take a full part in the artistic and creative aspects of the main school curriculum. Children are encouraged to ask questions, discuss alternative ways of doing things, and reflect on what has happened. As they feel at ease with adults they try to express what they may not fully understand and the staff help them with their acquisition of a wider vocabulary. The result of this sensitive planning for language development is that children are resourceful and resilient, and they respond in a way that shows that they have listened and taken on board what has been going on.

21. Staff plan extremely well to cope with the needs of all children. There is special provision for those children who have been identified as more able and, as a result, the learning of these children is very good. There is also special help given to those children who have speech and language difficulties, and those who have other special educational needs. These times are well organised so that they do not miss out on the range of planned activities as the support is given through interaction at 'Work Time' or during small group work.
22. The accommodation is good overall. Although some of the indoor areas are small for the numbers of children, staff use the space very effectively to support children's learning. The outdoor accommodation has been imaginatively designed to provide an exciting play space with a sensory area, a place where children can write and draw, a place to climb, a quiet space and a circuit for children to ride their trikes. There are good resources throughout the Centre with a wide range of toys and equipment to provide for all areas of learning.
23. There is a very good match of teachers and a generous number of support staff to provide very good quality for the curriculum. What some support staff lack in experience is more than made up for by total commitment and enthusiasm for their work. The recent appointment of extra staff to support new initiatives works extremely effectively. All staff work very well as a team and make a significant contribution to children's very good achievement, particularly by helping to create a vibrant learning environment.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The Centre gives **excellent** care to all children and ensures that their welfare is paramount. Procedures are exemplary.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are excellent procedures in place to ensure children's health, welfare and safety at all times.
- There are excellent relationships throughout the Centre.
- There are excellent induction procedures, which ensure that children settle down very quickly.
- Very good use of a key worker supports the needs of individual children very well.

### **Commentary**

24. The Centre's procedures to ensure the care, welfare, health and safety of the children are excellent and again this shows very good improvement since the previous inspection. The staff team provide excellent care for everyone in a very safe and happy setting which carefully nurtures children's personal development and allows them to blossom. There are exemplary child protection and health and safety procedures, which always have children's very best interests at heart. All decisions about health and safety are based on careful risk assessments, which ensure that everyone is safe. Staff smile and show genuine affection for the children which puts them at their ease and makes them feel confident and secure. Relationships throughout the Centre are excellent and, as a result, there are the highest levels of trust between children and adults. It means that children settle down quickly and soon realise that learning is fun.
25. There is a very supportive induction programme for new arrivals. Key workers work hand in hand with parents and carers before the children start nursery to ensure that the important transition from home is managed very well to suit individual needs. This ensures that any fears that parent or child may have are quickly nipped in the bud and that families are well known and supported. Adults know the children and their families very well and the school makes excellent use of outside support agencies to support and counsel children and their families.
26. Each child has a key worker who monitors their progress, keeps their record of achievement and meets regularly with parents and carers. However, the way the Centre is organised means that all staff come into regular contact with all children and well-managed daily review meetings

provide staff with an excellent opportunity to evaluate all the children's work and to share information. Each key worker updates the portfolios of those children for whom they have responsibility with examples of their work, photographs of them in action or the children's own words, to provide a record of achievement that illustrates their work. Children are proud of these and they are shared regularly with parents. Staff involve children in what they are learning by encouraging them to talk about what they have done and what they have discovered. There are very good procedures to identify and support those children with special educational needs and those learning to speak English in addition to another language. Regular review sessions are held which involve input from parents, staff and outside agencies.

27. For the many children who stay for the morning and afternoon sessions, lunchtime is a very special time. Considerable thought has been placed on the lunch menu to encourage healthy eating and each child sits down in a 'family group' table, attractively laid with flowers, where they learn to serve themselves and tidy away afterwards. At the end of the day the Centre's commitment to healthy eating continues with a healthy snack shop, which is very popular with both children and parents alike.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The Centre's partnership with parents is **very good**. Links with the local community and other schools are **excellent**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The Centre goes out of its way to ensure that parents are fully involved in their children's learning.
- There is very good verbal and written information about children's progress.
- Centre staff listen carefully to parents' views.
- The Centre is at the very heart of the community with whom there are excellent links.
- There are outstanding links with other schools and colleges.

#### **Commentary**

28. The Centre works very effectively to involve parents and to encourage support for their children's learning. Staff go out of their way to welcome newcomers and to ensure that all members of the family feel a strong sense of partnership in the Centre's work. The development of integrated services on one site is highly beneficial to families with young children in the whole community. Improvement since the previous inspection in establishing links with parents, carers, other agencies and the local community are excellent.
29. At the parents and carers' meeting and in discussions during the inspection, parents could not wait to praise the staff and the work of the Centre. They particularly like the way that their children are treated as individuals, the 'welcome time' at the beginning of each session when they can stay to see their children settled and the way the Centre operates for the benefit of the whole family unit. Staff put parents at their ease, dealing sympathetically with their queries, and this quickly breaks down any barriers they may have in coming into the Centre. There is an excellent induction programme for new children, which involves parents at the very start by attending the first three sessions with their child. Parents meet the parent link worker who encourages them to participate and benefit from the Centre's activities and also the key worker who has first hand responsibility for their child. The first welcome session of the day gives parents and children the shared experience of getting to know the Centre and the staff. Staff are always available to talk to parents and they will go that extra mile to listen sensitively to any concerns and find solutions to any problems.
30. The Centre communicates very well with parents both by written newsletters and very good verbal communications. There are good written reports of the children's progress and a parents' evening twice a year to discuss their child's development with the key worker. Parents appreciate the way children work in small groups and that each has a key worker who takes a

particular interest in them. Parents said that the start their children receive at the Centre prepares them very well for full-time school.

31. Many parents went to great lengths to tell inspectors of the many benefits the Centre offered to them as mothers and carers in coping with the stresses of family life. They spoke of the confidence the Centre gave them in their parenting skills, feeling that the staff genuinely understand their concerns and treat them as normal. Parents spoke warmly of the relaxed and unthreatening atmosphere, and the joy of getting out of the house for a few hours to come to one of the many groups or courses. The Centre is very popular and over-subscribed because staff are extremely flexible and go out of their way to accommodate the individual needs of parents as well as children. The breakfast and tea club are much appreciated as it means that parents can occasionally leave their children a little longer to suit their needs. Parents build up very strong relationships with the staff and feel that they could always come back, even when their children have left.
32. The tireless energy and enthusiasm of the Centre staff have helped to establish excellent links with the community which make a powerful impact on both the children and their parents and puts the Centre firmly at the very heart of the community. The Centre provides an exceptional range of services, not only for the children and their families, but also for the local community which it serves. Excellent links have been forged with other professionals concerned with children's development, education and care who bring their services to the Centre to create a real "one-stop shop" for the whole community. None of this has happened by accident. Staff consult, reach out and genuinely listen to suggestions that will improve the range of services on offer.
33. Staff make excellent use of the local community for visits to support children's learning. They visit the local supermarket, the post office, the docks, a nearby city farm where they grow flowers and vegetables on an allotment, go on a 'doors' walk in the Redcliffe area, and visit the church and the mosque. In addition, fun days out to the seaside are arranged for the whole family to join in.
34. The Centre's expertise is shared with many other nurseries as the headteacher of the Centre is the co-ordinator for the Redcliffe Network, which provides a base for training and professional development for local staff. In addition the deputy headteacher of the Centre is the special educational needs co-ordinator for many other local childcare establishments. She visits other nurseries to run workshops and drop-in sessions, and to share her expertise.
35. There are very good links with neighbouring feeder schools which promote continuity of education and care and smooth the transition for children into the reception class. Very good links with a local secondary school provide technical ICT support for the Centre and enables the children to use their swimming pool regularly.

### **Other services and educational support programmes**

**The Centre provides excellent opportunities for families to grow. It provides a place to go, socialise and learn alongside the children.**

36. There is not the slightest hint of complacency as staff continue to seek ways to reach groups of parents who may not already be using the Centre. Attendance at the local baby clinic, ensures all new mums, including teenage mothers are reached. Visits into the homes of those newly arrived into the area ensure all families are reached. A crèche is always provided which enables parents with young babies to take part in the wide range of planned services and events. Parents look forward to coming to a whole host of activities from toddler play groups to first aid courses, from behaviour management classes to baby massage sessions and much more besides. The range of health, education and care services on offer has extended so that families start coming to the Centre before their babies are born and stay until their child starts full time school. The high quality links developed with other local services by the recently

appointed parent link worker, a healthy living inclusion worker, a speech therapist and an advice and development worker gives parents immediate access to a vast array of services under the one roof.

### **Tums to Tots**

37. This is an excellent service. Parents who come to these sessions value the opportunity to talk to others with very small children and to learn about the range of services available for their support. The group meets in the community room within the Centre and this means they get to know the staff who work there very well. The babies benefit from the range of toys and resources they may not have at home and learn how to share and co-operate with others when they are very young. Help and advice are on offer if parents want it from a number of outside specialists. The family support worker is on hand to talk to parents and to offer suggestions about events and other services in the local area.

### **Play and Stay and toddler group**

38. Once the babies start to walk, parents and carers have the opportunity to join play and stay or toddler group. These groups enjoy more independent play activities. Parents and carers enjoy getting out of the house for a few hours and like the luxury of their children exploring some activities they would not perhaps plan to do at home. For example, during the inspection, the children enjoyed painting their feet and making a footprint track. Parents and carers often bring along other family members especially grandparents, who benefit from getting to know others of the same age.

### **Family learning**

39. Once parents and carers have been coming to the Centre they soon realise that it is there for them. When asked what they would like to see happening and for ideas on how they can get more involved, they come forward with a lot of good ideas. As a result of this consultation, a small group of parents recently enjoyed learning how to deal with some common minor injuries. All felt much more informed about how to deal with a medical emergency and were more confident about asking for help. Parents and carers are confident to attend because of the crèche facility on the same premises. They know that their children will be very well cared for and that if they are needed they will be fetched because staff always put the needs and feelings of the children first. Further training sessions are planned and the range continues to grow.

### **Under threes**

40. This relatively new group is extremely beneficial to the children who attend in several ways. They follow the same structure of planning, doing and reviewing their own work and play so are confident with the routines before they move to nursery, they receive support from the speech therapist who puts strategies into place early to help them with their speaking and language skills, and they learn to get along with others in a structured organisation. Relationships with adults are excellent and the care they receive outstanding. The opportunity to use the small area outside for their play enables them to meet with the over threes as they play in their outside area and to develop social conversations with them. By the time they start in the nursery they are confident to join in from the very beginning.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the Centre is **very good** overall but that of the headteacher of the Centre is outstanding. The management is **very good** and the governance is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has provided excellent leadership over a long period of time.
- The ethos of the Centre is excellent.
- The leadership of all staff with management responsibilities is very good.
- The management is very good.
- Professionals from many different fields work exceptionally well together.
- The input of the governors is good and improving.
- The cost of this comprehensive provision is very reasonable, considering what has been done, and so the Centre gives excellent value for money.

### Commentary

41. The reason for the excellent education given to the children who attend this Centre is that the headteacher has the vision to see what needs to be done and the knowledge and understanding necessary to ensure that it is done. Her input cannot be overstated. The local education authority has had the foresight to encourage this highly skilled headteacher to develop a centre for children that demonstrates the best practice in early years education and takes fully into account the needs of the parents and carers and the community. This push for excellence and sticking to principles has taken courage and hard work. The results are clear to see. There has been a very great improvement in the quality of provision over the last six years, barriers to children's learning have been removed, there is continual innovation in the curriculum, children's achievement is very good, and all concerned with the Centre sing its praises.
42. The excellent leadership of the headteacher has forged a very strong team of staff who work exceptionally well together. People believe in the headteacher's vision and staff are highly motivated. As a result, the leadership of staff with management responsibilities is very good. They lead by example. Cutting-edge work has been done as a result of well thought-out strategies, for instance, in teaching. Staff undertake their own research, study for further qualifications and have good knowledge and understanding of the current thinking about improvements in early years education. There are many measurable outcomes from this high quality leadership: people perform very well, there is constant improvement, everyone is optimistic, and communication is very good.
43. There are feelings generated by the headteacher and staff of '*We can do it*' and of striving for perfection. These rub off on to children who, consequently, become self-assured individuals, knowing that they come first but have responsibilities too. Professionals from different fields work together in the Centre and the teamwork is exemplary. There is a feeling of belonging and staff at all levels of their careers are given suitable responsibilities and so have a large stake in the success of the Centre. An atmosphere of rigour but having fun while learning has been set. The challenging and supportive ethos is sensed by everyone that goes to the Centre, and as a result, this educational establishment is an excellent place to train staff in the field of early years education and support.
44. The management is very good, and improving as the Centre develops into a fully functioning 'Children's Centre'. This is a very well ordered place. Work is very well planned and organised and all concerned know what is going on. The managers monitor what is happening and there is a refreshing openness about what works well and what could be even better. Staff development systems have been refined over time and work very well. This has been important as the staffing has expanded greatly recently and so induction procedures have needed to be tight. The Centre has shown excellent practice in the recruitment of some very

high quality staff, and their retention and deployment. The training to care for the children is very good. Staff's considerable workload is managed sensitively.

45. The Centre has only recently changed its status and so has a new governing body, although a few governors have been involved before. Current governors have been instrumental in shaping the work of the Centre, and through training and discussion, are well placed to become even more involved. At present, governors are not fully involved in ensuring that the monitoring of teaching and learning takes place. They will need training for them to do this effectively and they know this. Governors set their sights very high. They are well aware of the strengths of the Centre, and what is needed to continue the very good practice. Their commitment to inclusion is not just words on paper but is acted out constantly.
46. It has been difficult for the headteacher and governors to plan for the long-term while the current situation has been changing so rapidly, and because the Centre has only very recently started to run its own budget. The budget for the current financial year is still not finalised. However, they know what they want to do and what to do to get things going. Development planning has been sufficiently flexible to allow for instant decisions when cash has been offered or accommodation suddenly became available. Strategic planning is good, but could be better when the governors are able to plan the actions and the costings for the long-term.
47. The Centre gives support to families for much of the year, and has a very wide brief to educate parents and to spread the best practice in care and health as well as education. These tasks are performed exceptionally well. The funds for this wide-ranging work come from the government, the local education authority and from several other sources. A significant amount of funding is raised privately, and this takes hard work. This money has been extremely well spent because:
  - a large number of children's and families' lives have been made so much better by this Centre;
  - the achievement of the children is very good and sometimes excellent;
  - there are many excellent features in place that are a model for many schools.
48. The governors rightly believe that the funding for high quality provision has symbolic value, as well as proven benefits for the children. They think that the spending '*sends a strong message to the people in the locality that their children matter*'. In the context of the Centre the inspectors agree with this.
49. There has been a significant improvement in the overall leadership and management of this establishment over the last six years, even from the high quality that was reported before. The Centre has evolved smoothly into a Centre of excellence that is an example for others. The head and management are very well placed to continue this innovative work.

# PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

## AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **excellent**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is excellent.
- Children have high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Children have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- Skills of negotiation and making decisions ensure that the children are responsible young people by the time they leave the nursery.

#### Commentary

50. The atmosphere in the nursery is one of purpose and fun. This has been established by making sure everyone who comes to the nursery embraces the fundamental belief that young children learn best when they are confident and free to make choices. High quality leadership has made this happen, and constant checking to make sure it remains ensures that the learning environment is one of co-operation and enjoyment.
51. Highly effective teaching in this area of learning ensures the children achieve extremely well. The Centre puts the children's personal development and well being at the forefront of learning. Children's contributions are always valued and this is evident in the way that the Centre organises the day around the children's needs. Children are empowered to take charge and are given the skills to cope with a range of situations. They know that they can say '*Stop, I don't like that*' if they feel uncomfortable and know that the person to whom they are speaking will stop. Everything they do has a purpose and because they are all so involved in planning and developing their own learning, they all feel in control and valued. As a result, they have high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence by the time they leave the nursery.
52. The structure of the day ensures the children feel safe and secure. Routines and rules of how to behave and treat each other are so well established that the children follow these themselves. For example, when they want a turn with a favourite toy, they show the timer to the person playing and wait because they know that the rules will be followed and the toy given up when the sand has run through the timer. When the children come in after lunchtime play to plan their afternoons, they do so with the minimum of supervision and fuss. They all go sensibly to hang up their coats and go to the toilet if they need to. They all remember to wash their hands afterwards without needing a reminder. This is outstanding for children of this age. This ensures a smooth start to the afternoon and learning continues at a fast rate.
53. Everything that happens in the nursery is explained carefully so the children always know why they are expected to do something. For example, if they are asked to tidy away their mess from a previous activity, they do so immediately because they know that this is fair for others who need to use the area after them. Adults support this by ensuring they can return straightaway to their chosen activity. In this way the children know that they will not lose out and can return. All children have an acute awareness of how to keep themselves healthy and care for living things around them. This is done through gentle reminders of how to treat all resources including the plants and garden area outside. They enjoy healthy snacks and explain exactly why these are healthier to eat than sugary biscuits. All of this reflects excellent improvement since the previous inspection.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because teaching is very effective and very focussed.
- Very good emphasis is given to the children talking and they learn very well as a result.
- Children with speech and language difficulties achieve very well because of the support they get in nursery.
- When children work in smaller groups on specific literacy skills, learning is excellent.

### Commentary

54. Talk is at the heart of all activities and as a result the children build very quickly on their low starting base to reach the expected goals in this area of learning by the time they leave the nursery. Adults give the children many strategies to help them communicate. For example, they use hand signs to point out certain objects and to welcome the children into the nursery everyday, and repeat what they say so the children hear how to ask for different things. As a result, all children use 'please' and 'thank you' when talking to adults and each other quite naturally. They apologise if things go wrong, recognising if this is their fault. The wide range of activities on offer from which to choose ensures that vocabulary is developed systematically. For example, on walks into the local area, items of interest are commented upon to raise the children's awareness of places and signs in the local environment. As a result, all children know what the lights on a pedestrian crossing mean and this helps them to know when it is safe to cross the road. Adults join in with role-play and this develops the children's talking skills extremely well. In one group, the children followed the adult's lead by ordering parts for their broken trikes, in another they cared for an injured adult who had had an accident while another group acted out a different ending to a favourite story. Both practical and creative use of language was developed very effectively at these times.
55. Having a speech therapist on site is very beneficial to those children who have speech and language difficulties. The timely intervention and support and advice to Centre staff ensure that these children's needs are constantly met. In this way they make very good progress and are enabled to join in with all activities. Children who are learning to speak English in addition to another language are given good support in nursery from outside specialists who visit often to check their progress and give advice on future learning needs. Family members are seen at the same time and this ensures they get the support they need at home as well. As a result, the children make very good progress in learning English.
56. Early reading skills are developed very well in formal story reading sessions and during more informal structured play activities. 'Planning Time' always starts with the children in each group finding their spot on the carpet. By using labels, adults ensure that the children recognise their name in a number of different places and this helps them to find their personal possessions independently. Stories are read during 'work time' and at the end of the day, and consequently all children have a favourite story. Some choose these to 'read' by themselves during one of the quieter moments. When children work in ability groups during small group time learning is particularly effective. For example, a small group of children enjoyed a favourite story 'Pass The Jam Jim' and were excited when they correctly identified the rhyming words. The smiles on faces reflected how pleased they were to succeed. As a result, higher attaining children are beginning to recognise some letter sounds and using these to write recognisable words.
57. Writing is taught very well, both formally in small group time and informally in structured play activities. In this way the children decide what they want to write and are able to do so at their own level. Many children are beginning to draw recognisable pictures of things that are familiar to them, reflecting very good achievement since starting at the nursery when many had never drawn any pictures before. Some higher attaining children copy words they need in their play

accurately. For example, one child wrote a birthday card greeting to her mum, copying from an adult's writing but managing to write most of her name by herself.

58. The very good quality of provision is due to very effective teaching and very good leadership and management. Adults make sure learning in this area builds on the children's own experiences and that they talk whenever possible about what they are doing. Great emphasis is placed on the children solving things for themselves when setting up their learning tasks and this helps them to clarify their thinking. Time is given to those who need it, to think about what they want to say. Adults wait patiently, watching the children carefully to judge when it is time to interact with a question or suggestion. In this way the children are still in charge but their thinking and communication skills are extended. This reflects the very good improvement since the previous inspection.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well
- The children's learning is very good because the teaching is very good.
- The curriculum is very good.
- Children are taught to think things out for themselves.
- Children enjoy learning about numbers and shapes.
- The leadership of this area of learning is very good.

### **Commentary**

59. There has been very good improvement in provision since the previous inspection. Children's attainment is about the same as was reported then, but their achievement is better because many join the Centre with fewer skills. Currently, children have well below average skills in this area of learning on entry to the Centre. When they leave the Centre their attainment, overall, is as expected for children of the same age and so this is a big improvement on their levels of understanding when they join. The teaching has improved, and this is the key to children's very good progress. The way that staff develop mathematical thinking and skills ensures that children's knowledge and understanding are secure by the time they start school.
60. Children make especially good progress in the acquisition of an understanding that numbers are used as labels for counting and, in this aspect, a significant number do better than many children of the same age. By the time they leave the Centre, many count up to five objects with accuracy and a few to ten. The way they count up to four or five objects by saying the correct number for each of them is secure. Some recognise numbers to six all the time, and some the numbers that have a special meaning for them, such as their age. They enjoy counting by rote, and joining in games and songs that reinforce the names of numbers. They know that one child needs one chair and when there are too many cartons of milk for the group. Children's knowledge and understanding of shape is as expected for their age, and for a few more able children it is better than expected. Some know the names of common flat shapes, such as a circle, and talk about shapes of everyday objects. They know which solid shapes can be used for making model machines. Most know which object is bigger and more able children can suggest how it could be made even bigger. They make good attempts to instruct a programmable toy using forward/back/ more forward and so on. Older children show a good appreciation of pattern and can recreate pattern they have seen, such as making a staircase out of wood blocks. They know that one more block is needed each time to make the stairs get higher.
61. The reason for the very good progress is the high quality teaching based on an imaginative curriculum. Mathematics is taught consistently well, either in the special area of the Centre, or as opportunities arise during children's play. Very occasionally opportunities are missed to

extend children's understanding, such as using a different word for a comparative number or position, but this is rare. On the whole, the staff are particularly good at using general chat to reinforce mathematical thinking. There is an excellent emphasis on the language of mathematics. Staff use questioning very effectively to extend children's learning. They constantly ask questions such as: *'Can you do this in another way?'* and *'Why did you choose that number?'* The teaching during planned mathematics sessions is very well organised, with very good opportunities for assessment built in. At times the activities planned do not get covered in full, as other activities take over, in response to the questioning and interests of the children. The good systems that staff have to evaluate the sessions means that the gaps in teaching are noted and followed up. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection and so staff know what each child can do. However, staff do not always target specific skills to make sure that more able children are extended fully. They might consider splitting the groups to concentrate on some special aspects, especially during the small group sessions at the end of the activities when the range of abilities in each teaching group is so wide.

62. The curriculum in this area of learning is very good as it is based very firmly on practical activities and on enabling children to find their own solutions to the work they are set. The curriculum also has a very strong emphasis on language, not only of mathematical vocabulary, but also on questioning using everyday words, so that children are not dependent on adults' agreement that they have done the right thing. This is a major strength. Given that children are so confident they can ask questions without fear of being wrong, and so they show an interest in how to do things, not just on getting things right. Children are encouraged to work together and question each other, which prepares them for the real world. Because of this, work in acquiring mathematical skills is fun and children enjoy the sessions. They are conscious of their own good achievement and this makes them feel good.
63. This high achievement is the result of a highly professional approach to the teaching and the careful planning of the curriculum by the staff led by the subject manager. A great deal of work has gone into co-ordinating the teaching and organising the assessment in mathematical development, with great success in promoting children's mathematical skill, knowledge and understanding.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well because teaching is very good and the curriculum is extremely well organised.
- Children use their imaginations to make a variety of things with which to play.
- All children are developing good computer skills.
- The children have a good knowledge of their community through regular visits and walks around the area.
- Children learn by doing and consequently are finding out about the world around them very well.
- Leadership and management of this area are very good.

### **Commentary**

64. This area of learning is extremely well organised to make sure that the children learn by doing and reflects the excellent improvement since the previous inspection. Many areas of learning are linked so skills learned in one area develop skills in another. For example, the children learned about shapes in mathematics through building their own models from bricks and a range of construction kits. Some built long, straight roadways so they could play with their car, a favourite pastime for some, while others built symmetrical buildings. The creative area always has a range of materials from which the children make many different models. During the inspection, some children made traffic lights to use outside to direct the trikes and

scooters, while others made headgear for their role-play. All children are encouraged to work independently to make their models, by taping or gluing boxes and paper together, with adults only helping as and when requested. This develops the children's language skills very well in addition to those of co-operation and negotiation. During 'Review Time' the children describe how they make their models using the correct vocabulary for the materials they use.

65. Computers are always on hand for the children to use and as a result, they are able to choose for themselves the program they want to use controlling the mouse well to load it. The range of programs available supports their learning in mathematical development particularly well. Digital cameras are used constantly to record the children's achievements and this has rubbed off on others who can be seen going around asking their friends to '*smile please*' as they take a photograph of them working. Taped stories are on hand for the children to listen to and all control the tape recorder independently.
66. When inside or out, the children are involved in a number of activities which encourage them to use their senses to find out about the world around them. Building imaginative places is one such activity in which the children make shelters and other places from a range of materials always ready to hand. During the inspection the children were busily making a home under the trees. '*My bed's very uncomfortable*' mused one child. '*That's because the stones are round and bumpy*' offered another. Timely questions from adults develop the children's thinking very well so when asked how they could make the bed more comfortable, they made several relevant suggestions. They discounted some because of certain reasons. For example, grass was not accepted because '*It's still too wet because it's the morning*'. This is high level reasoning for children of this age and reflects the high quality curriculum organisation and results of the very good interaction by adults.
67. In their 'work time' the children are given every opportunity to plan and do things for themselves and as a result are learning about the world around them in a practical way. Regular walks to the allotment and to places nearby ensure they are getting a rounded learning base. For example, at the allotment children learn to care for living things and their needs. Others learn how and where to post their letter when they visit the local post office. As a result of the very rich and interesting curriculum and high quality teaching and learning, nearly all children reach the expected goals for their age when they start school.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well.
- The children's learning is very good because the teaching is very good.
- Children grow markedly in confidence during outdoor play.
- Children are given a very good range of activities to develop their bodies and to help them manipulate tools.
- The area for outside play is good, and used very well.
- The leadership of this area of learning is very good.

### Commentary

68. Children's achievement has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good because everything is set up so well to ensure that they can make the best progress. Their attainment is average, overall, and above the levels expected in respecting other children's personal space. This is an example of high achievement in one aspect of learning (personal and social development) having advantages for another aspect (physical development). Many children show above average development of their skills in climbing and co-ordination when running and jumping. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

69. Many children start at the Centre with under-developed skills, partly because some live in flats with no gardens which means that they cannot play outside very much, and partly because many are rather fearful of trying new, possibly risky activities. The staff actively plan to give the children a wide range of experiences to cope with this diffidence, and are on-hand, encouraging but not fussing or over-protective, to assist if asked. Children respond very well to this approach, and most are willing to have a go on new pieces of equipment. It is a measure of children's confidence and growing maturity that they persevere in repeating and refining physical actions. Children also make very good progress in using tools of all kinds. Most handle construction kits, pencils and paintbrushes well, but their skills with scissors are not so well developed. There is a good range of resources to develop children's physical skills.
70. The Centre has a good, safe outside area for children's play and it is used very well. There is a very good emphasis on safe practice, and children know well the rules about where to go and what might be dangerous. Staff supervision is assiduous during the outdoor sessions, but the children's behaviour is so good, that adult supervision is hardly necessary. There is a great emphasis on physical health and children know that they have to wash their hands after dirty activities, that hats are needed in the sun and which foods are good for you.
71. Although the accommodation is good, there is not a lot of space in the 'work' areas inside the main room. Children use these small areas extremely well, partly because they can position their bodies appropriately in the working spaces, but also because they have been taught to be careful of each other. Children work together well when undertaking physical activities. There is very little accidental bumping into each other when riding wheeled toys. They take turns well on the big apparatus, partly because they are well practised in the use of the large sand-timers to determine the times that each piece of equipment can be used by one person.
72. This happy picture is due to the very well planned curriculum and the very skilled teaching. Children learn while having fun. They are busy while playing and very few are left out on the sidelines. This is because staff intervene when appropriate, but not to dictate the activity. Children are given choices and have learned to negotiate when problems arise about who plays with the toys. The physical activities help children develop their communication, personal and social skills and the achievement in this area of learning is one good example of talking leading to learning.
73. The development of physical skills is co-ordinated very well. Outside play and the use of tools are integrated sensibly into topics and children's attainment is assessed well. Digital photographs are taken to show children what they did before and to help them to move on, more could be made of this good assessment strategy. A major strength of the teaching is the use of planned questions to enable children to think for themselves and to solve problems. This, in turn, leads not only to successful satisfaction of their preferences, but also to the sort of social skills that show up in good manners. One child was stuck at the top of a staircase he had built. After thought and several unsuccessful attempts at walking down backwards he said: *'I want to be somewhere else. Will you help me off.'* For a shy three year-old, this is mature speaking.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well and their imaginative play is excellent.
- The children's learning is very good because the teaching is very good.
- The curriculum provided is very broad.
- Children are helped to decide things for themselves.
- The leadership of this area of learning is very good.

### **Commentary**

74. The reason that children's achievement is so good is that there are many well thought-out strategies to ensure that they can make as much progress as they can. Based on the well-planned curriculum and an ethos of creativity, this Centre provides many worthwhile activities that ensure that children have a very good introduction to the creative and performing arts at an early age. Children achieve better in the creative fields than they did at the previous inspection because their use of role-play is now excellent. The teaching has also improved from the good quality that was reported five years ago and is now very good. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good.
75. The curriculum to promote children's creative skills is very well thought out but has preserved the 'fun' element that is so necessary. Children are encouraged to select their own materials and props and, as they are so confident, very few have any inhibitions in their artwork or their imaginative play. Children show curiosity, and love to experiment with colours and materials. The very good use of questioning by staff encourages children to evaluate what they have made or performed and to decide whether it could have been better. There is absolutely no question of children being worried about this and the result is a marked improvement in painting and role-play, even in short sessions. As children have been given a high-level language to discuss their creations, they can think positively about what they have done and many can express preferences or reservations.
76. Children's paintings, drawings and models are at least at the level expected for their age, and, for a few children they are way above the levels expected. A few more able children draw at the level of a clever five year-old. This is because they are taught to look carefully, and to think about space and proportion. Children are engrossed in their work when making pictures from a range of materials. They are very good at selecting colours and in making patterns. They are also very good at clearing up and taking turns when using equipment. All of this is due to the high quality of teaching based on warm relationships and an expectation of challenge and success. Children's work is celebrated openly. Some work is kept for assessment purposes in their files, some is used in their play and some for relevant display to celebrate current learning.
77. Children love to sing. Much singing is done at all times of the day during the work and play. Most children join in with the actions and many know the words. They show confidence marching to the music and are well behaved during music-making sessions. Many know the names of percussion instruments at a level expected of much older children. Music is used well to welcome the children at the start of the day and to structure the routines. Children get suitable opportunities to listen to live music.
78. The reason for this high quality provision is the extremely well planned curriculum and focused questioning, which sparks the children's ideas. It is a measure of the degree of planning that the creative activities look totally unstructured, and children are allowed much freedom to make choices and express preferences. They little know how carefully this has been choreographed! This emphasis on giving children autonomy has resulted in them becoming outgoing and sociable, and unconcerned about getting things 'wrong'. The staff are aware that the tight planning means that, at times, the sessions are rather short for children to be able to finish their work, or to talk about it as much as they might like. This area of learning is led very well and the leader ensures that children have very good opportunities to perform to parents.
79. In the area of imaginative play the children at this Centre display the sort of skills that parents of many much older children might envy. A few younger, less able children play on their own, but, mostly, children play very well together and make up interesting scenarios. Children play well in the home corner and so find out about their environment and people. They love to dress up, use props and act out the scenarios that they have created. In these situations their use of language is mature, especially when pretending to talk to adults on mobile phones! Children are helped greatly by the good range of resources and places to play, for these activities. They are also assisted by the highly sensitive interventions of staff. Praise is used judiciously and

staff are skilled when finding it necessary to intervene if the play becomes tetchy or the scenes might possibly get out of hand. The very good role models of the staff ensure that when children copy actions and responses, they are as parents would wish.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the centre</b>	<b>1</b>
How inclusive the centre is	2
How the centre's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	1
Value for money provided by the centre	1
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Children's achievement	2
<b>Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
<b>The quality of education provided by the centre</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well children learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets children's needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Children's care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for children	2
How well the centre seeks and acts on children's views	2
The effectiveness of the centre's links with parents	2
The quality of the centre's links with the community	1
The centre's links with other centres and colleges	1
<b>The leadership and management of the centre</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the centre	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*