

INSPECTION REPORT

KNOWLE WEST EARLY YEARS CENTRE

Bristol

LEA area: Bristol City

Unique reference number: 134241

Headteacher: Mrs J Sharp

Lead inspector: Mrs G Beasley

Dates of inspection: 29th November – 1st December 2004

Inspection number: 267160

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

© Crown copyright 2005

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: Nursery
School category: Maintained
Age range of pupils: 2-4
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 84

School address: Leinster Avenue
Knowle West
Bristol
Postcode: BS4 1NN

Telephone number: 0117 9030214
Fax number: 0117 3773453

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Lila Tomasi

Date of previous inspection: First inspection as amalgamated Centre

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Knowle West Early Years Centre was established in September 2003 following an amalgamation of an early year's day nursery and local nursery school. It previously existed on two sites, moving to its current site in June 2003 following refurbishment of the old nursery school. Following two concurrent and temporary part-time heads, the current head of Centre has been in post for just a year. Situated on the outskirts of Bristol, it provides a wide range of services to local families and the community, including a nursery, education and care for children under three, parent and children groups, family learning and community outreach facilities, including a child minders' group, a 'Breast is Best' support group and a lunch club. Eighty four children attend the nursery or under three group. About two-thirds attend full time and one-third part time. All those who attend the under three group are referred by health or social services because they have high levels of social or special educational needs. Most children are of white UK heritage with some from black African heritage and a small number of mixed heritage. A few children speak another language in addition to English. No children are at the early stages of learning to speak English. Many children start nursery with attainment much lower than average. Twenty nine children, an above average proportion, are identified as having special educational

needs, mainly in speech and language. Two have a statement to meet more severe needs. Thirty per cent, an above average proportion, are eligible for free school meals.

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, mathematical development, physical development
32698	Mr S Barker	Lay inspector	
22398	Mrs L Wright	Team inspector	Knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Inspections Ltd
102 Bath Road
CHELTENHAM
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet 'Complaining about Ofsted Inspections', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING	18
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Knowle West Early Years Centre has been open on its present site for a little over a year. It is giving its children a satisfactory quality of education. Standards are well below average overall, but children's achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory as are leadership and management. The Centre gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The head of Centre provides good leadership.
- Governors show high levels of commitment that every child should get the best that the Centre can offer.
- The strategic plan does not have sufficient detail to guide improvement.
- Personal development is provided for well so the children have good attitudes to each other by the time they leave the Centre.
- 'Work time' is not planned for sufficiently well so does not build on the children's previous learning, although recently introduced planning for small group activities enables the children to achieve well overall at these times.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.
- Centre staff ensure the children are well cared for, so relationships with adults are very good and the atmosphere for learning is good.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is good so they are all fully included in activities.
- The use of the outdoor area is poor.

This is the Centre's first inspection since it amalgamated just over a year ago. Since the current head of Centre has been appointed, she has put several effective initiatives into place to improve the quality of education for the children. These include developing stronger links with families, for whom the Centre provides well, and developing the role of the governing body. Issues with the accommodation continue to take up a considerable amount of the head's time.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is satisfactory overall. The children start with low levels of knowledge and skills in all areas of learning. They all achieve satisfactorily in communication, language and literacy, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their mathematical, physical and creative development. They achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development because of the support given to learning in this area by adults in all activities. As a result, the children have good relationships with one another and are learning to get along well when at play. Due to their low starting points, very few children are likely to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the time they start school.

Provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The children have good and caring attitudes to each other during play. Behaviour is satisfactory. Many children are still learning to share and take turns with the range of toys and resources they use. Consequently, play is sometimes very boisterous and careful handing is required by staff to keep the children on task. Attendance is satisfactory overall, although too many parents do not make sure their children arrive on time. This sometimes interrupts the learning of others.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. When children learn in small groups and during times when adults join in with the children's play, learning is often good because staff plan activities and ask questions that are matched well to individual children's needs. Relationships with adults are very good and these give the children confidence to ask for help if they need it. At other times the planning does not identify precisely enough what the children are to learn so children's play lacks structure and learning lacks purpose. On too many occasions in Early Years 2, time is wasted during the day. This cuts down the amount of time available for group learning and unsettles the children who are required to sit for too long as a large group waiting for sessions to restart. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. Satisfactory systems are in place, but these are not followed consistently by all staff so for some children there is too little information about what they can do. Adults do not track the activities that children choose to take part in closely enough so they do not have enough information about how to guide learning. Teaching in personal, social and emotional development is good because adults provide good role models and focus on learning in this aspect in all activity sessions.

The curriculum is satisfactory, with a satisfactory range of enrichment activities. There is a suitable balance between adult-led activities and those that the children choose themselves. However, while activities make a good contribution to the children's personal development, the use of the outdoors to support learning in all areas of learning is poor. The children are not given a choice whether to learn outside and those activities on offer have too little structure always to support learning sufficiently well, particularly in physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

The Centre cares for the children well. Links with parents are good. There are satisfactory links with the community. Good links with Sure Start provide a good range of services and support for families.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of Centre provides strong, clear leadership which is already resulting in improved provision since her appointment just over a year ago. There is a plan in place to guide improvement, but this lacks enough detail to drive forward the improvements required. Leadership of key staff is satisfactory overall. Leadership and management of the extra support groups for families and for special educational needs provision are good. Governance is satisfactory but evidently improving very quickly. The governing body is very new. It is very supportive of the Centre and knows its strengths and areas for development well. It is not yet fully involved in planning the detail of how the Centre will improve.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school. They are confident that their children are well looked after and kept safe while at the Centre. Most feel they are given good information about how well their children are doing. Parents and carers value the opportunity to join one of the many groups held in the Centre to talk about how they can support their

children's learning at home. The children are happy at the Centre and are confident to talk to adults and ask for help. They like playing with the toys and joining in with games.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the Centre should do to improve are:

- develop and implement a more detailed strategic plan;
- implement effective planning procedures for all sessions to ensure learning is consistently purposeful throughout the day;
- implement effective assessment procedures and use the information effectively to guide learning;
- improve the way the outdoor area is used to support learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. By the time the children start school very few are likely to reach the goals expected in all areas of learning so standards are well below expectations.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development.
- The children achieve well in aspects of their creative development.
- Achievement in children's climbing, balancing, jumping and crawling skills is unsatisfactory.
- Achievement in the children's making skills is good. However, their knowledge of the outdoor environment is unsatisfactory.

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 good in their personal, social and emotional development, although standards are still below expectations by the end of their time in Early Years 2.
2. The children's achievement in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is satisfactory. Children have suitable opportunities to listen to favourite stories and learn rhymes and songs at small group times. As a result, they have favourite stories and have a secure knowledge of numbers and shape. Children's achievement in knowledge and understanding of the world and the immediate area in which they live is satisfactory overall, although there are weaknesses in planned opportunities for the children to explore the outdoors on a regular basis. Achievement in the scientific aspects of this area of learning is unsatisfactory as a result. Children have good design and making skills because they have good opportunities to use recyclable materials on a regular basis to make models. Children make good gains in aspects of their creative development because they have regular access to paint and other materials to produce pictures. Physical skills are developed satisfactorily but, because the children do not have enough regular opportunities to learn outdoors in structured activities, their climbing, balancing, jumping and crawling skills are not developed sufficiently well. Due to their low starting points, very few children are likely to achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the time they start school in these areas of learning and standards are well below expectations.
3. Attainment of children with special educational needs is well below average and very low for pupils with severe and multiple needs. Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good where focused adult support is given, usually in small group situations and in some work sessions where adults play alongside the children or talk to them about what they are doing. Generally children with special educational needs who do not

have a statement receive little additional focused support to improve their rate of learning. The good levels of care and support and trusting relationships with adults enable children who speak English in addition to another language to make good initial progress in their early literacy skills. As their confidence grows, they join in formal and informal sessions. However, overall lack of planning to develop vocabulary and language for any group of children means that these children achieve satisfactorily overall and attain at the same well below average standards as the other children after this initial spurt.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children have **good** attitudes. Their behaviour is **satisfactory**. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Attendance is **satisfactory**. Punctuality is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children show caring attitudes towards one another because of the constant encouragement provided by adults.
- Children have good levels of self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Sometimes behaviour is challenging because play lacks purpose.
- Children with special educational needs are given good support when playing outside.
- The school closely monitors attendance.
- Many children arrive at the Centre late

Commentary

4. Children have good attitudes overall, especially when staff have planned the structure and social expectations of particular activities. For example, lunchtimes are social occasions when adults and children sit in small groups to enjoy their meals together. The children are developing good levels of independence at these times and return their plates and cutlery to the correct place when they have finished eating. Children are encouraged to care for one another and this has led to good relationships with each other. This was demonstrated when one child was overheard to say *'Can I get you a tissue?' to another child who was suffering from a cold.* Adults' constant encouragement for the children to follow the rules and routines ensures good provision for social and moral development. As a result, children have good levels of self-confidence and self-esteem.
5. Timely interventions by adults ensure that the children are developing a satisfactory awareness of their own and others' needs. Consequently, the children know to say sorry if they have hurt or upset someone. They do not yet have enough maturity to recognise this in advance so sometimes there is a little pushing and snatching when one child wants a toy another child is playing with. This is reduced when adults join in with the play. Tandem trikes and carts encourage the children to share and take turns and, at these times, behaviour is good because the children are engaged in purposeful play. *'It's my turn to sit and your turn to do the hard work'*, one child reminded her partner and they swapped jobs amicably. At other times, too much of the adults' time is spent on managing behaviour rather than guiding it because some sessions are not planned tightly enough for purposeful play.

6. The children are developing satisfactory awareness of their own and others' cultures through celebrations of the various festivals as they occur throughout the year. Books and toys from a range of cultures raise this awareness further as the children play and act out different roles and situations. When the children go outside to play, adults talk to them about the plants and animals around them. However, this happens on rather an ad hoc basis. Planned opportunities for the children to learn about the wonders of nature and the world around them are limited. The Centre has detailed plans to improve the use of the outdoors to deal with this weakness.
7. Children who have identified behavioural needs associated with their special educational needs are given good support by adults in line with their individual education plans. This ensures that approaches to behaviour management are consistent, enabling the child to join in with group activity or whole class sessions quickly with the minimum of disruption to their learning. The children are generally interested in their work. Their interest quickens when they have the close attention of an adult and the activity is particularly interesting. This gives them the extra confidence they need to ask questions and offer comments without prompting, such as when reading a story book with exciting pictures.
8. Children are warmly welcomed to the Centre and their attendance is always recorded in a register. The Centre monitors attendance well and follows up absences with parents and carers. Attendance is not always seen as important by parents and carers and this is reflected in the significant number of children regularly arriving late for the start of their session at the Centre.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory and provides satisfactory enrichment. Resources are satisfactory overall. The accommodation is poor. The Centre cares well for the children. Links with parents and services which use the Centre are good. Links with the community are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. Assessment is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning for activities when children learn in groups is good so children achieve well at these times.
- Too much time is wasted in Early Years 2 so group work is often cut short and this limits learning.
- Adults' planning for learning in 'work time' is not in place, except in some aspects of creative development when adults are always on hand to provide good support for learning.
- Children with special educational needs get good support when learning individually and in groups.

- The outdoors is used well to develop the children’s social skills. However, the children are not given enough opportunities to make their own decisions about whether to learn indoors or outside.
- Assessment procedures do not guide learning well enough.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	0	6	7	1	1	0

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

9. Recently revised planning for group work is effectively raising standards in those areas on which it focuses. When adults work closely with groups of children, learning is good. Children’s creative development is a good example of this. The gathering and regrouping of children between sessions, however, sometimes takes too long and this unsettles the children and hinders their progress. Delays such as this mean that group work sometimes has to be cut short and this prevents learning from being as good as it should be.
10. Teaching and learning in ‘work time’ is satisfactory overall, but unsatisfactory when activities lack focus. Although the children decide in which area they will play, they do not plan sufficiently well what they will do when they get there. Assessment information is not used well enough to guide the children towards a particular area or to ask them questions to spark off new enthusiasms and interests. As a result, children often choose to play with the same things in the same place every day during these times. When an adult joins in with the children’s play, learning is often good. The very good relationships they have with the children lead to meaningful conversations which develop speaking skills well at these times. When an adult is not present, learning lacks purpose and specific skills are not developed well enough.
11. The children take part in an outdoor activity every day and this makes a good contribution to their social development. As a result, children are confident to play with each other and get along well. This focus is too narrow and sometimes these sessions are not planned to ensure learning of particular knowledge and skills in all areas of learning. There is too little opportunity for the children to decide for themselves whether to learn indoors or out because there are insufficient activities planned to take place outdoors throughout the day. This is poor use of the outdoors to support learning.
12. Staff are aware of the specific needs and difficulties of all children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak another language in addition to English. This helps to guide their interventions which make learning satisfactory overall. Individual education plans for children with special educational needs are good overall. Some are too general to guide small steps in the child’s development and learning. The very good quality plans detail smaller steps in the child’s development and give very specific information to judge progress. However, while teaching plans detail how children will be cared for, they do not build sufficiently well

on learning in each session. This limits the children's achievements as work is not regularly matched to individual skills and development needs. Children with special educational needs are cared for well to enable them to join in with all activities and those with particular physical needs are given the adult support they need to enable them to work and play alongside others.

13. Satisfactory assessment systems are in place, but their use is unsatisfactory. While some staff complete these diligently, others do not. This means information for some children is not detailed enough to guide teaching and learning. No children, including those who speak another language in addition to English, are targeted in 'work time' for special input into language development and so there are missed opportunities to develop language skills further. Adults know the children's personal needs well so relationships are very good and when they interact with them during play learning is often good.

The curriculum

The Centre provides a **satisfactory** and fully inclusive curriculum that meets the children's learning and personal needs. The curriculum is enriched by **satisfactory** opportunities beyond lessons. Staffing is **satisfactory**. The use of the accommodation is **poor**. Learning resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Centre provides well for the children's personal, social and health education.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- All children are given very good opportunities to learn equally well.
- The poor use of the accommodation limits children's opportunities for learning, particularly in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical development.

Commentary

14. The Centre's curriculum is adequately broad and all areas of learning are given enough emphasis to help the children achieve satisfactorily overall. The Centre is increasing the range of people to whom it offers support and it is building up an effective curriculum from birth until the children start school. The Early Years 1 curriculum, based on 'Birth to Three Matters', is satisfactory, but the principles of good curricular planning outlined in it are not yet a regular part of the Centre's own planning so the focus is on care rather than learning.
15. The curriculum for children over three years meets all statutory requirements. It is based on the 'High Scope' philosophy and ongoing training is helping staff move towards a whole-school approach to curricular planning. The system is still very new and variable in quality and in its support for making the curriculum more suitable for the needs of very young children. The development of children's social and personal development is given priority and is included in all areas of the curriculum, even though it is not always clearly enough identified. This, together with the good support and care given by adults, helps the children to become confident and friendly and they, in turn, develop good relationships with each other, helping and showing

kindness when needed. This enables the children to achieve well in this area. Provision for the children's physical development is patchy. The use of the outside area is not planned carefully enough with the children's learning in mind and so the provision for the development of their ball skills and whole body movement, such as crawling and changing direction, is unsatisfactory and here their achievement is unsatisfactory.

16. Curricular provision for children with special educational needs is good because of the care and support which enable all children to be included in all activities. Clear procedures for the identification and assessment of children are carried out efficiently. However, curriculum planning does not always cater for the different learning needs of all groups of pupils in 'work time' sessions.
17. The school enhances children's learning satisfactorily. As they get older and more confident they visit nearby places, such as the shops, so that they begin to get a feeling of belonging to a wider community. Visitors provide other experiences, giving the children a chance to meet other adults and to learn from them. School lunchtimes for the older children have been reorganised so that they are pleasant and social occasions. The children behave very well, taking turns to be served and eating with enjoyment and good manners. This contributes successfully to their good personal, social and health development.
18. Although the accommodation is satisfactory in size, its internal construction makes it very difficult for the Centre to realise its curricular ambitions easily. The number of small rooms in Early Years 1 prevents the children from coming together as one group to give them a fuller sense of belonging. There is nowhere for very young children to rest quietly or sleep and this sometimes slows their learning. The way in which the building is divided by a corridor means that the children in Early Years 1 and Early Years 2 may never meet as a whole group. Staff cannot gain from watching those in the other year group working to share good practice. The outdoor area for children in Early Years 2 is bleak and unstimulating and lacks all but the most basic equipment to encourage imaginative play, learning about the environment or the development of some physical skills. It makes little contribution to children's learning. In addition, the building still has many shortcomings and the headteacher has had to devote too much of her time and energy to sorting out basic problems. Now that the Centre has a satisfactory range of basic resources, it is working towards increasing the range to match the intended improvements in the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The Centre provides **good** care for all children and has their welfare as its prime concern. Support, advice and guidance are satisfactory. The views of children are well valued.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know all children very well which leads to strong relationships and an overall ethos of care in the school.
- Centre staff are vigilant in ensuring that children are safe and secure at all times.
- Strong links with outside agencies ensure that all children receive the support they need.

- Children's learning is not consistently monitored, which prevents staff from always providing effective guidance on how children can make progress.

Commentary

19. Very good induction arrangements ensure that all children are happy to attend the Centre and are very well known to the staff who care for and work with them. Key workers work very closely with parents, carers and outside agencies before the children start at the Centre to ensure that the transition from home is managed very sensitively for each child. This ensures that any concerns are quickly addressed and that families are well known and supported. Staff know the children and their families very well and the Centre makes very good use of outside support agencies to support them.
20. Staff show genuine affection for the children, which puts them at their ease and helps them grow in confidence and feel secure. Relationships between adults and children throughout the Centre are very good and, as a result, there are very high levels of trust between children and adults. This ensures that the children starting at the Centre are warmly welcomed and settle down quickly.
21. The Centre has the children's care and welfare at its core and very successfully strives to create a happy, safe and secure environment. Very effective child protection procedures are in place and all staff are fully aware of the policies and practices which ensure that pupils are well cared for and nurtured. Careful risk assessments and very close attention to health and safety issues ensure that children are safe and well cared for at all times. Parents raised concerns about the safety of the children in the car park outside the Centre, an issue which staff are well aware of and for which they are actively seeking assistance from the local authority to remedy.
22. Very close working relationships with outside agencies ensure that all children who are referred to the Centre are thoroughly and sensitively assessed to identify their needs. This results in a focused approach to providing the right care and physical support for every child. All adults give very high levels of care to pupils with special educational needs. They are particularly caring of those with physical disabilities and those who find it difficult to cope with new situations, particularly when helping the child to become increasingly independent in developing new skills, such as using scissors. Staff are very vigilant in protecting the health and safety of children with particular physical needs. The Centre's strong partnership links with outside agencies ensure that there is a co-ordinated and unified approach to the many aspects of care and support that are available. As a result, children's individual care plans ensure that all parties are working towards the same ends to help the child develop and thrive.
23. Adults track the children's personal development informally, but do not consistently record what the children learn. This prevents staff from always providing good support and guidance on what steps the children need to take next to further their learning. They listen carefully to the children and always respond positively to their ideas and suggestions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The Centre has **good** links with parents and other schools and provides **good** extended services and support programmes for parents and carers. Links with the community are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents and carers are actively encouraged to play a major role in their child's learning and personal development.
- Parents and carers receive good quality information from the Centre.
- Strong links with outside agencies provide effective support for children and their families.
- The Centre provides a good range of extended services and support programmes for parents and carers.
- The Centre does not effectively harness all that the community can offer to aid the learning and personal development of the children.

Commentary

24. The Centre's care ethos extends to whole families and this strengthens the partnership between home and school. Children and their families are well known to staff, encouraging open dialogue with the school. Parents and carers are happy to approach the headteacher and all staff to discuss any issues they may have in the knowledge that they will be dealt with sensitively and effectively. Parents are kept very well informed about all aspects of their children's progress and school life.
25. Parents and carers are encouraged through a wide programme of initiatives to take an active role in their children's learning and development. The Centre expects parents and carers to stay with their children during the induction period which helps build the children's confidence and gently eases them towards greater independence. Children needing extra reassurance are cuddled by staff and wave goodbye to their parents from their classroom door and then from the window. Parents and carers know that their children are in safe and caring hands. Those parents and carers who wish to stay take full advantage of the comfortable parents' room until they are confident that their child has settled.
26. Communication between the Centre and home is effective and well planned. Parents and carers receive good quality information about the Centre and all that it offers them and their children. Written information is clear and concise and ensures that parents are provided with good opportunities to engage in their children's learning and personal development. Verbal communication and interaction between staff and parents at both the start and end of session times make a valuable contribution to strengthening ties between home and the Centre.
27. The strong links which exist between the Centre and outside agencies ensure that good support is provided to the most vulnerable members of the Centre's community. Effective links with social services and the local health authority enable the Centre to quickly and effectively enlist appropriate help from speech therapists and other services to meet children's individual needs.
28. Although staff have made some attempts to involve the local community in the daily life of the Centre, they do not effectively harness all that the community could offer to enrich the children's learning and personal development. There is at present little contact with other neighbouring schools and only a very small number of visitors come to the Centre to work with the children.
29. Relationships with parents are very good. All attend the regular review and target setting meetings for their children's individual education plans so that they have a

clear understanding of their child's particular needs and what they might do to help them and the school achieve the targets.

Other services and educational support programmes

The Centre provides **good** opportunities for families and other community groups to socialise and learn alongside the children. The extended services provided by the Centre enrich the lives of those involved and make a useful contribution to involving whole families in the learning.

Early Years 1

30. Children in Early Years 1 are well cared for at all times. Adults have formed very good relationships with the children and these ensure they will go to one of them for help and support if they need to. Sessions are organised well so the children play with a range of toys and games and have good opportunity to go outside or stay indoors if they wish. The rooms and outdoor area are small so do not always enable them to mix as a larger group. Planning to ensure learning is based on previously developed skills is not yet in place so the children's achievement is satisfactory overall. Their social and emotional development is nurtured well so that by the time they start in Early Years 2 most know how to behave, to share and take turns amicably. As a result they join in with the activities on offer with confidence.

KEEP 3

31. Parents who attend this group find the meetings very useful. The session is well structured to cover informal chat and more formally planned activities. The children enjoy learning with their mums and show off their newly developed skills when making models or painting pictures. Parents enjoy sharing ideas and considering how they can help their children's learning at home. Currently, parents are working together to identify the wide range of opportunities for finding numbers at home and in the local area. This is helping them to extend simple games to play with their child at home or when out and about. As a result, parents are confident to play with their children and support their learning. Good relationships are developed with Centre staff and these lead to closer links with the home.

Bumps and babies

32. Great fun was had by all involved as the session opened with the usual favourite songs. 'What shall I do with the bouncing baby?' in particular created lots of giggles and gurgles. Parents value these sessions because they can play with their babies and toddlers, learn about a range of important issues, such as baby massaging, and make resources to use with their children at home. The creative ideas of those involved are shared willingly by others in the group.

BIB (Breast is Best)

33. A small group of mums are supporting each other well through the pleasures and challenges of feeding one's own baby. The group's support is invaluable to first time mums who value knowing that everyone has the same feelings and concerns about breast feeding at some time. There are plans to develop closer links with midwives to let more people know about the group and to welcome additional members, including

expectant mothers. Some parents go into the local community to talk to mums individually, while others continue to attend to offer support after their children have started at nursery.

Child minders group

34. The Child Minders Club is a good opportunity for children, who often attend the Centre when they are older, to socialise and play in a stimulating and safe environment. Links between this group and the Centre are not currently as strong as they could be and this results in missed opportunities to ensure smooth transition into the Early Years 1 class.
35. In addition, the Centre runs a KEEP 1 group for children over one and a 'Stepping Stones' group for small groups of children with special educational needs and their carers. Neither of these groups were observed so a judgement is not made. Feedback from parents is very positive.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **satisfactory**. The leadership provided by the headteacher is good. The leadership provided by other staff is satisfactory. The school's management procedures are satisfactory. Governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of Centre has made a good start to guiding this new Centre forward.
- Governors show high levels of commitment that every child should get the best possible start to their school life.
- The Centre's strategic development plan is not focused enough on the most important issues.
- Each child is valued and given every support to be fully included in all the Centre has to offer.

Commentary

36. The Centre has been through a difficult time in the two years since its inception. It opened in temporary accommodation with two temporary part-time managers. The head of Centre, who has been in post just one year, faced a daunting task overcoming low staff morale and bringing together adults with two very different professional experiences and expectations. In addition, a great deal of her time and energy was taken up with overcoming problems with the accommodation. This has led to the rate of change being slower at times than was needed to give the children the very best start to their time at the Centre. However, although weaknesses remain, there is evidence of improvement. For example, improved planning for groups is leading to good teaching and achievement and staff are now working together well as a team.
37. The head of Centre made team building her initial priority. She has gained the staff's respect and, through the introduction of High Scope, has given a focus to their work so that they have a common starting point for development. Staff say that she has *'given us something to look forward to and we are all learning together'*. Her

supportive attitude, backed up by very good knowledge of how young children learn best, has helped the staff to reflect on how they want the Centre to be and their part in it. Staff are now ready to share their practice more openly as can be seen by the way that both Early Years 1 and 2 have literally opened their doors to groups within each class. This means that staff now plan the curriculum together so that there is a more consistent approach to the children's learning experiences.

38. The training programme has now acquired a new urgency as staff are beginning to realise that there is need to tighten up on planning for children's learning and how to assess it. Although training is regular and well planned, neither the head nor other managers monitor closely enough its effects on learning and teaching or evaluate the successes to see what needs to be done next. Despite this, the head of Centre has a very clear idea of what is needed to bring about further improvement. She is ruthlessly honest in her own informal evaluations and analyses. This level of thinking is not evident in the Centre Strategy Plan, which is unsatisfactory. It does not structure further development clearly enough or give the measures for success. Neither does it identify clearly enough the roles of other managers, such as team leaders and the Deputy Centre Managers.
39. The establishment of team leaders has given a more formal structure to the Centre's management, but as yet the system is not well enough developed to have any significant effect on the Centre's progress. Team leaders say they welcome the 'widening of our professionalism'. They feel that they are moving forward now and that the head of Centre lets them 'learn from our mistakes' rather than imposing new systems. The school's management of children with special educational needs is good. The managers liaise very effectively with a number of outside agencies to ensure that the children with special educational needs have the best support possible so that that they are fully included in all that the Centre does and achieve as well as the other children.
40. The governing body has only existed in its present form for a few weeks. Despite this governors have made a very energetic and supportive start. They have a good idea of the Centre's strengths and weaknesses and share the Head of Centre's vision for 'wrap around care'. They have already been on a number of training courses and booked for more. They are in the process of setting up a system to find out parents' and children's views of the Centre so that they can check its effectiveness. They have started the monitoring process and arranged focused observation visits. The finance committee members have asked detailed questions to determine that the budget is being spent wisely and are satisfied that they can see the benefit to the children. They are prepared to be challenging in their questioning in order to help things move forward at the pace that is now needed. The Centre is in the first year of managing its own budget. Financial control is satisfactory and there is a reasonable carry forward of funds.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children care for each other and help with small jobs.
- Minor incidents are soon sorted out because the children are encouraged to think about their actions.
- Children play confidently with one another when outside.
- Children are confident to ask for help because of the very good relationships they have with adults.
- Children take care of their own needs well.
- Children are not always given enough opportunity to develop their independence and take responsibility for making decisions and choices.

Commentary

41. The children's personal development is nurtured as soon as they start at the Centre and is at the forefront of everything the adults do. Children are encouraged to get along together and any minor incidents are talked through with individuals. This means that the children are thinking about the impact of their own actions and learn to say sorry if someone is upset. Children are encouraged to work together in groups so this ensures they learn to share and take turns. Most do so successfully. Children show care towards one another, helping with small jobs such as carrying plates to the table or sweeping the sand and look after one another's needs such as fetching a tissue for a friend with a cold. As a result of the good teaching and learning, the children achieve well. A small number of children are on track to achieve the goals expected by the time they start school but overall standards are below expectations.
42. When outside on the large play area, the children use the trikes, scooters and trolleys with good thought to their own and others' safety. They manoeuvre the toys with care, avoiding bumps and collisions as they steer around each other. Adults keep a watchful eye to ensure everyone is safe. Relationships with adults are very good so the children ask for help and support with confidence. Children with special educational needs are supported well so that they too join in with some of the physical activities despite their difficulties. Adults are aware of their particular needs and make sure that they join in safely. Children learn to take care of their own needs because this expectation is set from the beginning, for example fetching their coats independently when going outside to play. The children are given good opportunities to make choices about where to play indoors in the daily 'planning time'. However, this is limited because they are not given the choice to decide when to learn outside or to consider and plan what they might do in the different activity areas.
43. Leadership and management are good. Recent training has focused on how staff can build up the children's self-confidence and self-esteem and this is being done successfully. Adults record how well the children get along and how they approach a task, but this is inconsistent with some staff making detailed records and others hardly any comments. However, adults know the children's personal needs very well

and this is supporting their interactions so that the children develop their personal, social and emotional development well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- When adults intervene in the children's independent play they develop their speaking skills well.
- When children learn in small groups, they talk about what they have done with confidence.
- Group time activities are planned for well, although the development of specific language skills are not planned for well enough in 'work time'.
- Children have favourite books because of the range of stories they are told.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

44. Standards are well below average when the children start in Early Years 1 and 2. The Centre builds on this baseline satisfactorily and achievement is satisfactory. However, because of their low starting points, very few children are likely to reach the expected goals by the time they start school and standards are well below expectations.
45. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Activities in small group time are planned well to develop specific skills. When telling stories, adults often use toys and puppets to bring the story to life. This engages the children's interest and helps them to develop their listening skills and an enjoyment of the spoken word. As a result, some children talk about favourite books and choose to share these with a friend during 'work time'. Children who have a particular need are supported well when they work with an adult on specific skills. One such group were fully involved in considering what might be inside the special box. They all played along, not telling their friends what they could see as they slowly raised the lid and peeked inside, keeping its secret safe despite the squeals of delight when they opened the lid only to see their own reflection staring back at them. This simple activity developed the children's speaking and listening skills well. 'Planning time' is beginning to give the children a purpose for writing. They all take turns to pretend to write down where each child wants to play, using simple squiggles and patterns.
46. The role-play area is in constant use during 'work time' and this enables the children to act out everyday situations. For most of the time, this area is not supported by an adult so there are missed opportunities to develop the children's speaking skills. When adults join in with the children's play, learning improves. Conversations increase the children's vocabulary and help them to structure their ideas. As a result, all children are able to make themselves understood and to ask for help when needed, either through words or through gestures and pointing.
47. Leadership and management of this area of learning are satisfactory. Recently introduced group activities are beginning to focus on developing specific skills. This is

leading to better achievement at these times. Checks to make sure adults are consistently completing, recording and using assessments in their planning are not thorough enough. As a result, not all adults are recording in enough detail what the children can do and therefore are not identifying closely enough what they need to do next. This is unsatisfactory because, although adults know the children well, they do not plan to focus on developing specific language well enough when they interact during 'work time'.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are not enough opportunities for children to choose to take part in mathematical development in 'work time'.
- The children know a range of number rhymes which help their counting skills.
- Some adults develop the children's number skills well in small group activities.
- Assessment is not used well enough to target individual children's needs.

Commentary

48. Children start at the Centre with low knowledge and understanding of numbers, shapes and measures. Achievement is satisfactory so that by the time they leave the Centre all children have an awareness of numbers around them and are beginning to recognise and match circles, squares and triangles. This is still well below the goals they are expected to reach by the time they start school.
49. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. At times when the children sit together in a circle of friends to learn together, they sing a good range of number rhymes and songs and these raise their familiarity with how numbers work and develop suitable counting skills. 'Work-time' activities are not planned to focus enough on developing the children's number skills so there are missed opportunities for the children to follow up this learning independently unless adults happen to be passing and notice an opportunity. Learning is better during group-time activities, because teaching is focused on developing specific knowledge and skills. Every week the children take part in a focused group activity and when it is planned to build on the children's previous learning achievement is good. For example, during 'work time', adults noticed the children did not have a secure knowledge and understanding of shapes so the group time activity during the week was to find and match circles, squares and triangles with real objects in the environment. This is an example of good use of assessment to plan learning and of how the outdoors can be used effectively to stimulate learning. Small group activities enable adults to talk to the children individually, to check their knowledge and understanding and to take their learning forward. Some adults develop these skills well during other group activities, asking questions so that the children consider quantities. For example, when making play dough the children talked about how much flour and water was being added to the mixture, counting out the cupfuls and deciding together when the cup was half full.
50. Leadership and management of this area of learning are satisfactory. Recent changes to the way learning is organised is leading to better achievement in group work

activities. Assessment systems have been agreed, but checks to make sure these are consistently completed and used by all adults are not comprehensive enough. As a result, weaknesses in some practice have not been picked up. There is no formally written action plan detailing precisely how achievement in this area of learning will be developed and improved, although the head of Centre is very clear in her mind about how this will be done.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Where teaching in group work has a clear purpose, the children achieve well.
- Planning for 'work time' and the assessment of how well children have done does not concentrate clearly enough on children's learning so that these sessions often lack purpose.
- Standards in some activities are higher because the children have good opportunities to follow up group work.
- The outdoor area is not used well enough to increase children's knowledge and learning about the world around them.

Commentary

51. Standards are well below average overall in this area of the children's learning. Children enter the Centre with very limited life experiences. The activities planned for them in Early Years 2 build adequately on those provided in Early Years 1 so that the achievement of all groups of children is satisfactory. The children's achievement is good when they design and make their own models using recyclable materials in self-chosen activities. This is because they have regular opportunities in 'work time' to practise the skills, such as cutting and joining with sticky tape, that they have been taught formally in group time. As a result of adult guidance in helping the children think through what they are doing and to make choices, standards are higher in this area, but still below average. Children with special educational needs are given extra care so that they achieve as well as the other children. Those with a physical disability are given every opportunity to develop skills such as cutting so that they join in all activities as fully as possible.
52. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall. In small group sessions they are often good because planning is more detailed than that for 'work time' sessions as lessons are carefully sequenced. This planning is often linked to the children's earlier experiences and other aspects of the curriculum so that it guides the children's activity well and is purposeful. In a good lesson, planned to help the children explore and investigate a programmable toy truck, the adult built on the children's experience of toys and controlling the keyboard mouse well so that they were completely involved in finding out which buttons to press to make the car move in a chosen way. The adult used questioning well to help the children to think before they acted and the very trusting relationships that are built up between adults and children encouraged all but the most timid to have a go.

53. Planning for 'work time', when the children choose the area they want to play in and the activity they pursue, is not thorough enough. Children are not given enough guidance as to the purpose of the activity and so many children move too quickly from group to group to benefit from a sustained and challenging experience. In some areas, these sessions become little more than a free for all. For example, in the large block area the activity often becomes boisterous as it turns into a climbing, rather than building, activity. This is unsatisfactory. There are no systems for tracking which areas the children visit in these sessions and systems for assessing what they have learnt when there are unsatisfactory. This means that staff cannot offer the children the experiences they need to make learning more successful so that they achieve well. It means that, although few girls visit the large block area, there is no particular encouragement, stimulus or focus for them to do so. Children obviously enjoy looking at autumn leaves, experiencing different textures in wet and dry sand and playing in the water tray and these offer good chances for their social development. However, while the children describe what they see, they are not encouraged to explore and find out more through investigation.
54. The outdoor area is barren and bleak. Children go outside twice a day, weather permitting, and there is no element of choice offered. Although some wheeled toys and balls are sometimes available, the lack of focus in these sessions means that there are missed opportunities to develop the children's understanding of how things move and work. The use of the environmental area is poor when the children are left to decide what they want to find out. Although they enjoy being outside and running about, there is no learning focus to the activity and so their development in learning about the world around them is limited.
55. Leadership and management by the headteacher of this area of learning are satisfactory. She was instrumental in the recent improvements in small group planning. She is fully aware of the shortcomings in the classroom and the range of learning provided and has clear plans for further improvement.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a good awareness of their own and others' space when riding scooters, trikes and trolleys outside.
- Adults do not always support the children's learning when they play outside because there is no focus to the interventions.
- Provision for the development of the children's climbing, balancing, crawling and jumping skills is unsatisfactory.
- The children's cutting skills are provided for well.

Commentary

56. Children are confident movers when running around the large playground. They keep an eye open on others and this ensures very few bumps and grazes occur. Achievement is satisfactory in most aspects of this area of learning, although the children's skills are still well below the goals they are expected to reach by the time

they start school. When the time spent outside is planned and focused, the children have good opportunity to develop specific skills. During the inspection, one child proudly showed off his new-found skill of riding a scooter, managing for the first time to balance on one foot while pushing with the other. This is because several times over the week the children have access to a good range of trikes, trolleys and scooters which they use sensibly to practise their skills. Again, there are missed opportunities for the children to enjoy these toys at other times because the outdoors is not used throughout the day. At times when there are no resources available for the children to use, they do not develop physical skills well enough and achievement during the inspection was poor. Although some children choose to play on the climbing apparatus at these times, too few other opportunities are planned for the children to develop their climbing, balancing, jumping and crawling skills specifically.

57. Group time activities are better planned to focus on the development of specific skills. During the inspection, adults planned for the children to learn how to throw and catch balls and beanbags in the small area immediately outside the classroom. However, despite good teaching, this activity was cut short on two occasions because of time slippage from other activities so the children did not get enough opportunity to develop these skills as well as they should and achievement was unsatisfactory.
58. A good range of activities to develop the children's finger and hand movements ensures good achievement in this aspect. As a result, the children have satisfactory cutting and manipulation skills. Play dough is often available for them to shape and make models and the children use the cutters and rolling pins to flatten, smooth and cut out their required shapes with good levels of skill. The creative area always provides good opportunities for the children to cut and join recyclable materials and this helps them to develop good control over paint brushes, tape dispensers and scissors. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory, although there is more work to be done in improving the planning for learning in the development of the children's specific movement skills.
59. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Learning is too dependent on ad hoc intervention by adults to take learning forward and allow the children to improve. This is despite the recent introduction of more focused group activities. Close checks are not made to ensure that group activities are always long enough for the children to practise their skills and, if not, to build in more opportunities for the children to choose to do this at times other than when they are told. Satisfactory assessment systems are in place but again their use is unsatisfactory to plan further learning. There is no formal strategic plan to outline precisely how achievement will be improved, although there are detailed plans on how the outdoor area is to be developed to provide a more stimulating learning environment.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Group activities offer good opportunities to explore colour and materials within a limited range.

- Planning and assessment do not concentrate sufficiently well on what the children are to learn so activities sometimes lack purpose.
- Imaginative language is developed well when adults join in with children's play.
- There are a limited range of activities and resources for children to choose from in 'work time'.

Commentary

60. Children start at the Centre without the language skills and experiences they need to help them communicate their own ideas and develop their imagination through story, role play and exploring different materials. Children achieve satisfactorily because adults give high levels of care which encourage them to try out new things within an adequate range of activities. Standards are well below average.
61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall. They are sometimes good in small group sessions where the activity is carefully structured to teach the children new techniques, such as using Brusho dry paint to mix colours. Where adults give the children time to talk about what they are doing and what is happening, for example when they put the dry paint onto very wet paper, achievement is often good. However, planning for small group sessions does not always give enough emphasis to exploring and experimenting or indicate the language that will be developed. This means that children are not given enough time to think about and plan what they are going to do and this sometimes prevents them from learning more successfully.
62. Planning for 'work time' is not so carefully structured and tends to concentrate on what the children are to do rather than what they might learn. This means that sometimes the activity lacks a real purpose and the children do not get as much out of it as they might. For example, those who choose to play in the home corner are sometimes left to do so without adult support and so they do not develop the stories they start to act out. When adults join in with these imaginary stories and play, the children concentrate for longer and enjoy it more. At these times, the adults provide good support, modelling language and ways of responding to each other well, so that the stories develop well as the children are encouraged to use their imagination. This particularly benefits those children with special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English. Adults also keep an eye on the children's behaviour so that achievement is often good. Adult help tends to focus on the creative aspects during 'work time' and skills gained in group time, such as making collages, are used in a more focused way, promoting good achievement at times.
63. The children's learning is not assessed in enough detail and is unsatisfactory in helping the teachers plan work that helps the children to learn at a quicker pace. It also does not identify closely enough what children with particular learning needs should be offered next. This prevents better improvement in standards and achievement. Adults do not keep a record of what activities children choose to go to and so they cannot be certain that all children try out new things or have a spread of experiences.
64. The use of songs to help learning in other areas is satisfactory. There is no permanent area where children can experiment with instruments and sounds and this

is unsatisfactory. There are no teaching plans for the outdoor area and this is not used nearly well enough to encourage the children's creativity.

65. Leadership and management of this area of learning are satisfactory. The development and use of the outdoor area to support learning are a priority and planning for group sessions is resulting in good achievement.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the Centre	4
How inclusive the Centre is	2
How the Centre's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	N/A
Value for money provided by the Centre	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the Centre	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-Centre activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the Centre seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the Centre's links with parents	3
The quality of the Centre's links with the community	4
The Centre's links with other Centres, schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the Centre	4
The governance of the Centre	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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