

Crosfield Nursery School and Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101702
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	323509
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Sue Vale

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	95
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	25
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Paula Ollett
Headteacher	Mrs Jaqi Stevenson
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2005
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Elborough Road South Norwood SE25 5BD
Telephone number	020 8654 7566
Fax number	020 8654 7352

Age group	3–4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Crosfield is a large Nursery school in a culturally and socially mixed area of Croydon. It was designated as a children's centre in June 2007, but does not yet have fully operational status. Increasing numbers of children, currently about half, are new to learning English. Around 10% of children are identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; these include children with specific physical disabilities, and those who are delayed in developing their speech and language skills. There are almost twice as many boys as girls in the current year group. The school has an onsite, privately run, breakfast club, after school care club and a few places for all-day extended day care. The Nursery has Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

During their time in the Nursery at Crosfield Children's Centre, children receive a good start to their education. The Nursery provides a warm and welcoming environment for the children and their families. As one mother commented, 'I am very pleased that my daughter is beginning her education in such a well-run, stimulating and happy environment.' From the moment children visit in the 'stay and play' centre until they leave aged four, the children thoroughly enjoy their learning through play.

Most of the children begin Nursery with skills and abilities that are broadly as expected for children of their age, albeit a little below those expected in their personal and social development. At the time of the inspection, many children had only been at Nursery for a week, but due to the care of the staff and the interesting and stimulating activities on offer, most children had already quickly settled into the daily routines. Those who were taking longer to separate from their carers were looked after and cared for very well.

By the time they leave Nursery, children make good progress in developing spoken English and in their personal, social and emotional development. As one father wrote to the inspector, 'Since starting at Nursery my son's language skills have improved. He is producing longer sentences and using a wider range of vocabulary. He is happy and keen to tell me about new stories, songs and things he has done.'

Well-planned practical activities allow children to develop their own interests and abilities independently. This provides them with a strong foundation for the next stage of their education. As a result, children achieve and progress well towards the goals expected of them. The curriculum is broad and well planned with practical and engaging activities that allow children to learn through play. However the full implementation of a more rigorous approach to the teaching of phonics has been impeded by the fact that the member of staff concerned has been on maternity leave. Not all staff are trained in how to help children learn initial letter sounds to support them more fully in their next steps for learning. Governors and parents commented on the many positive aspects of the outside learning environment, and children are fortunate to have access to such an exciting and stimulating outdoor area. The free flow of movement between the inside and outside areas means that children widen their learning experiences and grow in confidence.

Children's personal development and well-being are good. They are happy and keen to be at Nursery, although attendance amongst some families does not always reflect this. Children become independent and confident learners and at this early stage in the year, they are becoming aware of how to work and play together. They understand about a healthy lifestyle, and are keen to help chop up the fruit! The outside area gives them many opportunities for physical development. More challenging behaviour from some children is handled well by staff. Children learn the differences between right and wrong and understand the expectations to behave well. On the few occasions when behaviour is not as good as expected, staff explain clearly to the children why something is not right.

The care for the children is good, and their academic guidance has good elements to it although planning is not yet sufficiently related to the new Early Years Framework. Good use is made of external agencies, such as physiotherapists, in order to support the individual needs of children. There are good links with the local community, and the Nursery is an active member of a local cluster group of schools.

Leadership and management are good. The governing body is knowledgeable and supportive. Governors undertake their role as critical friends well. The headteacher leads the Nursery very well and has a clear vision for its future development as a fully integrated children's centre. The Nursery's view of itself is accurate and good progress has been made since the last inspection. The school's successful record of improvement shows that its capacity to improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Clearly incorporate reference to the new EYFS framework in planning in order to show how children's individual learning needs are being met.
- Train all staff in the teaching of phonics and implement a more rigorous approach to the teaching of initial letter sounds.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children, including the increasing numbers who are new to learning English and those identified with learning difficulties and disabilities, achieve well. Staff plan a good range of activities, which encourage children to settle quickly and help them to develop their confidence. At the time of the inspection, most children had only been in Nursery for 1 to 2 weeks but were already confident in their understanding of daily routines. In order to ensure that the children make the best possible progress, the Nursery staff have adapted the curriculum to provide more activities that are likely to appeal to the boys. Since they currently comprise the large majority, this supports and includes all learners in making good progress. Children achieve standards appropriate for their age in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their creative development. They make rapid progress towards what is expected in communication language and literacy and in their personal and social emotional development, and are already exceeding what is expected for their age in physical development. This is because of good quality teaching, and adult interaction, which encourages children to try speaking English and to help them to develop new and meaningful vocabulary.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a good focus on developing children's positive self-esteem, confidence and independence and this helps children to make rapid progress in their learning. This is because they are interested and encouraged to want to learn and to find out more. The excellent facilities available in the outdoor garden area motivate and stimulate their curiosity. Children make a positive contribution to the Nursery community. They work safely, and are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Despite the Nursery explaining to parents the importance of children attending regularly, attendance is low amongst a small number of families.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in their learning, and show positive attitudes to trying out new activities. Staff regularly observe the children to ascertain precisely what they know and can do, and what their individual interests are. These observations, along with children's 'special books' form the basis of future planning. There are some missed opportunities in the current planning to both identify children who need specific help and to ensure that the principles of the new EYFS framework are fully embedded. The Nursery has introduced more 'key people' to support different groups of children. This is a new initiative, and an initial analysis of how it is working shows a positive impact on children's language acquisition. There are activities and some support related specifically to the teaching of phonics. They are not regularly planned for nor have all staff been trained in this aspect of learning in order to help children to learn initial sounds. Overall, the provision enables most children including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language to make good progress towards the early learning goals in relation to their starting points.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 2

Children receive a positive start to their school life because the staff show a real commitment to meeting their personal and welfare needs. Child protection procedures are in place and are understood and followed by staff. Risk assessments for school visits and rigorous procedures for monitoring the health and safety of the children are in place. Parents are particularly pleased with the support that they receive. As one mother commented, 'I can honestly say Crosfields is extraordinary in the attention given to the children's needs.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. There is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the Nursery. The headteacher leads well, and clearly understands the centre's strengths and areas for development; consequently, self-evaluation is good. Equality of opportunity for all children is important and opportunities are managed very well to ensure that all participate fully. There are good procedures for day-to-day management to ensure that things run smoothly. The few places which are available for children on an extended day care basis are managed well. There are good facilities available for those who need to have a quiet time or a snooze if they are spending the whole day at nursery. Community cohesion is good as there are good links with children's families, and family learning sessions which are run at the Nursery are popular. There are good links with external agencies and with other local schools through the cluster group. The governors are knowledgeable and understand the strengths and areas for development very well. They are a pro-active body and attend regular training in order to strengthen their knowledge and understanding. They ask pertinent questions and are fully supportive in helping the Nursery to develop further as it takes on the full commitment of being a children's centre.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
The standards[1] reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Crosfield Nursery School and Children's Centre, South Norwood, SE25 5BD

It was lovely to meet you when I came to visit your Nursery. I enjoyed being outside in your lovely gardens with you and looking at the 'wiggly worms' you found.

Your Nursery is a good school. There are many things that you do well.

- You are very happy and like coming to your Nursery.
- There are many interesting things for you to try.
- You really enjoy playing outside, and are fortunate to have such a lot of lovely things to play with in the garden.
- Your teachers plan interesting activities to help you learn.
- You have good teachers who look after you well.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased with the Nursery.
- The Nursery is well led and managed.

There are still some things that could be even better at your Nursery.

There is a new framework for the early years, which every Nursery has to look at and follow, it started very recently, and so I have asked your teachers to look at the way they plan things for you to. I have also asked them to help you more in learning your initial letter sounds - this is called phonics.

Yours sincerely

Sue Vale

Lead Inspector