



The Foundation Stage

A survey of 144 settings

This is a major survey of the Foundation Stage. Ofsted visited a variety of different settings to evaluate standards, achievement and the quality of provision for children aged three to five, as well as local authorities' support. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage were good or better in almost two thirds of the settings. In primary schools the headteachers' knowledge of and commitment to the Foundation Stage were important factors, as were the role and influence of Foundation Stage coordinators. Although most settings provide effective education and care, variation in quality exists between them. The survey's findings provide a baseline from which the success of the Early Years Foundation Stage may be measured when it is implemented from September 2008 and subsequently inspected by Ofsted.

Of particular interest to:

Parents, carers, childcare providers, early years settings, local authorities, inspectors, initial teacher training institutions and the Department for Education and Skills.

Age group
3–5

Published
March 2007

Reference no.
HMI 2610

© Crown copyright 2007

Document reference number: HMI 2610

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Contents

Executive summary	2
Key findings	3
Recommendations	4
Introduction	5
Standards and achievement	6
Standards	6
Achievement	8
<hr/>	
Teaching, learning and assessment	12
Teaching and learning	12
Assessment	13
<hr/>	
The curriculum	15
Leadership and management	17
Inclusion	18
English as an additional language	19
<hr/>	
Care and guidance	20
Health and well-being	21
<hr/>	
Transition	22
Managing transition	22
Curriculum and transition	23
Impact of the Foundation Stage profile on transition arrangements	24
Impact of transition on children's development	24
<hr/>	
The contribution of local authorities	25
Assessment	25
Transition	25
Health	25
Professional development	25
Inclusion	25
Self-evaluation	25
<hr/>	
Notes	25
Further information	25
Annex	25
Local authorities visited	25
Settings visited	25

Executive summary

This is Ofsted's first major survey of Foundation Stage settings since 2001.¹ The term 'settings' is used to include all types of provision visited. Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), childcare inspectors and Additional Inspectors visited 144 settings between April 2005 and July 2006 to evaluate standards, achievement and the quality of provision for children aged from three to five, as well as local authorities' (LA) support. Settings were selected to represent a range of provision.

Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage were good or better in almost two thirds of the settings and were particularly strong in the special schools and maintained nursery settings. In primary schools, the headteachers' commitment to and knowledge of the Foundation Stage were important factors, as were the role and influence of the Foundation Stage coordinators.

With the exception of the special schools, standards were within the expected levels in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. In the settings visited standards were higher than expected in aspects of personal, social and emotional development, and physical development. Girls achieved better than boys across all the areas of learning. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities usually did well; some more able children underachieved.

Standards in communication, language and literacy were below the levels expected in a third of the settings visited. Significant barriers to learning in these settings included inadequate support for children who were at the early stages of learning English as an additional language and high mobility in the communities the settings served. The local authorities visited during the survey were, in the main, not sufficiently prepared to support children from families of minority ethnic heritage, especially recently arrived refugee and asylum-seeker families.

Assessment was good or better in two thirds of the settings. Although it was inadequate in only a few of them, aspects could have been improved further in many. Assessing communication, language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world was more effective than for the other areas of learning.

Parents appreciated the high level of care their children received, but some said they were not always given enough information about their progress in learning. Although the pastoral arrangements for transition from one setting to

¹ *Nursery education: quality of provision for 3 and 4 year olds 2000-01* (HMI 331), Ofsted, 2001; available from www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/331. This report was the first published by Ofsted since the introduction of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the first since Ofsted took responsibility for the regulation of all under-eights day care and childminding.

another were generally appropriate, the maintained and non-maintained sectors did not share information about children well enough.

The survey's findings provide a baseline from which the success of the Early Years Foundation Stage may be measured when it is implemented from September 2008 and subsequently inspected by Ofsted.²

Key findings

- ❑ Although the survey identified much positive work, systemic weaknesses remain, such as variations in quality between settings and unsatisfactory links between the maintained and non-maintained sectors.
- ❑ Most of the settings inspected provided effective education and care. However, the curricular emphasis on certain early learning goals meant inadequate planning for others.³ Elements of each area of learning were not covered in sufficient depth to promote achievement consistently.
- ❑ Most children achieved well in the majority of the early learning goals. However, achievement was lower in calculation, early reading and writing, a sense of time and place, an understanding of culture and beliefs, and imaginative play because practitioners gave these too little attention. Girls achieved better than boys and reached higher standards.
- ❑ In the main, standards were at or, in some cases, above the levels expected for children in the Foundation Stage. However, standards in communication, language and literacy were lower than expected and children's speaking and listening skills were weak in a third of the settings visited.⁴ Links between communication, language and literacy, and other areas of learning were not developed well enough.
- ❑ The quality of teaching and assessment were at least good in six in 10 of the settings. However, in around a third, practitioners did not include children and parents well enough in assessment. Parents were not involved sufficiently in completing the Foundation Stage profile.
- ❑ Teaching was consistently effective for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). It was not always challenging enough for more

² Useful background information can be found in *The early years foundation stage: direction of travel*, published on the Every Child Matters website (www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/news/?asset=News&id=35252).

³ The early learning goals set out the standards which it is expected most children will reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. The *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (www.qca.org.uk/5585.html) describes early learning goals for each area of learning and identifies 'stepping stones' which mark progress towards them. These stepping stones are not age-related and the number of them varies between and within areas of learning. Progression is shown by the use of coloured bands: yellow, blue and green. It is likely that most three-year-olds will be at the stage indicated by the yellow band and five-year-olds by the green band.

⁴ Communication, language and literacy comprises six aspects: language for communication, language for thinking, linking sounds and letters, reading, writing and handwriting.

able children or sufficiently matched to the needs of those learning English as an additional language. Not all settings were aware enough of the impact of girls' and boys' different choices of play activity on their progress in other areas of learning.

- ❑ There was a clear link between communication skills and the development of creativity. Creativity flourished where practitioners supported and valued language development and children's imaginative play.
- ❑ Leadership and management were good in at least six in 10 of the settings, outstanding in about one in 10 and inadequate in only a small proportion of those visited. They were particularly good in the special schools, maintained nursery schools and children's centres. Foundation Stage coordinators were important influences on the quality of provision.
- ❑ Procedures to help children settle and make friends during points of transition were effective. However, support for children's progression in learning from one class to the next was less effective. Links between maintained and non-maintained settings were almost always underdeveloped.
- ❑ Local authorities had suitable procedures for considering transition arrangements. Over the course of the survey their practice improved and, by the end of the survey, it was generally good. However, of the 10 authorities visited to discuss transition arrangements, only two had clear guidance for schools on transition from the early learning goals to National Curriculum levels.

Recommendations

In order to provide a firm foundation for further development of the Foundation Stage, it is recommended that the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) should:

- ensure that settings have improved guidance on raising standards in communication, language and literacy; supporting the achievement of boys; and providing effective challenge for more able children.

Local authorities should:

- use data effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses in curricular provision and communicate their findings to settings
- ensure practitioners receive training to meet the needs of children for whom English is an additional language
- ensure that training is provided on improving the links between communication, language and literacy, and other areas of learning
- play a role in improving procedures for transition between non-maintained and maintained settings.

Staff in settings should:

- raise standards in communication, language and literacy, with an appropriately high focus on children's speaking and listening skills
- increase their awareness of the impact of boys' choices of play activity on their progress and help them to achieve more rapidly by providing opportunities for learning that engage them
- provide more effective and specialist support for children learning English as an additional language
- ensure that more able children are challenged sufficiently
- ensure that each of the areas of learning is planned for and taught effectively
- provide regular, planned opportunities, including imaginative play, for children to develop their creativity and adults should discuss with them what they are doing
- work with children and parents to involve them more fruitfully in assessment
- pay more attention to children's academic as well as pastoral progress during points of transition, linking appropriately with the previous setting.

Introduction

1. During the course of this survey, the government's public consultation on what is now known as the Early Years Foundation Stage raised key questions about what should be provided for young children's learning and development. The Early Years Foundation Stage draws from and builds on the success of earlier guidance and regulations for this age group, especially *Birth to three matters*, *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* and the *National Standards for under-8s day care and childminding*.⁵
2. This survey evaluated the quality of provision in the current Foundation Stage curriculum, which, since 2002, has formed the first stage of the National Curriculum. This sets out early learning goals in six areas: personal, social, and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. These will also be the areas of learning and development set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage.⁶ As well as considering provision, children's standards and achievement, the survey also considers the extent to which progress

⁵ *Birth to three matters*; available from www.surestart.gov.uk/resources/childcareworkers/birthtothreematters. *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (QCA/00/587), QCA/DfEE, 2000; available from www.qca.org.uk/5585.html. *National Standards for under-8s day care and childminding*, DfES, 2003; available from www.surestart.gov.uk/publications/.

⁶ Mathematical development will be termed 'problem solving, reasoning and numeracy'.

has been made since previous surveys. In 2001, a report on nursery education found that settings did not keep parents informed well enough about their child's progress.⁷ In 2004, a report on transition from the Foundation Stage to Year 1 identified weaknesses in passing on information about children's learning.⁸ Little progress has been made in these areas.

3. The Early Years Foundation Stage will be implemented from September 2008 and will be compulsory for all primary schools and early years providers that have to register with Ofsted, as well as independent, maintained and non-maintained special schools with provision for children from the age of three. All young children, therefore, should experience integrated learning and care which enable them to achieve the best possible outcomes. The Early Years Foundation Stage should help to improve provision, since it is designed to support and promote consistent approaches and high quality, regardless of the setting a young child attends. The findings of the report therefore provide an agenda for action and the survey itself provides a baseline from which the success of the Early Years Foundation Stage may be measured.

Standards and achievement

Standards

4. With the exception of the special schools inspected, standards were within the expected levels in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Higher than expected standards were observed in aspects of personal, social and emotional development, and physical development.⁹ Standards in communication, language and literacy were below the levels expected in a third of the settings visited. In these settings, mostly serving disadvantaged communities, significant barriers to learning included high mobility and inadequate support for children who were at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
5. Within each area of learning there were discernible differences in standards and achievement across the early learning goals (Table 1). These arose from weak teaching and curricular planning.

⁷ *Nursery education: quality of provision for 3- and 4-year-olds, 2000-1* (HMI 331), Ofsted, 2001; available from www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/331.

⁸ *Transition from the Reception Year to Year 1: an evaluation by HMI* (HMI 2221), Ofsted, 2004; available from www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/2221.

⁹ National data also confirm this finding. In 2005 and 2006, personal, social and emotional development and physical development were the areas of learning where the highest percentage of children achieved all, or were working beyond, the early learning goals.

Table 1. Differences in standards and achievement across the early learning goals.

Highest standards and achievement	Lowest standards and achievement
Personal, social and emotional development	
Dispositions and attitudes	Emotional development
Communication, language and literacy	
–	Writing Linking sounds to letters Speaking skills
Mathematical development	
Numbers as labels and for counting	Calculation
Knowledge and understanding of the world	
Exploration and investigation Designing and making skills Information and communication technology	A sense of time A sense of place Understanding culture and belief
Physical development	
Control and coordination of movements	–
Creative development	
Exploring media and materials	Use of imagination

6. Girls reached higher standards than boys in all areas of learning. The following extracts from inspectors' notes are typical:

In language for communication, boys are performing less well than girls. Boys do not speak with as much confidence or show an awareness of the listener. Boys are beginning to talk in imaginative situations but are not as able as girls to take this very far.

Girls played for sustained periods in the nursery shop. They selected goods from shelves, talked to their babies and paid at the till. They collaborated well and took turns to fill shelves, manage the till and be the customers. A few boys played on a bus constructed with large bricks, although they needed adult help to adopt roles and extend the play, and quickly lost interest when the adult moved to another activity.

7. Girls applied themselves to table top activities more readily than boys and were willing to sit for longer periods of time without becoming restless.¹⁰ They were also keener to put up their hands to answer questions and to show their work. Boys enjoyed the practical elements of the curriculum and showed good spatial awareness, for example in reversing wheeled toys into bays and in orientating jigsaw pieces. They were less interested in recording their work and rarely chose to do this when they could choose activities freely.
8. While boys were more proficient in using a range of large equipment, girls showed better dexterity. In activities where they could choose freely what to do, girls more frequently used small equipment, sorting and playing with small world toys; boys preferred to use large equipment outside. Not all settings were aware of gender differences, or made the link between children's choices of play activity and their progress in other areas of learning, for example, girls' development of their writing through play.

Achievement

9. Achievement was good in half the settings visited and outstanding in nine. Outstanding achievement was found in every type of setting visited and related directly to how well the setting was led and managed. There was no relationship between outstanding achievement and the socio-economic circumstances of the areas served by the settings.
10. Achievement sometimes varied between Foundation Stage 1 and Foundation Stage 2 in the same school. For example, in personal, social, and emotional development, children in Foundation Stage 1 showed that they were competent in learning independently, but were then not given sufficient opportunity to do this in their next class (Foundation Stage 2). In communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development, children sometimes did the same work in Foundation Stage 2 that they had done a year earlier.
11. On the whole, girls' progress was more rapid than that of boys. Boys often needed to be encouraged to persist with tasks, especially those they found difficult. Most settings were effective in helping children from black and minority ethnic heritages to settle positively.
12. Exciting and relevant activities, planned to motivate the children to learn, promoted rapid progress. In this example, a simple strategy aroused children's interest in writing:

¹⁰ Children should have opportunities to engage in a range of activities planned by adults. Well organised resources, set out on tables for instance, are easily accessible and therefore encourage children to make choices and explore.

The week begins with a letter arriving from a ladybird. This stimulates a wide variety of writing, including replies to an invitation, lists of food for a party and labels for party hats. The lesson is very well paced, moving from an initial word-building activity to a class discussion on the invitation – including noting the layout of the letter – and drafting a reply. Work matches the children's capabilities, and praise and positive comments ensure that they make progress and sustain concentration. The children are given clear targets for their work, and complete the task on time.

13. Matching activities to what children were able to do was crucial in promoting rapid progress, particularly in mixed-age classes.

The teacher took careful account of the wide spread of ability in her class. With a trainee teacher, the least able children compared the number of bears of different sizes and talked about the groups they had made; the trainee recorded what they were able to do. Children of average ability worked on activities to develop their understanding of subtraction, using money as they played in the class shop. One group worked independently to match socks into pairs and then recorded their answers using a model which the teacher suggested. The most able group worked with the teaching assistant in a 'cashing up' activity from the shop takings. They had to sort various coins into columns, each totalling 10 pence, and then calculate how much there was altogether by counting in tens. All the children were highly successful in the different activities they had been given.

14. Parents' involvement was also an important influence in promoting good achievement. They were frequently involved incidentally, such as being given a rhyme of the week so that they could reinforce learning at home. Curricular plans were frequently displayed, although these were not always explained well enough for parents to know how they might support their children's learning. Parents were rarely treated as true partners but, where this did happen, there was a discernible impact on achievement.

In collaboration with parents, a large home corner was set up, focusing on mathematical development. The kitchen was a special area of focus, and had an array of scales, cutlery, crockery and so on. In this area the children explored counting, saw the usefulness of numbers, solved problems, and developed an understanding of measures in their daily routines at home and school. There was a strong focus on linking the mathematical concepts with the associated language. Parents were treated as co-educators and played a full role in identifying and developing ideas.

Parents were delighted to be involved and felt that, as a result of the joint initiative, their children developed well. All parents spoken to in the survey welcomed being involved in their children's education and were keen for ideas about how they could help.

15. The rate at which children acquired language affected their progress in other areas of learning. Progress, particularly in imaginative aspects of the curriculum, was less evident where the children's linguistic skills were poor.

Some children engaged in imaginative play, for example, using the telephone to book Bob the Builder to mend a door but, for many children, their limited language restricts their ability take their play further.

16. In their creative development, girls achieved more rapidly than boys because they chose creative activities more frequently and persisted with them for longer. There was a strong link between communication skills and creativity, particularly in imaginative play. Girls' better linguistic development helped them to sustain imaginative activities and involve others in their fantasy play. Girls were much more likely to chatter to themselves and others whilst playing whereas boys' play was sometimes silent and frequently done in isolation from others. Girls listened to each other and developed their play cooperatively through a shared conversation, frequently organising the roles that each would take and suggesting ideas to each other. One girl, seen giving out roles in the home corner, said:

'I'm going to be dad and read the paper, [to a girl] you can be nanny and make the dinner, and [to a boy] you can be the dog!'

17. The serious point to be drawn is that the inspector observed the boy's willingness to adopt the role of the dog: it was physical and demanded little engagement or talk. He lay on the floor, then sniffed around the home corner and barked. This observation was typical of many others where boys' play was *alongside* the main activity rather than as a catalyst to it. On the occasions where boys' play was more collaborative it was usually in 'raiding' games. In these activities, they enjoyed running around together outside, sometimes shouting, but rarely developing their play through talk.

18. The final report of the Rose review argued strongly for:

...making sure that young children benefit fully from all the areas of learning and experience of the Foundation Stage. ... It is self-evident that work in music, drama, art, science and mathematics and so forth is valuable not only in its own right but also rich in opportunities for children to listen, speak, read, write and rapidly increase their stock of words (paragraph 39).¹¹

¹¹ Rose, J. *Independent review of the teaching of early reading: final report* (ISBN 1-84478-684-6), DfES, 2006: available from www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/rosereview/.

The survey's findings support the importance of making links across the areas of learning and, particularly, the importance of securing children's early spoken language development.

19. Unsurprisingly, and reflecting the Rose review's report, the level of support given to children learning English as an additional language had a direct impact on their achievement across the board. In settings where the children received regular, appropriate support in learning English, their achievement was good and their confidence grew. However, where practitioners and teachers thought that they would just 'pick it up', underachievement was considerable.
20. Where children's achievement was satisfactory rather than good, practitioners planned suitable tasks but did not engage themselves well enough with the activities which children initiated. For example, a group of children in Foundation Stage 2 were excited by an activity to search for 'treasure' (plastic letters) in the sand. No one encouraged the children to recall letter sounds or think of words beginning with those sounds; the children simply stored the letters in a bucket and played in the sand. Similar practice was seen in other areas of learning. For example, beads or blocks were often available for children to play with, but practitioners made few comments to help children appreciate patterns, see relationships or improve their understanding. The following observation by an inspector was typical:

Small world play in the nursery was basic, with boys pushing cars around a track but with little talk about what was happening, collaboration, or development of their ideas. They needed help from an adult to extend their play. An adult gave this briefly, but the play deteriorated again when she moved away to work with other children.
21. The level of intervention from adults was particularly important in children's personal and social development. Children's progress in their social development was hampered occasionally by adults' ineffective management of boys' behaviour. For example, during minor squabbles, practitioners stepped in too quickly to resolve the issues for the children rather than supporting them to solve their own problems and develop appropriate skills in doing so.
22. In the six settings where inspectors judged children's achievement to be inadequate, the teaching was ineffective. In Foundation Stage 1 the sessions were too long, the pace too slow, and practitioners missed opportunities to teach key skills. In Foundation Stage 2, teaching was an uninspiring blend of talk by the teacher followed by poor quality worksheets for children to complete. As a result, they were not sufficiently involved in their learning and lost concentration.

Achievement is inadequate because the children are not engaged in learning. They have now been sitting for 45 minutes. This impedes concentration, particularly for the boys; they pay insufficient attention to the shared text and word level work in the literacy lesson. Because they have not been listening, they are not clear about what they have to do next. Rather than completing the task of writing words beginning with 'sh', three of the boys engage in an imaginary shark fight with the toys.

Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning

23. In the settings where teaching was judged, the quality was good or better in over two thirds, satisfactory in one quarter and unsatisfactory in one in twenty-five. In one in eight settings the teaching was outstanding and this was characterised by:

- excellent planning which promoted learning through challenging yet achievable targets
- high expectations of what children could achieve
- practitioners' very good knowledge of the children
- very positive relationships
- a judicious combination of the direct teaching of skills with imaginative activities which maintained children's interest and helped them to learn
- effective involvement of boys and girls in activities.

24. Outstanding teaching is illustrated in the following example:

A bike hire shop was set up where the children paid for the hire of various wheeled toys. They gave change and the hire time was set with sand timers. The children hiring the vehicles had to reverse into chalked spaces when returning their vehicles and fill in a hire form reporting any faults. This really engaged the interest of boys and girls alike.

There was a strong element of enjoyment in such outstanding lessons. Children in a special school, for instance, laughed as they popped bubbles and hit big balloons, in an activity designed to improve their fine motor control and coordination.

25. Good teaching was underpinned by meticulous daily planning which built on previous learning. Practitioners' attention to detail ensured they took account of any incidental learning and used it to extend children's learning. The most successful planning involved the whole Foundation Stage team and built on the observations they had made. The plans developed from this shared knowledge helped to ensure progression in children's learning.

26. In the settings where the teaching was satisfactory, the practitioners had caring relationships with the children and resources were presented attractively. However, planning was less precise and many of the activities were simply routine and resources were not available to promote incidental learning, as in this example:

Practitioners had not provided an area equipped for children to write, put magazines in the 'hairdressers' or notepads in the home corner; storage boxes were unlabelled; there was no exciting book corner or a listening centre.

In a third of the settings, some activities were not matched well enough to what the children knew and could do. This affected the most able children in particular. The children enjoyed outdoor play, but practitioners gave too little thought to how they might provide more challenging opportunities for learning. In addition, they missed opportunities to develop communication, language and literacy or promote independent learning.

27. Some of the teaching, particularly in Foundation Stage 2, did not take account of the youngest children, such as those who were not ready for the daily mathematics lesson. In these sessions, children spent too much time sitting still or waiting for instructions; this led to a lack of concentration and occasional misbehaviour.
28. Unsatisfactory teaching resulted in limited opportunities for children to make choices or initiate ideas. Their experiences were predictable and dominated by inappropriate interventions from adults who, for example, stepped in too quickly without appreciating children's immediate prior learning. This was detrimental and, in some instances, left the children bewildered. For example, a child received critical comment for painting black all over his picture of woodland creatures, even though, as he said to the inspector, 'Some animals go out in the dark and you can't see them.'
29. Practitioners in a few settings did not consider sufficiently the needs of children for whom English was an additional language; the specific support required to help them develop the necessary language skills for learning was not available.

Assessment

30. Assessment was good or better in two thirds of the settings and, although few were inadequate in this respect, many had aspects which could have been improved further.
31. The quality of assessment varied across the different areas of learning. It was more effective in communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world than in the other areas. In mathematical development more settings had outstanding practice, but it

was also the area where assessment was inadequate in the highest number of settings. The assessment of creative development was the weakest; assessing imaginative development was particularly inadequate. There were few occasions where adults noted, for example, children's responses to being invited to say what might happen next in a story or to suggest what might be hidden in a pretend box.

32. Almost all the settings used a wide range of methods to assess and record, such as observations, photographic records, and notes on individual achievement. Most, but not all, used the national guidance to record progress, but how this information was analysed and used varied.¹²
33. Outstanding practice included well managed systems to collect accurate information which was used to set targets for learning. In the best examples, children received regular feedback and were encouraged to make their own assessments:

Children were appropriately involved in assessing their own work and were given the responsibility for recording, on a wall chart, the activities that they had undertaken. In addition, children took photographs of work they were proud of for their record of achievement.

34. In a few of the settings visited, the expertise of other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, was drawn upon to paint a fuller picture of children's capabilities.
35. Settings whose arrangements for assessment were satisfactory had reliable systems for collecting information about attainment, but they did not use the information effectively enough to plan learning or guide the children about how to improve. In these settings, praise was often used too freely and so lost its currency. For example, an able boy was congratulated for the speed and accuracy of calculations which were, in fact, far too easy for him.
36. Inconsistent practice, a careless approach to collecting data and a lack of understanding about the purpose of assessment all featured in inadequate assessment. For example, some of the settings used more than one system for recording individuals' progress which confused practitioners and frequently led to duplicating records or an inadequate focus on subsequent learning objectives; in other settings work was not dated, so that the pace of children's progress could not be tracked accurately. In a minority of the settings, information was analysed inadequately or infrequently: its value in identifying what needed to be taught or to signal what might benefit from evaluation was therefore diminished. This was

¹² See also *The implementation and moderation of foundation stage profile assessment: annual monitoring report*, National Assessment Agency, 2005.

particularly detrimental for more able children whose potential was not recognised fully; they became bored and mischievous as a result.

37. Although parents were usually kept well informed about their child's progress they were not always included more formally in assessment. In such instances, they were unaware of the Foundation Stage profile and so were unable to contribute to it as expected.¹³ Parents were more frequently included in developing an entry profile for their child but, in a few settings, they had not been involved at all in such arrangements.

The curriculum

38. The quality of the curriculum was good in half of the settings visited and outstanding in 25. It was most successful in the special schools and settings dealing exclusively with the Foundation Stage. About half of the primary schools visited had an effective curriculum; the remainder had notable weaknesses.
39. Outstanding curricula met the needs of all groups of learners. They provided a good level of challenge and, in settings with mixed-age classes, curricular plans identified outcomes for different groups of pupils, as in this example:

Planning is very well focused. It considers all the different learning contexts very carefully to provide a rich and varied range of experiences for all children. It covers the full curriculum systematically. The planning of experiences to allow different levels of challenge is excellent. Identifying the different levels of the 'stepping stones' displayed beside the different learning experiences works extremely well and ensures that all adults are very clear about how to support the younger children and how to challenge the older ones.

40. In these settings, the curriculum responded to children's particular needs. Thus, a setting in an area of high-density housing emphasised children's opportunities to learn in the safe yet challenging outdoor area:

Children use the large equipment daily in the outdoor play areas. Staff encourage them to develop their skills, using a range of interesting equipment to improve the control of their bodies. They enjoy the freedom of playing outdoors and learn together well.

¹³ The Foundation Stage profile includes a parents' page which they are encouraged to complete.

In this example, opportunities for play were planned imaginatively, with particular emphasis on the need to promote children's physical development.

41. Outdoor areas also supported other areas of learning successfully:

In an activity to promote personal, social, emotional and creative development, the children were given the opportunity to explore with all their senses lemons, lavender and mint. The activities motivated the children. Boys were particularly taken with this sensory work: the chance to paint to music or make a collage, but especially to play with herbs. This activity really excited several boys who quickly learned new words and used them in their subsequent play.

42. The majority of settings ensured that the outdoor area had a significant place in the curriculum throughout the year. This helped children to consolidate and extend their learning, particularly in investigative work.

The children were very enthusiastic to work outside and were soon dressed in warm, waterproof clothes. They were keen to organise the boxes and worked collaboratively to build the den together. The practitioner asked a range of open-ended questions to extend the children's thinking, helping them to explore ideas. In response to the question, 'How will we get inside?' children made suggestions confidently. They were willing to try out their ideas independently and were encouraged to experiment and discover things for themselves. They learned from their mistakes and solved the problems they met.

43. In a few settings the outside area was too small or staffing was insufficient to provide supervision, so the time available for learning outdoors was too short. Six of the settings had no suitable space and in two the areas were unsafe. About a fifth of the settings needed to improve the way in which they used the outdoor area.
44. Most settings enriched the curriculum with visits to local places of interest which provided children with a meaningful and relevant context for learning. Visiting professionals, such as artists, regularly supplemented practitioners' expertise and enriched learning.
45. A strong feature of the curriculum in Foundation Stage 1 was that it was rooted securely in activities which motivated the children to learn through play. In most Foundation Stage 2 settings, the balance of play and directed activities was intelligently planned. However, in a few settings children were introduced too quickly to recording their own work, completing worksheets which did not sufficiently engage or move their learning on. As a result, insufficient attention was given to fundamental skills and concepts, such as speaking and listening, consolidating the notion of quantity, or identifying sounds in words.

46. Planning for progression across the Foundation Stage was not always effective. This had a particularly negative impact on the learning of more able children.

The LA's nursery profile shows that the very able boys have already done well and they are not being stretched in the tasks being given to them now in the Reception year. There is clear underachievement.

47. In a few settings, practitioners used the early learning goals as the starting point for planning rather than the stepping stones. This limited the scope of the curriculum, particularly for some of the youngest children.
48. Over a quarter of the settings visited gave too little consideration to curricular balance within each area of learning. This was the fundamental weakness in the curriculum. Aspects were not planned or taught regularly enough and in some instances not at all; children did not experience the breadth and richness of the full early years curriculum, with a consequent effect on their progress. The following, in particular, received insufficient attention:

- linking sounds to letters
- writing
- calculating
- a sense of time
- a sense of place
- culture and belief
- developing imagination.

Occasionally, these aspects were planned into the curriculum, but only as free choice activities without adult support, so the potential for learning was not always maximised. Furthermore, if practitioners did not monitor these free choice activities they were not in a position to assess the impact of the curriculum on children's learning and development.

Leadership and management

49. Leadership and management were good or better in almost two thirds of the settings and were particularly strong in special schools and maintained nursery schools. Effective leadership and management were characterised by:
- high expectations
 - a commitment to continually improving provision
 - high status given to the Foundation Stage
 - well qualified staff
 - continuing professional development.

Robust systems for monitoring and assessing children's progress were also important: they had a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning and, therefore, on what children achieved.

50. The most effective settings did not let their very high standards of education and care lead to complacency. They were forward looking and vigorous in pursuing improvement. A special school was adapting its already very good assessment procedures to respond to an increasing number of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. An early years centre placed great emphasis on professional development: several of its already well qualified staff were on advanced training courses and their peer coaching had a lasting impact on the quality of teaching.
51. The extent of the leader of the setting's commitment to the Foundation Stage and their knowledge and understanding of it were important factors, as were the role and influence of the Foundation Stage coordinator. In the most effective settings, a senior member of the team undertook this role. Such staff were well placed to lead, rather than simply manage, and thus to have a significant impact on the quality of provision and children's achievement. Rigorous monitoring was a feature of the best settings. It identified clearly what was working well, where practitioners needed to improve and what needed to be done. For example, awareness of different learning styles led staff in one nursery to provide opportunities for some boys to be physically active before settling down to other more sedentary work: identifying barriers to learning early on led to effective intervention.
52. Leadership and management were inadequate in only a small proportion of the settings, but weak leadership and management were nearly always associated with weaker teaching and learning and a lack of effectiveness overall. In one primary school setting, for example, staff were unsure who had responsibility for leading and managing the Foundation Stage. This uncertainty resulted in a lack of direction: assessment procedures were poorly managed, teaching was unsatisfactory and the curriculum lacked coherence.

Inclusion

53. Most settings were effective in helping children from black and minority ethnic heritages to settle positively. Arrangements to support vulnerable children and those with LDD were also effective. Several settings committed themselves to using sign language to augment communication and all the practitioners and children learned to sign. Settings did not pay enough attention, however, to the intellectual needs of the more capable children; the relatively poorer achievement of boys also calls into question how well settings provided for them.

54. In a fifth of the settings, good links with the home supported inclusion: home visits to the new intake of children during the summer holidays, visits to their previous setting, well planned open days and information packs for adults whose own literacy was weak.
55. The most inclusive settings had excellent liaison with external agencies. Effective collaboration, for example, with speech therapists and physiotherapists ensured that children's particular needs were properly taken into account, and they also trained teaching assistants to support and monitor children's progress. Trained key workers were assigned to children to promote inclusion and forge close home/school links. This was particularly effective where bilingual support was provided for families who were at an early stage of learning English.
56. Regular and effective staff training about diversity and equality meant that adults recognised and understood children's often complex and particular needs. In one setting it led to prompt identification of the way in which boys and girls were choosing stereotypical play activities. This was tackled swiftly: practitioners discussed with the children the choices they had made and encouraged them to try other activities.
57. The settings where inclusion was satisfactory identified differences in achievement between groups of learners but did not follow this up effectively enough. The impact was particularly marked on the more able children. An inspector noted:

The teachers could not tell me how they monitored the children's day. This, together with the high levels of self-directed choice, suggests that time is wasted, especially for the more able children, and they are unlikely to be doing as well as they should.
58. In four settings, approaches to inclusion were inadequate. Monitoring and evaluation were weak and systems to track children's achievement were inadequate. Inconsistent planning failed to ensure continuity and progression across the areas of learning, resulting in inequalities in the provision.

English as an additional language

59. Provision for children for whom English was an additional language varied widely. Bilingual teaching assistants supported children effectively in their home language where settings had very good links with the LA's ethnic minority achievement service. Learning was effective because children had many opportunities to talk about their work; a wide range of practical play activities supported speaking and listening effectively. An inspector wrote:

A child working with a skilled bilingual assistant was able to show his understanding of matching objects to numbers in his own language and then demonstrated this using English to the teacher. This

allowed him to develop confidence about the concept in his own language before using English with a larger group.

In addition, well trained, bilingual teaching assistants liaised effectively between home and school for minority ethnic families.

60. In other settings, however, there was little or no provision to support bilingual learners to learn English and their learning did not progress well enough. Some practitioners observed that they thought the children would soon 'pick it up' as they played with their English speaking peers, but this left children without adequate support. It hindered their ability to understand concepts as well as to learn English language skills and enjoy the full curriculum. Occasionally, even when support was available, practitioners sometimes missed opportunities to make the most of it, as in this example:

A librarian and a bilingual student were left with half the class and no support from the teacher. When the librarian read the story in English, there was little response from the children; when the bilingual student re-read the story in the children's home language, their response was much better. However, an opportunity was missed for the teacher to observe the responses to the story in different languages.

Care and guidance

61. Most settings guided and supported children effectively; only two were inadequate. The most effective settings identified children's individual needs early on, made good provision for children with LDD and formed successful links with outside agencies. In the best practice, additional adults supported children with specific needs. They knew children's medical conditions very well, for example, and were actively involved in planning for them. The curriculum was adapted to meet the needs of individuals. Settings paid very good attention to child protection procedures and supported vulnerable children very well. Early intervention programmes made a significant contribution to their care.

The centre provided easy access to professional support for families. The children could join a weekly 'young explorers' club which supported their early development and gave parents the confidence to work with them at home. Regular opportunities to drop in for coffee and attend courses and activities at the setting helped parents and children to become familiar with it.

62. A fifth of the settings focused strongly on the child in the context of the family, resulting in highly effective and relevant care and guidance. Practitioners had regular contact with parents and carers through detailed

information packs, photographs, posters and open days. Discussions with parents revealed how much they valued the 'open door' approach.

The very strong links with children's families contribute much to children's learning. Sensitivity to the needs of the children's families is at the heart of the nursery's work. Additional support is directed towards meeting the needs of the community through a range of groups and classes. Bilingual assistants speak community languages and so liaise effectively with parents to help break down possible barriers to communication between home and school. Parents receive very good quality information, including guidance on what children are learning and how to help them at home. Early identification of individual needs, sometimes at baby or toddler group, enables the school to support children from an early age.

63. Parents enjoyed frequent and pertinent informal updates on their children's progress from discussions with practitioners. However, written reports had shortcomings. They lacked sufficient detail about achievement and often did not identify targets for improvement. Parents in some settings, therefore, were not given enough information about their children's progress.

Health and well-being

64. Although almost all the settings were aware of the importance of health and well-being, only one in five had a clear focus on healthy living. Few had achieved the Healthy School award, although many were taking steps to improve their provision. In one setting, a consistent drive for physical activity and healthy living had spilled into children's wider lives:

Many children walk to school and are encouraged by the campaign to get every child walking on one day of the week. Healthy eating is encouraged through closer supervision of and advice about the content of packed lunches.

65. A few of the settings actively encouraged parents to aim for children to have healthy lifestyles. One ran a gardening programme, 'Sow, grow and eat,' in the school garden, as well as a scheme which gave parents and families free entry to the local leisure centre. In addition, families' mental health was taken seriously: the setting arranged counselling services on the site for parents who needed them.
66. Excellent practice in the special schools visited exemplified the importance of partnership with parents and carers. Many of the children arrived by taxi and so informal opportunities to talk to parents were infrequent. Some settings used photographic diaries to show parents, for example, that their children would try various foods, even though they did not eat them at home. One parent said that she was 'absolutely astonished' that

her son ate a vegetable wrap at school, when at home he refused all vegetables except peas.

67. Although much of the practice was positive, key messages were not always reinforced. Communication was less effective in the settings' information to parents about emotional health issues and early education about sex and relationships. Many parents spoken to during the survey were unclear about how the setting answered children's questions about where babies came from and tackled bullying or racism.

Transition

Managing transition

68. Arrangements for managing transition were effective in half the settings visited. They managed the pastoral aspects of transition very effectively, but promoting progress in learning at points of transition was less effective.
69. The majority of settings used home visits or talks to ease transfer from home to school. A number of settings made individual arrangements for children and were sensitive to the needs of working parents. Practitioners planned a wide range of interesting activities to ease transition:

Several joint events were organised between the pre-school and school to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. The pre-school invited the school practitioners – including catering staff and the school crossing patrol – to talk to the children about their role. Children attending the pre-school visited the receiving school regularly and the Reception class visited the pre-school setting for events such as picnics. Parents and practitioners shared the children's records of achievements which were passed to the school to inform practitioners about each child.

70. The majority of the settings had no written policy about transition, many relying on custom and practice, and only a few evaluated their arrangements. However, even where there was no formal evaluation, changing practice in response to parental feedback was evident, such as shortening the gradual admission of children to respond to parents who found the 'staggered' arrangements difficult to fit around their work.
71. A number of schools had developed a Foundation Stage unit, an arrangement which was usually effective in supporting transition; it resulted in a freer flow of activities between Foundation Stage 1 and Foundation Stage 2 than the more usual practice of separate classes.
72. Only around a fifth of the settings visited had communicated effectively with other settings. Links were more difficult to develop where several

settings were involved and links with the non-maintained sector were underdeveloped. Some schools had no contact at all with the non-maintained settings and others expressed concern about the pre-school provision. Five of the 48 pre-school settings visited reported that they prepared children for school by encouraging them to wear the school's uniform, providing more direct teaching and expecting children to sit for longer. This was inappropriate for many of the children, particularly younger boys who found it difficult to sit still, especially when the teaching was not engaging.

73. During the element of the survey that focused on transition, under one in 10 of the Foundation Stage practitioners said they had received training about it. However, those that had said how it had helped them, for example, by providing useful links with the LA and valuable networking with its early years team.

Curriculum and transition

74. Although many schools were working to promote coherence between the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum, this was still at an early stage. In the best examples, schools tackled issues of continuity from Foundation Stage 2 to Year 1 by enabling the Foundation Stage leader to work alongside her colleagues in Year 1.
75. Around a fifth of the schools were developing joint planning to ensure that there was progression in children's learning from Foundation Stage 1, through Foundation Stage 2 to Year 1. However, other settings gave too little consideration to how skills for learning were developed as the children developed. This was particularly evident where teachers had lower expectations of children's independence and skills in Foundation Stage 2 and Year 1 than in Foundation Stage 1.
76. One school's approach to children registering themselves independently provides a good example of effective continuity between Foundation Stage 1 and Foundation Stage 2:

Arriving in Foundation Stage 1, children registered themselves by finding their photograph and putting it onto a number ladder. This was used as a focus for checking how many children were present during the more formal registration session. In Foundation Stage 2, self-registration was extended. Using an interactive whiteboard, the children moved photographs of themselves to indicate whether they wanted a school dinner or a packed lunch. These sets were later counted separately and developed the children's counting skills to 20 and beyond.

Impact of the Foundation Stage profile on transition arrangements

77. The majority of practitioners passed on the Foundation Stage profile, but not all settings used it. Only a minority of schools gave Foundation Stage and Year 1 practitioners time to discuss the findings and the progress children were making.
78. Some children arrived at their next setting without records and a few settings took insufficient account of the records they did receive. Some nurseries said they did not receive feedback from schools and reported that schools said they liked to 'start from scratch'.
79. Only a few parents said they were invited to discuss their child's progress or received the profile, but there were imaginative examples of good communication:

Parents in a socially disadvantaged area were actively encouraged to involve themselves in their child's education. The school developed 'learning diaries' to capture the children's progress as they moved through Foundation Stage 1 and Foundation Stage 2 and into Year 1. The diaries began as part of the initial home visit and contained a visual, easy to read record of children's achievement in each area of learning. Photographs, notes from observations, narrative records of discussions and conversations, together with parents' and children's contributions, were pasted into pages of the diary allocated to each area of learning. Practitioners summarised the evidence of achievement against each 'stepping stone' in the profile. The diaries were used to inform planning for individual children's needs. The completed diaries were sent to parents at the end of Foundation Stage 2 after relevant information had been transferred into a similar 'diary', linked to the National Curriculum in Year 1.

80. In 2004, Ofsted reported that very few teachers used the profile during the autumn term of Year 1 for pupils who had not attained the early learning goals.¹⁴ However, in about a third of schools in this survey, the Year 1 teacher used the profile to inform planning in the first term; although this indicates an improvement in this area, further work is still needed.

Impact of transition on children's development

81. The majority of settings made good provision for children's personal development and well-being. A fifth of the settings had some kind of 'buddy' system to support children through transition. Almost half of the

¹⁴ *Transition from the Reception Year to Year 1: an evaluation by HMI* (HMI 2221), Ofsted, 2004; available from www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/2221.

settings said that children with identified needs received good support from outside agencies across the points of transfer:

Home visits, meetings with parents, links with the Sure Start team, health visitors, the asylum seeker team and other agencies ensured children and their parents had a calm introduction into life in the nursery.

82. In contrast, not enough thought was given to the impact of transition on children's intellectual development. Over a fifth of the settings made no formal evaluation of children's progress during transition. They were therefore unsure whether the children had regressed during the summer holidays and whether elements of the Foundation Stage curriculum needed to be revisited before work started on the National Curriculum.

The contribution of local authorities

83. Overall, support for the Foundation Stage from the 18 LAs in the survey was good. However, the range and extent of responsibilities of early years managers differed considerably across LAs, with a consequent impact on the quality of what was provided. One LA had redesignated the role as a school improvement post, with a subsequent loss of emphasis on the early years. Another LA, in contrast, had large multi-disciplinary teams which managed and coordinated all aspects of early years provision.
84. Most of the LAs visited during the survey were rewriting their development plans for the early years in response to their restructuring into children's services directorates. Across LAs a range of agencies took part in drawing up the plans, although it was not always clear whether children and parents who used the services had been involved. One LA had no current plan; others had several plans, covering the full range of early years issues.
85. Most plans were linked appropriately to the outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda¹⁵. The weakest element of plans, however, was the link to educational outcomes for children by the end of the Foundation Stage. One LA had recognised that its non-maintained settings made little use of the profile and, to a great extent, schools which admitted children from these settings disregarded it. As a result, this issue had become a priority in the LA's plan. Other LAs had analysed the data from the Foundation Stage profiles and, acting on this, planned to focus on particular areas of learning and particular groups.

¹⁵ The Every Child Matters website is www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/.

Assessment

86. All 18 LAs analysed the data from the Foundation Stage profile, both for their own purposes and to inform the settings. They were all aware of relative strengths and weaknesses in the overall scores compared to national figures. Most used this information to plan training and support. One LA developed a resource pack on physical development because the scores in this area were lower than they should have been.
87. All LAs produced analyses for schools, identifying strengths, weaknesses, gender differences and comparisons with schools in similar circumstances. However, only a minority of LAs provided details about specific groups, such as pupils of minority ethnic heritage and those for whom English was an additional language.
88. LAs' practices in assessing progress took various forms, as these examples indicate. One LA analysed children's learning in four of the Foundation Stage scales at the beginning of Foundation Stage 2, interrogating the scores in terms of gender, ethnicity, month of birth and comparison with similar schools. It used the analysis later in the year to assess children's progress. Of the settings in this LA, 85% of them had provided their children's scores voluntarily in the previous academic year. In two other authorities, most of the schools used a commercial scheme. Elsewhere, authorities had introduced their own forms of baseline or nursery assessment because the Foundation Stage profile was not thought to be meeting settings' needs. One LA, believing that scores from the Foundation Stage profile were inflated, developed a 'stepping stones' profile; it identified smaller steps in attainment than those in the Foundation Stage Profile and aimed for greater precision in assessment.
89. Almost all LAs moderated the profile as recommended. Several reported that scores in previous years had been inflated. They had provided training for all settings and had conducted moderation in specific ones.
90. During the course of the survey, LAs' handling of data from the Foundation Stage profiles, and their familiarity in using it, improved substantially. Consequently, by the end of the survey, practice in these areas was generally good.

Transition

91. All LAs visited ensured, or had plans to ensure, training for Foundation Stage 2 and Year 1 teachers on transition and, in some, the training was already well established. Support for and training about transition from Foundation Stage 1 to Foundation Stage 2, and involving staff from the non-maintained sector, were mentioned less frequently.
92. LA support for curricular continuity remained a weakness. Of the 10 LAs visited where inspectors focused on transition, only two had clear

guidance or training for schools on transition from the early learning goals to National Curriculum levels.

93. All the LAs had systems to identify and manage transition for vulnerable children, including children with LDD and those who were looked after. Several authorities reported that they held a register of vulnerable children, collated through multi-agency working. They also reported that this was monitored carefully and full agency team meetings were called to plan provision and support for children deemed to be at risk or in need.

Health

94. All LAs visited considered the issue of children's physical health to be reasonably well highlighted and supported, mainly as a result of the much higher profile given to it in the Every Child Matters agenda. In several LAs, the majority of the schools were engaged in 'healthy eating' or 'healthy school' schemes, with the non-maintained settings following their equivalent. Children's emotional health was becoming a priority for all LAs, but few had coherent strategies to deal with it.

Professional development

95. Most LAs ensured a broad range of training was provided for settings which responded to local and national needs. Support and training were generally available to settings at no cost, apart from supply cover, although one or two LAs had a system of service level agreements. For larger conferences and events, for which LAs made a charge, the cost to non-maintained settings was considerably reduced.
96. The annual cycle of professional development in LAs was very strongly linked to the national agenda and to local priorities, identified by their audit of settings' needs. LAs supported a range of training leading to qualifications: national vocational qualifications, early years degrees and post-graduate training, as well as a range of practical, business management courses for practitioners in non-maintained settings. Training in the leadership of the early years in all settings was a priority for several LAs.
97. Most LAs had good systems for monitoring attendance at courses, with a database of settings, courses applied for and actual take up. In the best examples, LAs had details of the qualifications of staff in non-maintained settings, the training they had attended and those they still needed to attend. However, such details were not always available about staff in maintained settings.
98. Most LAs recognised that evaluating the impact of professional development in their settings needed to be strengthened. One had already reorganised its training model to include, in some cases, a practical

session at the setting after a day's training, with a later follow-up visit to the setting by one of its consultants to measure the impact of the initial training course.

Inclusion

99. LAs' support for inclusion was variable. In most, but not all, of the LAs visited, support was led by the area special needs team and education psychologists, and was available to all settings. Although LAs had established protocols for identifying and supporting children with LDD, few had systems for identifying children who might be gifted and talented. In the main, LAs visited were not prepared sufficiently to support children from families of minority ethnic heritage, especially recently arrived refugee and asylum-seeker families. Provision for children for whom English was an additional language was very patchy; most LAs had already recognised this.

Self-evaluation

100. The LAs visited knew their settings well and were clear about national and local priorities. Several had quality assurance schemes and used these to judge the effectiveness of settings; others monitored against the national quality statements and standards. However, too few of them measured effectively the impact of their support and training, especially on the outcomes for specific groups of children in the six areas of learning.

Notes

This reports the findings from Ofsted's first major survey since 2001 undertaken exclusively in Foundation Stage settings.¹⁶ HMI, childcare inspectors and Additional Inspectors visited 144 settings in 2005 and 2006 to evaluate standards, achievement and the quality of provision for children from three to five years of age.

The sample included special schools, primary schools, first schools, infant schools, nursery schools, children's centres and non-maintained nurseries, selected to represent a range of provision in different areas of the country, serving communities from various socio-economic groups.

Evidence included observations of sessions, discussions with children and parents, a review of documents, and discussions with the headteacher or Foundation Stage leader. Inspectors planned to inspect two areas of learning,

¹⁶ *Nursery education: quality of provision for 3 and 4 year olds 2000-01* (HMI 331), Ofsted, 2001; available from www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/331. This report was the first published by Ofsted since the introduction of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the first since Ofsted took responsibility for the regulation of all under-eights day care and childminding.

so that the visit could have a clear focus, and the identified areas of learning were agreed with the setting shortly before the visit. In almost all cases the plan was followed, but in a small number it was not possible to inspect the area of learning which had been scheduled. Each area of learning reported on in the survey is therefore based on around 45 to 50 observations. HMI also held discussions with representatives from 18 LAs on a variety of aspects of the survey.

In the summer and autumn terms of 2005, inspectors visited 48 schools and settings in 10 LAs to evaluate transition arrangements, including children moving from home and the non-maintained sector into the Foundation Stage, between Foundation Stage 1 and Foundation Stage 2 and from the Foundation Stage into Year 1.

In the spring term 2006, inspectors gathered evidence from 58 of these settings to contribute to a separate survey on health and well-being. The findings are reported in *Healthy Schools, Healthy Children? The contribution of education to pupils' health and well-being*.¹⁷

Further information

Ofsted inspects Foundation Stage settings. Inspection reports are on the website www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports.

Further information about the Foundation Stage can be obtained from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) website (www.dfes.gov.uk), including

- the Foundation Stage – www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/foundation_stage/
- information for practitioners – www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/foundation_stage_practitioners/
- the curriculum – www.surestart.gov.uk/improvingquality/ensuringquality/foundationstage/
- curriculum guidance – www.surestart.gov.uk/improvingquality/ensuringquality/foundationstage/curriculumguidance/
- information pack for parents – www.surestart.gov.uk/improvingquality/ensuringquality/foundationstage/foundationstageinfopackforparents/.

¹⁷ *Healthy schools, healthy children? The contribution of education to pupils' health and well-being* (HMI 2563), Ofsted, 2006; available from www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/2563.

Background to the Early Years Foundation Stage can be found on the Every Child Matters website:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/news/?asset=News&id=35252

Foundation Stage curriculum guidance (www.qca.org.uk/5585.html) and the Foundation Stage profile (www.qca.org.uk/10001.html) are available from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

A report on the monitoring of the second year of the Foundation Stage profile can be found in the *Implementation and moderation of foundation stage profile 2006: annual monitoring report* (QCA/06/2959), National Assessment Agency, 2006; available from www.naa.org.uk/downloads/QCA-06-2959_fspreport.pdf.

Annex

Local authorities visited

Bolton

Bradford

Bristol City

Buckinghamshire

City of Derby

Croydon

Cumbria

Derbyshire

Greenwich

Manchester

Northumberland

Sandwell

Shropshire

Solihull

Staffordshire

Surrey

Wiltshire

Wolverhampton

Settings visited

Alston Primary School	Bordesley Green	Birmingham
Alumwell Nursery School	Walsall	Walsall
Ambleside Primary School	Ambleside	Cumbria
Bare Trees Infant and Nursery School	Chadderton	Oldham
Belmont Primary School	Chiswick	Hounslow
Birstall Methodist Pre-School	Birstall	Leicestershire
Booker Avenue Infant School	Liverpool	Liverpool
Boughton St Paul's Nursery and Infant School	Chester	Cheshire
Bridgwater College Children's Centre	Bridgwater	Somerset
Broadmead Nursery and Infants School	Croydon	Croydon
Brompton Community Primary School	Brompton	North Yorkshire
Cape Primary School	Smethwick	Sandwell
Castle Park School	Kendal	Cumbria
Catterick Garrison, Le Cateau Community Primary	Catterick Garrison	North Yorkshire
Cavendish Primary School	Chiswick	Hounslow
Chalvey Early Years Centre	Chalvey	Slough
Charlestown Community Primary School	Blackley	Manchester
Charnwood Nursery and Pre-School	Thurmaston	Leicestershire
Chestnut Avenue Nursery School	Exeter	Devon
Children's House Nursery School	Bow	Tower Hamlets
Chorlton C of E Primary School	Chorlton-cum-Hardy	Manchester
Clifton Primary School	Clifton	Salford
Cronehills Junior and Infants School	West Bromwich	Sandwell
Crowmoor Primary School	Shrewsbury	Shropshire
Culmstock Pre-School	Millmore	Devon
Dappledown House Nursery	Honington	Lincolnshire
Dunkeswell Pre-School	Honiton	Devon
Educare for Early Years	Rossendale	Lancashire
Fairchildes Primary School	New Addington	Croydon
Fetcham Village Infant School	Fetcham	Surrey
First Steps Nursery	Twerton	Bath & NE Somerset
Forest Methodist Nursery	Melksham	Wiltshire
Fountains C of E Primary School	Ripon	North Yorkshire

Gay Elms Primary School	Withywood	City of Bristol
Glebefields Primary School	Tipton	Sandwell
Glyne Gap School	Bexhill-on-Sea	East Sussex
Good as Gold Child Care Centre	Rossendale	Lancashire
Gorton Mount Primary School	Gorton	Manchester
Greenmead School	Putney	Wandsworth
Hadrian School	Newcastle-Upon-Tyne	Newcastle-Upon - Tyne
Hamstead Infants School	Great Barr	Sandwell
Happy Days Club and Nursery School	Holmes Chapel	Cheshire
Happy Hours Play Group	Winsford	Cheshire
Happy Days Nursery	Exmouth	Devon
Harlequins Day Nursery	Enderby	Leicestershire
Harrogate, Grove Road Community Primary School	Harrogate	North Yorkshire
Haven Early Years Centre	Gosport	Hampshire
Haxby Road Primary School	York	York
Headley Park Primary School	Headley Park	City of Bristol
Helmshore Pre-School	Helmshore	Lancashire
Hemyock Pre-School	Hemyock	Devon
High Bentham Community Primary School	Bentham	North Yorkshire
Hill Top Day Nursery	Grantham	Lincolnshire
Hindley SureStart Nursery	Hindley	Wigan
Holland House Infant School and Nursery	Sutton Coldfield	Birmingham
Hollywood, The Coppice Primary School	Hollywood	Worcestershire
Holy Name RC Primary School	Moss Side	Manchester
Holyport Manor School	Holyport	Windsor and Maidenhead
Honeycomb Nursery	Chard	Somerset
Howard Street Nursery School	Rochdale	Rochdale
Kings Day Nursery School	Malmesbury	Wiltshire
Kirkbride Primary School	Kirkbride	Cumbria
Knaresborough, The Manor Infant School	Knaresborough	North Yorkshire
Lea Pre-School Playgroup	Malmesbury	Wiltshire
Lister Infants School	Old Swan	Liverpool
Little Angels Day Nursery	Northwich	Cheshire
Malton Community Primary School	Malton	North Yorkshire

Marsh Hill Nursery School	Erdington	Birmingham
Moat Farm Infant School	Oldbury	Sandwell
Moss Farm Pre-School	Northwich	Cheshire
Moss Park Infant School	Stetford	Trafford
Mount Stewart Infants School	Kenton	Brent
Narnia Day Nursery and Nursery School	Altrincham	Trafford
Newfield School	Blackburn	Blackburn with Darwen
Nyehome Nursery Schools Ltd	Nantwich	Cheshire
Old Cleeve C of E First School	Washford	Somerset
Old School Nursery	Kibworth	Leicestershire
Oldmixon Primary School	Weston-super-Mare	North Somerset
Parish Church CofE Nursery and Infant School	Croydon	Croydon
Park Hill Primary School	Wednesbury	Sandwell
Peter Pan Pre-School	Middlewich	Cheshire
Ravensbury Community Primary School	Clayton	Manchester
Redcliffe Early Years Centre	Redcliffe	City of Bristol
Redditch, Roman Way First School	Redditch	Worcestershire
Rednal Hill Infant School	Birmingham	Birmingham
Richmond C of E Primary School	Richmond	North Yorkshire
Riverside School	Waterlooville	Hampshire
Robert Owen EY Centre	London	Greenwich
Rodney House School	Burnage	Manchester
Rowley View Nursery School	Wednesbury	Walsall
Sandbach Heath (St Johns) Playgroup	Sandbach	Cheshire
Scalford Playgroup	Scalford	Leicestershire
Sea Mills Infant School	Sea Mills	City of Bristol
Sedbergh Primary School	Sedbergh	Cumbria
Settle C of E Voluntary Controlled Primary School	Settle	North Yorkshire
Severndale	Shrewsbury	Shropshire
Shawbury Primary School	Shawbury	Shropshire
South Acton (Heathfield) Children's Centre	Acton	Ealing
Springfields First School	Stone	Staffordshire
Springwell Infant and Nursery School	Heston	Hounslow
St Aelred's R C Voluntary Aided Primary School	York	North Yorkshire
St Anne's Infant School	Brislington	City of Bristol

St Barnabas C of E Voluntary Controlled Primary School	Montpelier	City of Bristol
St Brigid's Catholic Primary School	Northfield	Birmingham
St John's C of E Infant & Nursery School	Failsworth	Oldham
St John's C of E Primary School	Longsight	Manchester
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and Nursery	Burnham-on-Sea	Somerset
St Margaret's Pre-School	Nailsea	North Somerset
St Michael's C of E First School	Stone	Staffordshire
St Michael's Nursery & Infant School	Workington	Cumbria
St Peter's Primary School	Bromyard	Herefordshire
St Philips C of E Primary	Hulme	Manchester
St Stephen's & All Martyrs C of E Primary School	Oldham	Oldham
St Thomas Centre Nursery	Lee Bank	Birmingham
Stannington Infants School	Stannington	Sheffield
Stepping Stones Day Nursery	Grantham	Lincolnshire
Stile Common Infant and Nursery School	Huddersfield	Kirklees
Stokesay Primary School	Craven Arms	Shropshire
Strand-on-the-green Infant and Nursery School	Chiswick	Hounslow
Sunshine Playgroup	Great Gonerby	Lincolnshire
The Avenue School and Early Years Centre	Warminster	Wiltshire
The Hollies Centre of Excellence	Taunton	Somerset
The Kingfisher Community Special School	Chadderton	Oldham
The Village Kindergarten	Brant Broughton	Lincolnshire
Thurmaston Village Pre-School	Thurmaston	Leicestershire
Townsend Primary School	Southwark	Southwark
Uffculme Pre-School	Uffculme	Stockport
Upperby Primary school	Carlisle	Cumbria
Valley Infant School	Solihull	Solihull
Victory School	Southwark	Southwark
Warren Farm Primary School	Kingstanding	Birmingham
Wednesday Oak Primary School	Tipton	Sandwell
West Ewell Infant School	West Ewell	Surrey
Western Primary School	Harrogate	North Yorkshire
Westfield Farm	Spalding	Lincolnshire
Westwood Farm Infant School	Tilehurst	West Berkshire
Willow Wood Nursery & Infant School	Wharton	Cheshire

Wilson Stuart School	Erdlington	Birmingham
Woodfield Primary School	Harrogate	North Yorkshire
Woodlands Nursery	Nantwich	Cheshire
Woodlands Primary School	Salisbury	Wiltshire
Woodthorpe Primary School	York	York
Wrenbury Pre-School Playgroup	Wrenbury	Cheshire
Yardley Wood Community Primary School	Birmingham	Birmingham