



Explore Learning

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY239970
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Inspector	Jane Plested
Setting Address	Sainsburys, Maxwell Road, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, HP9 1QH
Telephone number	01494 677488
E-mail	beaconsfield@explorellearning.ltd.uk
Registered person	Explore Learning Ltd
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Out of School care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Explore Learning Centre opened in July 2002. It operates from premises in Sainsbury's Supermarket in Beaconsfield. The club runs on a membership basis and children attend for a 75 minute session once or twice a week. They follow the computer based curriculum.

The centre opens seven days a week all year round. Weekdays during the school term time they are open from 15:00 until 20:00 and in the holidays from 10:00 until 18:00. The centre opens Saturdays from 10:00 until 18:00 and Sundays from 10:00 until 16:00.

The setting employs three full time staff to work with the children and up to 18 staff are available on a part time basis. All staff have child care experience. A maximum of 30 children under eight years may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 346 children on roll. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to follow good personal hygiene practice. The setting supports this by displaying posters at several points in the setting including the toilet to remind children to wash their hands and flush. The setting has written policies promote good hygiene practice for example, there is a clear policy on sickness to reduce the spread of contagious illnesses amongst children. Staff ensure the premises are clean and very well maintained. In addition, the setting is set out to take account of children's health and safety. With planned spaces between learning zones so children can move around safely.

The ethos of the setting limits children's opportunities to take part in physical play. However, children do have the opportunity to enjoy games of 'Twister', when they learn to balance and gain control of their body. Children learn about healthy life-styles through planned activities, worksheets and computer programmes in the Surf Club. As a result, they receive healthy messages such as, the importance of eating five pieces of fruit or vegetables a day. Children can freely and continually access drinks of water via a dispenser sited in the Surf Club ensuring they do not get thirsty.

There are ample first aid resources that are easily accessible by designated staff so they can treat any minor injuries to children. The staff know children's individual health needs and all relevant information, such as the management of particular conditions is on record so they receive the correct care.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Areas for children are well organised, safe and secure. Children have free movement from computers to the Surf Club area. The environment is welcoming as there are displays and incentive charts on walls. Equipment and resources that children use are good quality and safe. They stimulate the children's development because they are age and stage appropriate. Daily checks and clear rules ensure there are no hazards so that children can take part in their programme of learning and move around the setting safely.

There are effective procedures to maintain children's security. There is a secure entry system to the setting. Records clearly show when children are on the premises. The emergency plan is on display and children can describe how they evacuate the

premises in the event of an emergency. There are good procedures to protect children's welfare. All staff are very familiar with child protection procedures and are confident in describing these. The setting has a detailed policy to support them in this area of their work. Consequently, staff knowledge and procedures will effectively safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy in the setting, they are confident in their relationships with their tutors, and feel able to ask for help. These good relationships develop tutors address children respectfully and give them clear explanations about their learning. For example, as tutors help children learn and use times tables, open a programme on the computer and offer plenty of praise as activities are completed. Tutors chat freely to children about their activities during the summer vacation and their summer holidays.

The range of activities and play opportunities that children experience are suitable for this type of provision. Choices available primarily promote mathematical learning, reading and spelling skills. Children know the routine to their session and are encouraged to plan their own time in the setting thus developing feelings of independence. Children concentrate at the planned activities and respond to tutors encouragement to complete these. Children say the computer programmes are fun, even those subjects they enjoy least. As a result, they remain meaningfully occupied throughout their session. Parents comment that the programmes are effective in supporting their children's learning and say, "staff provide me with helpful information on how to help my child at home".

In Surf Club, children enjoy developing their pencil control and drawing skills during colouring activities. They draw pictures as part of a holiday theme. These are displayed attached to a world map, highlighting the area of the world children have visited for their holidays. Children are encouraged to feel part of the setting through competitions for example, to design a 'lizard reward card'. These displays and activities show children's work is valued and provide a practical activity to support children's knowledge of geography. Children laugh and have fun playing 'Twister' a game that helps them learn their left from right, and gain bodily control. They are confident playing with tutors and of taking the role of the 'spinner', giving instructions to other children. They develop their computer skills further in Surf Club, through access to games linked to themes such as being healthy, by using the internet and by communicating to family members through email.

Managers seek children views about the setting. There are comment sheets in Surf Club about the setting and from time to time children contribute to staff evaluation procedures, by voting for tutor of the month. Comments on these forms include "my favourite tutor is funny", "she always helps me and makes me feel good, even if I got a question wrong" and many others comment on the kindness or niceness of tutors. Children spoken to also say that the tutors are friendly and kind. They also answered questions on what they like about the setting so that tutors can establish which

activities outside the mathematics and English children enjoy.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Setting welcomes children and staff from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Children receive a warm greeting and because of the time taken by staff to get to know children, so that they feel welcome and valued. Tutors establish the individual and particular needs of children through detailed conversations with their parents, so that they are challenged and receive the correct care.

Children begin to develop positive attitudes about diversity. They do this through the positive images on display on posters, and the planned themes. Children with learning difficulties receive highly effective support. This is because tutors work closely with parents to address children's individual learning needs and their strength and weaknesses. Tutors then plan programmes to support these for example, individual learning programmes are available for children with dyslexia.

Children behave well because of the effective strategies to encourage good behaviour. Tutors offer praise as children achieve saying for instance "you are doing really well, keep it up". Children's good behaviour and achievements are recognised through incentives such as, Thorny Devil or Marine Iguana Trail. Successful completion of one of the trails results in the award of a certificate, with their agreement children receive these publicly. For this, the setting stops work and a tutor praises the child's achievement. One child says receiving certificate "made me feel proud". Staff implement the rules consistently and children say they do this calmly. As a result, children work in a peaceful environment within which they develop high self-esteem.

Strategies for working in partnership with parents and carers are generally very good. They receive clear and detailed information about the setting and have free access to the setting's policies and procedures. Additional information is also on display in the setting and accessible through the company's web site. An induction and trial period form part of the settling procedures. There are effective systems for sharing information on children's care and learning and this enables setting to meet their needs well. Parents spoken to value the setting highly they say their children are making clear progress and comment that the friendly staff help them to understand their children's learning needs more clearly. However, the systems for sharing records of incidents are less effective and the complaints policy is not fully up-to-date. Therefore, the setting cannot demonstrate all information is available to children's parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting is well organised to provide care and supplementary education with a

strong focus on children's English and mathematical skills. The premises are safe, secure and well equipped to support its ethos. Staff appointment procedures are effective as is their induction. As a result, new staff are confident in their role, and when answering questions about the setting's policies. They are enthusiastic and keen and work well as a team. Staff management systems include regular staff meetings, twice-yearly appraisal and regular self-evaluation of the setting as a whole, demonstrating effective procedures for reflection on practice and ensuring good care for children.

Children benefit from high staff ratios and working in small groups, this means they receive plenty of tutor attention and remain fully occupied. Staff currently do not hold recognised child care qualifications but regularly attend in-house training which is being accredited in order to meet the requirements of the National Standards. The majority of tutors are vetted, those who have not completed the required checks do not have sole access to children. All specified records on children are maintained. Tutors record detailed information on children's progress but there is no system for sharing the incident record, and the recording process in this book is not fully confidential as there are several entries on different children visible on the same page. The recommended parental agreements are in place so that children receive the agreed care. The setting meets needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to ensure staff first aid certificates are available on site. Three staff currently hold first aid qualifications and are the designated first aiders. Their certificates are on display within the setting so children's parents can see who will manage any minor injuries.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- make sure parents sign the incident records and update relevant policies and procedures
- develop and have on site an action plan to demonstrate how staff qualification requirements are to be met.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk