



Excel Childcare

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY229507
Inspection date	21 September 2006
Inspector	Denys Rasmussen
Setting Address	96 Forest Hill Road, London, SE22 0RS
Telephone number	0208 299 6387
E-mail	
Registered person	Excel Childcare
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Excel Childcare is a private nursery which opened in 2002. It operates from a refurbished house, with a garden to the rear. Children are accommodated on the ground and first floor. The nursery serves families in the local community of East Dulwich. Excel operates five days a week from 08.00 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to the secure enclosed outdoor area.

Excel is registered to care for a maximum of 35 children under five years at any one time. There are currently 31 children on roll aged from under one year to five years. Of these, five children receive funding for nursery education.

Eight staff work with the children, of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications including the acting manager and two of the staff are on a training programme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Three staff are first aid trained with at least one being on duty at all times. This ensures accidents are dealt with appropriately. Accurate records are kept, for example, about any accidents that have occurred. This ensures that children's health needs are met and information can be effectively shared with the parents. Children are encouraged to develop good hygiene practices by washing their hands after visiting the toilet or before meal times. Liquid soap and paper towels are used helping to prevent the risk of cross-contamination. The nursery keep satisfactory records about children's health needs and dietary requirements including any allergies. These are complied with to keep children healthy. The medication procedures have been improved to ensure staff rigorously apply them. Only qualified staff administer medication after parents have given written consent. This is then recorded appropriately protecting children's health and safety. Children are cared for in a clean environment. There are good hygiene routines such as the no-shoe policy in the baby room and staff wearing disposable gloves when changing nappies. This helps reduce the spread of infection. The nappy changing routine in the 'portakabin' has improved. There is adequate ventilation and a curtain to provide privacy. Nappies are disposed of hygienically.

Children are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits by being offered fresh fruit and vegetables daily. Meals are varied to meet children's dietary needs and their likes and dislikes. An outside catering company provide the children's lunch and staff prepare children's breakfast, snacks and tea. Staff responsible for preparing food have not received basic food hygiene training which means children's health is not entirely protected. Children are provided with drinks routinely and older children can access water as they want it. Children's physical development is satisfactorily promoted. They are given daily opportunities to take part in physical play activities either indoors or in the garden. They use wheeled toys with skill and play games to improve control of their body movement.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where their work and photographs are displayed. The premises provide a comfortably warm environment with a range of activities to promote children's development. The nursery has improved their temperature control of the environment by purchasing air conditioning units for each group room. Play materials are checked for safety and are appropriate for the children's age and stage of development. Risk assessments are carried out. However, they are not always thorough enough to identify potential hazards. For example, staff are left alone with too many children which is a breach of regulation and babies slip on the floor because they are wearing their socks. Registers are maintained, however, they do not include the child's specific time of arrival and departure. This means staff do not know for sure who was present at a given time.

Regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely. Children learn to keep themselves safe when staff remind them

of the rules, such as, how to use equipment safely and tidying up to prevent falling over toys. Satisfactory steps have been taken to promote the security of the children. For example, exit doors are kept locked, visitors are signed in and there are satisfactory systems in place for the safe arrival and departure of the children.

Children are satisfactorily protected, the staff recognise their responsibility to the children in their care. Key staff have attended up-to-date child protection training ensuring the correct procedures are followed if there are any concerns about a child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Although staff have had training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework they are still unsure of how to put this into practice and how this ties in with their planning. This means, some of the planned activities are inappropriate for children under two. For example, children are put one by one into a high chair and given paper and a paint pot with a brush, staff held a child's hand to make a mark on the paper but the child was not interested. The child put his finger on the paint on his paper and started to paint with fingers, he was told 'no', he tried to use his fingers again, but was told 'no, no use the brush'. The staff play on the floor with the children and make the most of the relatively limited resources. Staff ensure they discuss the babies day with the parents and use contact books to relay basic physical care information. However, the contact books are not always completed and are not dated so it is not clear of what benefit these are. Children in the baby room enjoy singing and clapping their hands. They have close relationships with the staff they are familiar with and happily approach them for cuddles and support. This increases their sense of well-being.

When the toddlers are housed with the pre school children, for example, when there are staff shortages in the morning, or when staff take children to school (wrap around care) their needs are not met. This means their care, learning and play is not supported adequately during these times.

When the toddlers are in their base room they play happily and are offered a suitable range of activities appropriate for their age and stage of development. They enjoy pouring water into containers and experimenting with paint. They play imaginatively with the role play and dress up involving each other in their play. The staff interact in a positive and gentle manner, encouraging the children to make choices in their play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. The planning and assessment process is satisfactory and work well to help children progress. The nursery has long term, medium term and weekly plans which cover all areas of learning. Focus activities are planned and there is a weekly theme which states the intended learning outcomes. Children's assessment records contain observations under each area of learning, activity plans, what the child has learnt and next steps for learning. This is incorporated into the weekly plans to help children progress. The pre school leader has a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and extends activities for the more able children, particularly in mathematical development.

Children are confident and settled at the nursery. They happily discuss their friends and are inquisitive, asking me who I was and inspecting my identity badge. Children use the toilet independently and conscientiously wash their hands. They are polite and well behaved in response to the staff's praise and encouragement. Children are given responsibility such as being a 'helper' when they help to set out the table for lunch. This supports their confidence and self esteem. Children are given good opportunities to practise pen control, they draw and colour with pencils and spend time concentrating on a task, carefully colouring in what they have drawn. However, writing is not used for a variety of purposes, for example, in the role play area. Children are introduced to letters of the alphabet and some of the children can identify the first letter in their name. Children are confident speakers. They engage readily in conversations with each other and adults easily expressing their needs. The nursery use labels well to help children with word recognition. Children enjoy looking at books and participate well during story time. There are satisfactory practical activities offered for children to learn about size, shape, measure and sequencing. They pour water into different sized containers and sort objects into size and colour. Children are encouraged to count and are often observed to be counting objects. Mathematical activities are extended skilfully to provide enough challenge for more able children. Children learn about early addition and subtraction through songs and focus maths activities.

Topic based activities help the children understand the world around them and outings are used to consolidate their learning. For example, when they went to the park to observe trees and to collect leaves. Staff ask questions to make children think. For instance, when children were handling pine cones staff asked what it felt like. Children are confident designers when using construction equipment. The children investigate the natural environment to some degree when outdoors, for example, when they look at mini beasts through their magnifying glasses. They touch and smell items on the nature table describing what they feel like. Children are introduced to a variety of cultural traditions and festivals. Children handle tools with increasing control, such as scissors, glue sticks and the computer mouse. Music and movement sessions are used to promote physical development. The children negotiate the rooms with skill. Outdoor activities are planned and children enjoy practising ball skills, riding wheeled toys and playing group games. This all helps children to control their body. Children have satisfactory opportunities to experiment with colour at the easel, they add texture with glue and glitter. They enjoy craft activities. For example, they were making cards for their friend who is leaving, the activity was child led and they enjoyed using the paint, glue, glitter and sequins. Art and craft materials are available to them to use independently, this encourages their design skills. Children are offered a variety of malleable materials such as corn flour, soil, clay and salt dough. This develops their manipulative skills. The role play area was not used fully by the children as it is not planned sufficiently to extend children's learning and has limited resources. This means it is repetitive and learning opportunities are not fully exploited. Nevertheless, children used the available resources with imagination, they fed their babies, made dinner and watched a ballet performance.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from positive relationships between staff and their parents. The flexible settling in policy meets the families needs and the regular sharing of verbal information and written reports ensure parents are informed about their child's progress. All parental consents are now in place which means the nursery know the parents wishes. There is an informative notice board displaying the nursery policies and procedures for parents attention. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. The regular sharing of children's progress both verbally and written, enables parents to have clear guidance on how their child is developing. The parents receive regular newsletters to inform them of nursery plans.

There are no children presently attending with a learning difficulty and/or disability. However, there are satisfactory systems in place for supporting children with additional needs. Children generally settle into the nursery routine well. Staff regularly praise children and recognise their achievements. This helps to raise children's self esteem and confidence. Children behave well because of the supportive and gentle guidance from staff. Children are proud of their achievements and delight in showing their friends and staff their work. Children show a sense of belonging when they talk freely about their friends, family and nursery. They have a positive attitude towards each other helped by staff valuing their differences. They are encouraged to develop an awareness of their local community through local outings and learn about a variety of cultural traditions. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Recruitment procedures are satisfactory ensuring that adults caring for the children are suitable to do so. All required documentation, policies and procedures are in place and most work well in practice helping the management of the nursery. However, the organisation of the children and the deployment of staff is not always appropriate. This means the toddlers needs are not always met adequately when they are housed with the pre school children. Staff are sometimes left on their own with too many children, this compromises their safety. The nursery sometimes has more children aged under two years attending at the same time than they are registered for. This is a breach of regulation. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and how to apply this in practice to support children's development. However, there are weaknesses in teaching that have not been identified. Space, staff and resources are well organised to create a stimulating and accessible environment where children are busy and occupied throughout the day.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provision was judged to be inadequate and actions to improve were given for both the care and the nursery education. They were told to improve the medication procedures and plan and provide a suitable range of activities for children aged between two and three years. They were told to develop assessment procedures for tracking children's progress to share with parents, to increase staff's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and to ensure rigorous systems are put in place to monitor and evaluate nursery education provision.

The nursery has made satisfactory improvements. The medication procedures have improved. Staff all trained in how to implement the policy. Only qualified staff administer medication and parental consent is sought on a daily basis. All medication administered to the children is recorded appropriately. This protects children's health. The planning of activities for children aged between two and three years has improved. Staff have had training in 'Birth to three matters', and a stimulating variety of play resources are now available to the children when they are housed in their base room. However, their progress is compromised when they are housed with the pre school children because of ineffective deployment of staff.

Effective assessment procedures are now in place for children receiving nursery education and these are shared with parents to track children's progress. The nursery has employed a staff member in the pre school room who has a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how to apply this in practice. Nursery education is being evaluated by the manager and by the pre school staff evaluating the activities provided. The nursery education has improved and now provides a satisfactory outcome for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint that required the provider to take action. A concern was raised on 03/07/2006 relating to National Standard 4 - Physical environment. Ofsted inspectors visited the nursery and discussed the concerns. An action was raised to ensure the premises are adequately ventilated. Ofsted received a satisfactory response from the provider. The provider met the National Standard and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure the required adult to child ratios are maintained at all times.
- ensure staff deployment is appropriate to meet the needs of all the children.
- ensure the numbers of children attending at any one time reflect the registration requirements.
- plan and provide a suitable range of activities for children aged under three, which are appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs throughout the day.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

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

- improve the role play area to plan to incorporate all areas of learning and opportunities for children to extend their play.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk