



Elim Church Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	119474
Inspection date	27 October 2006
Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
Setting Address	Windermere Road, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS1 2RF
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Registered person	Elim Church Governing Body
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets 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?

Elim Church Day Nursery is run by the Governing Body of the Elim Church. It opened in 1990 and operates from four playrooms within the church premises. The nursery is situated within walking distance of local schools and the railway station at Southend East. All children share access to two secure, enclosed, outdoor play areas. A maximum of 63 children may attend the nursery at any one time.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Operating times are from 07:30 until 18:00.

There are currently 62 children aged from one to eight years on roll. Of these, 14 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions, full day care or out of school care. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. The

setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 staff to work with the children, of whom 12 of the staff, including the managers hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. There are four staff employed to carry out administrative, catering or domestic duties. The setting receives support from the local authority and the Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are well-nourished. They eat balanced and freshly cooked meals each day. A variety of snacks with some healthy options such as fruit or vegetable sticks are offered. Mealtimes are happy social occasions. Babies are seated where they can see each other and the older children gain independence through making choices about their food and serving their own meals. Staff are aware of any allergies or special dietary requirements because they gather information to meet individual children's needs. Drinking water is provided within the rooms to ensure that children do not become thirsty or dehydrated. Children are starting to learn about healthy living as they find out about what they need to eat or drink to develop strong bones and teeth.

Children have daily opportunities for physical exercise and fresh air, which contributes to their good health. Although there is limited outdoor play space, each age group has a scheduled time to go outdoors or children go for short walks within the vicinity. Children adeptly ride bicycles, scooters and sit and ride toys and carefully avoid obstacles and each other. Indoors, children climb and balance on soft play cushions and expressively dance to music with streamers. School-age children attending the holiday club exercise and enjoy taking part in a limbo competition. Children benefit because the hall within the centre of the nursery building is used in addition to the minimum space requirements. As a result there is plenty of space for children to use a wide range of energetic movements as they play indoors. Children relax or sleep according to their needs. They can rest peacefully and undisturbed and clean bedding is provided each day.

Children stay healthy because staff follow sound procedures which meet the children's health needs. Staff wear disposable gloves when changing nappies and aprons when preparing or serving food. Changing mats and tables are cleaned regularly to help prevent any cross-infection. Children are starting to learn about the importance of good hygiene as they wash their hands before their midday meal. However, potentially children's health is compromised because they are not consistently encouraged to wash their hands at other times during the day, for example, before they eat snacks or after they have used a potty. Children are encouraged by staff that value their efforts and flexible routines are offered which support their growing independence, for example, when they are potty training. Clearly written policies support the children's health and well being, with suitable action taken if a child is unwell. Children are protected because

the majority of staff hold first aid certificates and reliable records are kept of any accidents or when medication is given.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a warm and generally safe environment. Staff put considerable effort into making the play rooms attractive by displaying posters, photographs and examples of the children's artwork. Risk assessment is undertaken with staff daily checking each play room prior to the children arriving. However, their check list is not adapted for the differing needs and stages of development of the children. As a result potentially children's safety is compromised because the toaster and an electric socket extension unit are sited within reach of taller children in the art room. The staff are vigilant about the security of the children. Doors are securely locked and there is CCTV and a buzzer entry system installed in the entrance of the building to ensure that all visitors are closely monitored.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe. They use tools such as cutlery or scissors with care and learn to pick up tripping hazards. Children and staff regularly practise fire drills and all know what to do in the event of an emergency. They learn about road safety. Children enjoy taking part in activities that encourage them to remember and recall what they know about traffic lights and they understand how they need to wait for the green man at the pedestrian crossing before they cross the road.

Children play with a suitable range of safe toys and play materials. Play equipment is checked regularly for cleanliness and breakages. Any toys within reach of babies are safe for them to explore with their mouth or hands

Children are safeguarded because staff are aware of their child protection responsibilities. Staff have developed their knowledge and understanding through training and there are written child protection procedures for them to follow. This ensures that staff are aware of current information regarding child protection issues to enable them to act in the best interests of children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and are given plenty of reassurance and cuddles by the affectionate staff team. The key worker system in each room ensures that warm relationships are formed. Interaction between the children and staff is lively and friendly. Language development is supported by staff as they chat animatedly about familiar things, sing songs or tell stories. Children have opportunities for outings and visitors to the nursery enhance children's learning. They attend picnics during the summer at Wat Tyler Country Park and travel by train. Footballers from Southend United Football Club encourage the children to exercise and develop ball skills. Children learn about first aid and investigate how the ambulance service helps us.

School-age children have fun attending the holiday club. They are offered interesting activities each day such as modelling with salt dough, painting or other sensory and messy play to enable

them to express their ideas in a variety of ways. There are opportunities for French lessons and they can take decisions and select from a variety of resources from various rooms around the nursery.

Children and babies are developing confidence in their environment because toys are readily to hand and they are encouraged to make choices. The staff have had training regarding the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use this approach to plan relevant activities for the youngest children in the nursery. Children's developmental records are also linked to this framework.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff plan a respectable range of activities and children show interest in the learning experiences they are offered. Teaching methods are varied. Children sometimes offer their own ideas and staff make use of unplanned events. For example, children show great fascination by observing worms crawling across the outdoor play area. Staff spontaneously use this opportunity to encourage children to talk about how the worms move and to calculate which worm is the longest or the shortest. However, staff are not consistently looking at how children can be challenged within the planned activities and some children are working within their capabilities.

Children are learning to communicate with confidence. Staff ask the children carefully formed questions that encourage them to think and demonstrate what they know. Children learn about phonics and enjoy the sound of words. There are labels with simple words in the pre-school room and children can recognise their names. Children are developing a real love of books. They choose to look at books as an alternative to other activities and there is a range of both fiction and non-fiction material provided. The staff have developed strategies for keeping children enthralled while sharing books and telling stories. For example, props are used or sufficient copies of some books have been purchased to allow each child to have their own book while the story is being read.

Children are developing capable independence skills. They pour their own drinks, deal with their own hygiene needs and help themselves to food at mealtimes. Children understand the boundaries, know about the need for simple rules and respond well to the staff's expectations for good behaviour.

Children develop mathematical skills through planned activities and everyday routines. They count to 10 and recognise numerals as they look at rulers or measure themselves on wall charts. They match simple shapes and sort and categorise everyday items according to size and type. Sand and water play encourages children to explore volume and capacity. Children calculate as they sing number rhymes.

Children learn to care for living things when they ask if they can feed the fish and they learn about animals as they play with small world creatures. There are good opportunities for children to learn about technology as they independently use a computer and adeptly demonstrate their skills as they follow the instructions on the educational software. Children develop their knowledge of the wider world and awareness of others by celebrating some festivals. However,

staff do not yet effectively plan for or record evidence regarding the cultural festivals, traditions or community events that the children do follow throughout the year.

Children demonstrate their creative skills as they design and make their own pictures and collages. They describe what they have done and show pride in their work by sharing their pictures with staff and visitors. Children play imaginatively with small dinosaurs and are encouraged to talk about colours and textures as they play.

Children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals given their starting points and capabilities. The staff observe children as they learn through play. Very detailed developmental records are kept with plenty of positive comments about the children's achievements. Each child's next steps in learning are identified at half-termly intervals and these observations are used to inform future planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel a sense of belonging as the majority enter the nursery with confidence. They understand the nursery routine and enjoy taking part in small tasks such as helping to tidy up or carry items for staff. Plenty of praise and encouragement is given by staff to raise confidence and self esteem. Children are starting to understand responsible behaviour and play harmoniously together. The older children in the nursery show great care and tenderness towards the younger children and the babies. At times during the day siblings of different ages can see each other and play together in small groups.

Children are cared for by staff who work thoughtfully to meet individual needs. For example, they follow the children's routines regarding sleeping arrangements or allow a child to be comforted by a member of staff that they have a special bond with. An effective system is in place to support children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) is committed and enthusiastic about her role. Staff liaise appropriately with parents, schools and any other professionals working with the children. This ensures that children thrive in the setting and are given every opportunity to participate fully in the activities.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Each day the children give thanks for their food by saying grace before lunch. There are play materials, books and activities that represent the children who attend and the wider community. As a result children develop a positive sense of themselves and others. Children are encouraged to learn social skills such as sharing, turn taking and remembering to say 'please and thank you'.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are made to feel very welcome. Information is displayed on notice boards in the entrance hall and within each classroom. Newsletters are regularly sent out. Each day parents receive a daily report that details how much their child has eaten, sleeping arrangements and nappy changes. The forms and menu charts have been cleverly adapted with visual prompts so that they can be understood by parents who speak English as an additional language. Staff give verbal feedback to parents about their child's achievements. However, there are currently no formal opportunities to share

the progress of the children receiving funding for nursery education. As a result parents do not always share what they know about their children and few opportunities are provided for them to become involved further in their child's learning. The nursery management is now aware of the need to devise a complaints log that can be shared with parents. Parents speak positively about the staff and complement them on the friendly and caring service they provide.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a caring, long-standing staff team who are vetted and have relevant experience, knowledge and skills. The majority hold recognised childcare qualifications and also attend short training courses to keep up to date with childcare issues and trends. The nursery management is well aware of the need for robust recruitment procedures and staff induction and appraisal systems are in place. Although the nursery manager sometimes has to check staff deployment and move staff and children between the various rooms, overall staffing ratios are met within the nursery. However, there are times during the day when staff are fully stretched dealing with domestic duties as well as supervising and playing with the children.

All the essential documentation for the safe management of the pre-school and to promote children's welfare and safety is in place. Paperwork with confidential information is securely stored. However, not all documentation is systematically organised. Written policies and procedures are continually reviewed and updated to meet current care practice and the National Standards.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Roles and responsibilities are divided between the three managers and the staff team. The space and resources organised for the funded children allows them to take part in appropriate activities within their own learning environment for much of the day. However, this pre-school room is also used as a sleep room in the early afternoon when funded children have to use other areas of the nursery. The nursery manager is aware of the need to monitor the impact this has on the children's learning experiences. The nursery shows commitment to the improvement of care and education for all children by achieving Investors in People and by passing the PSLA Accreditation Scheme. Regular staff meetings are held. Staff are given incentives to progress and their professional development is on-going.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure that the medication record is maintained accurately and includes the dosage to be given, ensure that warm water is available for children to wash their hands and to ensure that more fresh food such as fruit and vegetables are offered. All these recommendations have been addressed to improve children's health and welfare. Improvements have also been made to the information supplied to parents and the complaints policy and Ofsted's contact details are now displayed.

There were three key issues raised at the inspection for nursery education. Satisfactory improvement has been made. Children's learning has been enhanced because staff regularly attend training in regard to the Foundation Stage to improve their knowledge of how children learn. As a result staff are now more proactive in providing more purposeful play experiences that cover all areas of learning. The staff's awareness of promoting equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice has been developed further through training. The short term planning has been extended so that staff are now fully aware of the desired learning outcomes for focussed activities. Provision has been made on the planning sheet for staff to adapt planning for the older or more able children. However, staff are not consistently completing this and a further recommendation has been made.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- assess the risks to children in relation to the toaster and electric extension sockets in the art room and take action to minimise these
- ensure that staff consistently encourage children to follow good hygiene procedures through the daily routine.

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):

- ensure that staff consistently identify how activities can be adapted for the individual needs of children, so that all children are challenged and supported to achieve as much as they can

- review the long term plan to include the festivals and community events that support the children's knowledge and understanding of the world
- encourage parents to share what they know about their children and provide further opportunities for them to become involved in their children's learning.

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