

Excel Childcare

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY229507
Inspection date	24 September 2007
Inspector	Silvia Richardson
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Excel Childcare was registered in 2002. It operates from ground and first floors of a refurbished building on Forest Hill Road. There is an enclosed area to the rear of the property for outside play. The nursery serves families in the local community of East Dulwich. The group opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08:00 to 18:00

The nursery is registered to provide full day care for 35 children aged under five years. There are currently 25 children from one year to under five years on roll. This includes six funded three and four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are nine staff working with the children. Half the staff, including the manager, have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. Two staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The nursery has regular support from an area special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). Staff have access to training courses and support services run by Southwark Early Years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children relax and play in reasonably clean and comfortable rooms, because routine cleaning duties are included on the daily schedule. Outdoor shoes are removed in the baby room, so that their floor play areas are hygienically maintained, promoting their welfare. Toys and play equipment are cleaned on a weekly basis. However, some of the baby toys, storage boxes, dolls and dressing up clothes are grubby, because cleaning is not thorough enough, to ensure these items are presentable to children, for their enjoyment or good health. Nappy changing routines are helping to minimise the risk of cross infection, because adults wear protective clothing, clean the mats after use and dispose of waste appropriately. However, children's health is compromised, because adults are not washing their hands after changing nappies or before serving children's meals. Children are encouraged to wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet, helping them to develop appropriate personal hygiene habits. However, children are not developing knowledge of how germs are spread or becoming independent with personal skills, because too many children are crowded into the bathroom and rushed through routines.

Meal times are stressful for children, because tables are pushed together to create one group of up to sixteen children, without adequate elbow room or space for adults to sit with the children during their meal. The atmosphere is tense and noisy, because the children are crowded together and not receiving personal attention. Opportunities are not created for children to talk about the meal or healthy eating, because arrangements are focussed on serving the group and clearing away. Adults continually tell the children to eat up and discussion primarily centres on the consumption of food, who has finished and who wants more, making it difficult for children to relax and enjoy their meal as sociable time in the day. Children are not developing independence skills or making a positive contributing to the meal setting, because they are not encouraged to help with laying tables, serving or pouring themselves drinks.

Arrangements for young children to rest and sleep are unhygienic, because they are laid together on one sheet on the floor. Children are not resting and sleeping comfortably, because they are laid directly on the sheet, side by side, without any personal space between them. These arrangements are also increasing the risk of cross infection and spread of germs, especially when children have coughs and colds. Children are distressed and tearful at times and not appropriately comforted, creating a stressful atmosphere, compromising the welfare of all the children trying to sleep. Babies sleep comfortably in cots in a separate room and are closely monitored, promoting their welfare. Suitable records are kept of children's care routines, so that parents know what children have eaten and how long they have slept for. Details are kept of individual children's dietary preferences, allergies and any food sensitivities, so that adults are aware of these when preparing and serving meals, supporting children's health in this area. Adults are trained in first aid procedures and appropriate records are kept and shared with parents, promoting children's health and welfare.

Children have opportunities to enjoy sunshine and fresh air, because outside activities are scheduled daily. They have access to a fair range of equipment, so that they can practise and develop a variety of skills, such as climbing, sliding, balancing, jumping and hopping. Children clearly enjoy being active and spend much of their time running around the outdoor area energetically. Adults tend towards a supervisory role, providing children with instructions and commands, such as 'slow down', 'be careful' and 'look where you are going'. Children are lacking in positive guidance and support and there are no clear aims and objectives for outside play,

to support and develop team games involving co-ordination, such as when using bats, balls and hoops. Adults are not actively engaging children in discussion about how their bodies work, or the benefit of exercise to their health, so children's knowledge and understanding remains limited.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children's safety in the setting is compromised, because daily risk assessments are ineffective in identifying potential hazards. Cleaning spray and plastic bags are accessible to children in the bathroom. Resources, such as boxed games and puzzles are unevenly stacked on shelves. Toys and play materials are left scattered on the floor, creating tripping hazards for children and adults. The fire blanket in the main kitchen is propped up on the cooker and the one in the toddler kitchen is laying on its side by the draining board, making their use less effective and efficient in the event of a fire. The gate to the fire escape in the outside play area is not secured before the children come out to play, making these stairs easily accessible to them. Children are not always safely and appropriately supervised when using the staircase. Although children are taught to come down seated, an adult is not in position ahead of the children, to supervise the pace of movement and to prevent children from tumbling. Children's understanding of how to stay safe in the setting is very limited, because adults are not consistently talking to the children about the rules and boundaries for safe movement and safe play in the setting.

There are some safety measures in place, helping to prevent accidents, such as electric sockets fitted with covers and a pole in the garden has padding fitted around it to soften any bumps. Children have a soft landing if they trip or fall accidentally in the outdoor area, because the play surface is rubberised, minimising risk of injury. Safety gates are fitted in various locations, such as across doorways and stairs in the main building, helping to make areas inaccessible to children. Fire exits are clearly marked, notices provide clear instruction and doors open efficiently, helping to aid swift evacuation of the premises in an emergency. Appropriate precautions are taken to minimise risk to babies, from the fractured glass pane to the front of the building. Suitable temporary re-grouping arrangements are in place, so that children's care and day care services for parents are not disrupted. Children are kept safe and protected should safe-guarding concerns arise, because adults follow the appropriate guidelines and know how to make a referral to care services if necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Babies play happily and move around confidently in their group room, because they are well supervised and supported. Adults sit on the floor with the babies at their chosen activities, talking to them and playing with them, helping them to feel comforted and secure. Babies enjoy a good range and variety of practical play experiences, such as sand and water play, developing their senses and building on their natural curiosity to explore. Babies actively select resources of their own choosing, because a good supply of toys are sorted into sets and easily accessible to them in floor tubs and boxes. Care routines are meeting individual needs, because adults are attentive to guidelines provided by parents. Toddlers and older children play quite happily, because adults are attentive, move around and follow the children to their chosen areas of play, providing a reassuring presence. Adults are kind to children and praise them frequently, helping them to enjoy playing with their friends.

Children's care routines, such as using the bathroom and arrangements for meals and rest periods are not addressing and meeting individual needs or promoting children's welfare and well-being in the setting. This because adults focus on the group as a whole, so that the management of children becomes task orientated, rather than child centred. The key worker system is ineffective at these times and fails to acknowledge children's needs for personal care and individual attention, in accordance with their developmental stage and level of maturity. Children become tense, anxious and distressed, because they are not adequately supported and comforted. Children are crowded together in the bathroom, at tables for meals and on a sheet for sleeping, so that they have no personal space or room for movement. Adults are failing to be in touch with what it is like for a child in the setting in these situations, so that they are unable to identify the difficulties children are experiencing.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate.

Children are making poor progress towards the Early Learning Goals, because the environment in which they are playing is not appropriately arranged and resourced to support learning across the six areas. Planning does not take account of the key components, so there are large gaps in children's knowledge and acquisition of skills. Activities set out for children are not sufficiently challenging, stimulating or interesting, to encourage exploration and discovery. Adults are not asking children open questions to make them think or introducing children to new language and concepts, to develop their understanding beyond the basics of colour and shape. Adults praise children, saying 'well done', 'that's nice' and 'good work', but these responses are not promoting or stretching children's potential for learning in all areas of their play. Adult led learning, focuses primarily on pencil skills, tracing and copying letters and numbers, without children having had adequate practise in mark-making activities during the course of free-play experiences.

Children have insufficient opportunities to develop personally, socially and emotionally, because adults take the lead in care routines, so that children are discouraged from doing things for themselves. Children are not confident and independent learners, because they are not clear about place and order, in terms of where and how resources are arranged and stored, so that they can select items for use and replace them when finished. Children are not making effective use of the large range of books available to them, because adults are not helping them to appreciate the value of books for learning or reference to activities, as well as choosing stories for enjoyment and pleasure. There are missed opportunities throughout the daily routine and free-play times, for children to count and calculate and to talk about position, size and quantity, such as during meal times and outside play. Adults working with children, are insufficiently skilled in recognising potential learning situations, so children tend to play randomly and without any real structure or purpose. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is limited, because they play with very basic materials with little active input from adults.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

The setting reflects diversity through a range of resources, such as dolls and dressing up clothes, so that children are helped to develop a positive identity. Children can see themselves and feel good about themselves, through the provision of a wide range books, portraying positive images of differences. The setting accepts children with learning difficulties and or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language, although there are few resources available

or used with these children, such as picture exchange cards, to assist children with communication and to help them integrate successfully. Children are included in activities and have equal access to resources, although individual needs are not properly assessed, to actively promote inclusion and to ensure children make some progress. Children generally behave well when playing and enjoy the company of their friends, because adults sit and play with them. Children play co-operatively, share and take turns well, because adults consistently support children with social skills and good manners. Difficulties arise when children become tearful or distressed, because their expression of feelings are not appropriately managed. Adults ask children 'what is the matter' or 'what's wrong' without providing comfort and support away from the situation they are in, so that the atmosphere becomes tense, impacting on the well-being of other children. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

The quality of partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Adults make parents welcome in the setting and establish positive relationships, promoting a partnership approach to children's care and learning. Some helpful written information is available to parents about the setting and the Early years curriculum, so that they have knowledge of the six areas of learning. Adults meet with parents and carers to talk about planning and to discuss children's learning needs. Children use work books in the setting, to trace and copy letters and numbers and parents take these home on a Friday evening, so that they can help their children practise at home. Parents are encouraged to share information about their children with key workers, so that they can establish how well children are getting on and help plan for the next stage in children's learning. Parents are generally involved in their children's learning through the homework scheme and can ask for additional work to do with their child at home if they wish. Parents, carers and management meet occasionally to discuss plans for the nursery and also have daily opportunities to talk about the sorts of activities children are doing and the progress they are making.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Adults are properly vetted, ensuring their suitability to work with children. The minimum ratio of qualified staff and assistants are employed, so that children receive satisfactory levels of supervision. Difficulties arise when fully qualified staff are absent, so that the manager has to be deployed to childcare activities, making sure appropriate levels of supervision are maintained. Records, policies and procedures are in place, although some of these, such as risk assessment, are not implemented effectively, to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting. Suitable temporary arrangements are in place for group care of babies, while repairs to the damaged frontage of their base room takes place. The setting is currently below registered numbers, so that toddlers and preschool children are cared for together on the first floor, within the space requirements for registration. However, children's care routines are inappropriately organised, so that individual needs are not effectively addressed and met. The operational plan supports task oriented management of children, impacting on their welfare and well-being in the setting. Toys, play materials and learning resources are poorly organised and presented, such as boxed games and incomplete puzzles stacked on top of each other, discouraging children from being able to help themselves and to know where to replace items after use. Creative resources are not clearly sorted and arranged to encourage children to use these to make things of their own choosing. Overall, the setting does not meet the needs of the children for whom it provides.

The quality of leadership and management is inadequate.

There are significant weaknesses in the leadership and management of the setting, specifically in the ability to identify the adverse impact care routines are placing upon children's welfare and well-being. The setting is ineffective in monitoring and evaluating the provision for nursery education, to the extent that there are large gaps in children's learning across the six areas. Management develops a good rapport with parents but is less effective in building a rapport with staff, that supports and enables them, to provide safe and appropriate childcare and an interactive learning environment for children. Leadership and management are keen to address weaknesses in the provision and seek training and advice from Early years support workers, so that they may improve the quality and standards of care and learning for all the children in the setting.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to an action, to ensure at least one member of staff is trained in health and safety and that children's safety is maintained at all times, through regular risk assessment at the nursery. The provider responded by reporting that staff had been identified to undertake health and safety training and to carry out regular risk assessments. However, at the time of this inspection, the risk assessment procedure was evidenced as ineffective in ensuring children's safety in the setting and further action was agreed.

At the last inspection the provider agreed to an action, to ensure the organisation of the nursery is clearly supported through regular supervision of staff and securely underpinned through up to date policies and procedures in all areas. The provider responded by reporting that all staff now have regular supervision, carried out by the manager and that the Director would carry out the manager's supervision. At the time of the this inspection, significant weaknesses were identified in the organisation of the nursery and care routines, impacting on children's welfare and well-being and further action was agreed.

At the last inspection the provider agreed to a recommendation to build on the nursery's leadership and management in the Foundation Stage, to ensure consistency in teaching and children's learning. At the time of this inspection, leadership and management is evidenced as inadequate in monitoring and evaluating the provision of nursery education, so that teaching and learning is poor. Further action is agreed to help children make adequate progress towards the early learning goals.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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

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 inadequate - notice of action to improve.

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:

- promote children's health and take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection, with specific regards to cleaning of toys and play materials, arrangements for sleeping and hand washing routines
- take positive steps to promote safety within the setting, with specific regards to the storage of cleaning materials, children's personal items and toys, and ensuring risk assessment is rigorous and effective in improving fire safety precautions and minimising potential for accidents
- meet children's individual needs and promote their welfare, with specific regards to children's care routines, use of bathroom, meal and rest times
- manage children's expression of feelings in a way which promotes their welfare
- review the operational plan, ensuring organisation and management of children's care routines, support the setting in meeting the needs of the range of children for whom it provides

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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- plan and provide learning activities and play opportunities across the six areas of learning and with specific regard to children's personal, social and emotional development
- organise space and resources to meet children's learning needs effectively
- develop leadership and management of the setting, with specific regards to monitoring and evaluating the provision for nursery education

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

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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