

Elim Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203995
Inspection date	28 September 2007
Inspector	Janette Elaina Lockwood
Setting Address	Elim Christian Centre, Hall Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0HG
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Registered person	The Ministers of Elim Day Nursery
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Elim Day Nursery opened in 1979. It operates from a suite of rooms on the ground and first floor, within Elim Christian Centre, in Chelmsford, Essex. The nursery serves both the wider and local area. A maximum of 84 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 07.45 until 17.45 all year round. Morning sessions are from 07.45 until 13.00. Afternoon sessions are from 13.00 until 17.45. Alternative sessions available are 09.00 until 11.30 and 13.30 until 16.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 135 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, 40 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 30 members of staff plus support staff. Of these, 27 hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are cared for in a clean environment where staff take responsibility for keeping their areas clean. They use effective nappy changing procedures, for example, wearing gloves and cleaning the changing mats between use. Children use separate face cloths and paper towels to dry their hands and are encouraged to wash their hands at key times during the day. In addition, they have separate bedding for when they sleep which is laundered on site. These procedures help minimise the spread of germs between children.

Clearly written procedures are put into practice when administering medication and parents are aware of some sickness exclusion times when they should keep their children at home. However, sometimes children attend the setting whilst taking prescribed medication for ear, nose and throat infections for example, when their illnesses may be considered contagious. As a result, this could increase the risk of the spread of germs.

When children have an accident it is clearly written in the accident book and signed by parents. Several staff are first aid trained and they often manage any injuries in pairs, both signing the accident book.

Children are learning some ways in which they can keep themselves healthy through activities such as having a role play area as a dental surgery. Staff focus on activities linked to this to help children understand the importance of keeping their teeth clean.

Children are nourished with suitable meals which often include fresh fruit and vegetables. Parents are able to influence their children's' diets by specifying their preferences as well as any medical or religious dietary needs. Children are offered regular drinks and more able children can help themselves, beginning to learn to recognise their own thirst.

Younger children are offered some alternatives in the menus, however, babies may not be offered the correct consistency of food for their individual stages of development, for example, having food pureed when they are moving onto their next stages of weaning. Furthermore, babies are not given enough opportunities to help feed themselves and become more independent in their development.

More able children are learning about healthy eating through planned activities relating to health and food, for example, cooking and preparing foods. Staff talk to them about healthy eating and encourage them to use their cutlery properly to eat independently.

Children have frequent and worthwhile opportunities to develop their physical skills and to use the outside area twice a day when possible. The outside area offers children the chance to run around and build their large muscle skills using the climbing frame. Children thoroughly enjoy learning to steer their bikes around the paths drawn on the ground and some can skilfully avoid obstacles.

Exciting music and movement sessions enable children to practise copying a range of movements and following instructions and plenty of opportunities exist for the older children to use a range of tools to help with their manipulative skills.

In the baby rooms there are opportunities for the babies to move around freely and to learn to crawl and walk confidently. There are plenty of activity toys to help them with their hand-eye co-ordination and there are sometimes opportunities for them to go outside for fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery operates from a church building on both the ground and first floor. The younger children are cared for in small rooms until they are two and half years when they join the 'Toddlers' and finally 'Pre-school' which are both large well-equipped rooms. The children benefit from an outdoor play area which allows play all-year-round.

There is plenty of equipment available for children's use in all the rooms, including high chairs and cots. The equipment is clean, suitable for children's needs and available to share throughout the nursery if required. Toys and resources are stored appropriately and older children have access to some of these themselves. A policy is available regarding replacement of equipment and staff are able to ask for items they think are appropriate for the needs of the children.

Children are beginning to learn some ways in which they can keep themselves safe, for example, learning about road safety through various activities. Staff talk to them about helping to keep themselves and others safe in the nursery by lining up properly and walking in the rooms instead of running.

The nursery has a thorough system for risk assessments and monitors the accident book every week to assess where improvements in safety can be made. This has led to the garden being resurfaced as many accidents were related to children tripping over during outside play.

Although the nursery shares the building with other users, there is a reception area directly inside the main doors where any visitors have to sign in. There are safety gates and signs around the nursery to show where visitors can and cannot go so children are kept secure.

The manager has had recent child protection training and is one of the appointed persons along with the registered person for managing any safeguarding issues. If staff have any concerns they will discuss it with the appointed persons who will follow the setting's safeguarding children policy and the Local Safeguarding Children Procedures. However, the setting's own policy does not detail clearly what to do in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. Furthermore, although staff record existing injuries to children, these are not recorded centrally so reports of repeated injuries may not be detected and therefore children may not be fully safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Although staff have had some 'Birth to three matters' framework training and are trying to plan a range of activities for the babies under 18 months, the plans have no real aims. The details on the planning are scant and show that some staff have little understanding of some of the terms used. Babies and children under 18 months are given opportunities to play with a range of toys including teething toys and rattles, activity toys, painting and some messy play. However, activities do not always seem to be planned properly by staff so are not particularly inspiring or challenging to children's development. There is some evidence of more worthwhile activities having been carried out but little thought appears to go into the core activities

provided and this is not consistent everyday. As a result, the babies and children in this age group may miss opportunities to explore and learn at their own pace.

In the room for babies aged up to one year staff try to create a calm atmosphere by playing music and there are mirrors low down on the floor so babies can see themselves and develop a sense of me, myself and I. Some staff sit with them on the comfy mats and interact with words and gestures encouraging them to communicate.

The period around lunch time in the largest baby room is too rigid as staff try to stick to routines without enough consideration for the babies' individual needs. For example, babies sometimes wait too long in highchairs for their lunch and become fretful and are not given enough opportunities to help feed themselves. In addition, after lunch most of the babies are expected to sleep although they may not show any signs of being tired. This results in staff spending unnecessary time and effort in trying to make them sleep.

There are three interlinking rooms for the children aged 18 months to two and a half years and although each child has a base area, there are opportunities for them to move around during certain parts of the day to experience different activities. Planning is displayed but still appears to lack any real understanding by staff and sometimes there are few activities for children to choose from or the equipment is not being used effectively. For example, the role play area does not have any accompanying equipment such as a tea set or dolls.

In most of the rooms for babies and children aged up to two and a half years there is a system in place for the recording of observations and detailing their progress. This system mostly works well and produces good evidence for children's individual progress showing staff what they need to do next to move the children on. However, the observations and recording have not been carried out consistently in all the rooms so staff are not aware of how the babies are developing and therefore cannot plan effectively.

Children move into the toddler room when they are approximately two and a half years old and in this room planning is very effective and staff show a good understanding of bridging the gap between the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children are settled well, very friendly and developing their confidence, for example, having their own trays to keep their things in. Children begin to interact more with one another and with staff and learn to choose from a wide range of well-planned activities such as washing toys in a large water tray. There are opportunities for small group stories and focussed activities and the role play area is well-resourced and used imaginatively, for example, as a hospital. There is evidence of regular creative play with displays on the wall showing finger painting and printing, the use of stencils, collage and children's own drawings where they have opportunities to use their imagination.

Staff in this room challenge children, for example, asking them to count how many children are already in the role play area and work out if there is room for one more. They give children constant encouragement and praise them frequently, keeping their eye out for children who may be playing alone or showing distraction so they can be redirected.

Early Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate that they are familiar with the stepping stones and the early learning goals and that they take account of the different ways in which children learn. They recognise that children learn through practical and immediate experiences and there is evidence to show how they plan for this. For example, children made

bread with staff, weighing and counting the ingredients, feeling the textures and using their manipulative skills. When it was cooked, they used the loaves in their 'bread shop' extending their concepts of buying and selling.

Although there is some small group work, there are large story and singing times together which can be distracting for some of the children as there are a range of different levels of ability in the group. The whole group also goes out into the garden together and although there are sufficient resources for the children, staff may not be able to use the opportunities for learning so effectively as with smaller groups.

All staff contribute to the planning to promote progress towards the early learning goals and the inclusion of all children. The planning is clearly displayed, shows the learning aims for children as well as differentiation and evaluation and is overseen by a qualified teacher to ensure it is meeting children's learning needs. There are clear purposes for the activities to show what children are intended to learn. Furthermore, relevant information is displayed around the different areas of play to remind staff of how to help children get the most out of an activity.

Staff are aware of children's individual progress, helping them to identify their next steps, they have realistic expectations for each child and plan to challenge them. This is evident in the differentiation section on their planning which helps demonstrate staff's understanding. Regular observations help build up a true illustration of children's attainment and ensures children are progressing towards the early learning goals.

Children have positive dispositions and attitudes, demonstrated by their obvious motivation and enthusiasm for the activities. They are building their self-confidence and esteem, choosing their activities from a wide range and showing pleasure in what they accomplish. For example, when building a tower a child chatted to himself and clapped his hands in glee at what he had achieved. There are some definite friendships developing between children and they often enjoy cuddling up to staff for spontaneous stories, particularly when they are settling in.

Children use their language for communication, talking about what they intend to do when playing together or asking staff questions. They narrate their play quite often, both when playing together and alone and staff encourage them to use new language such as 'prickly' and 'spiky' to help them describe new things. Children listen to and join in with stories enjoying those with rhymes and rhythms and anticipating some of the rhyming words that come next. They begin to recognise some familiar words as there are labels all around them and notices which staff read to remind them of simple rules such as 'put all the hats in this box'. Children are helped to use writing as a means of recording and communicating on their work and practise their pre-writing skills frequently, for example, attempting their names on their work.

Children show an interest in numbers as labels and for counting and use some number names and number language spontaneously, for example, counting how many children there are before going into the garden. They park their bikes in numbered spaces to show they can recognise numerals. Children enjoy singing number songs and rhymes, demonstrating that they can add or subtract in the songs and calculate the answer. They use a wide range of equipment to learn about shape, space and measure, for example, co-operating with each other to complete a large pattern of tessellated shapes or choosing the correct components to make a model. Children use size language commenting on how tall a member of staff is as they have been measuring their height and recording it on a chart.

Children have frequent opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world and enjoy learning about the life cycles of frogs or by growing seeds. They have looked at how we grow up using photographs of a family, relating it to their own lives and helping them learn about the past and present. A range of resources from bricks to junk materials give children the chance to design and make things, sometimes with a purpose, for example, using the components to make a functioning marble run. They use the computer confidently and are beginning to understand the importance of technology in our everyday lives. Children sometimes explore new things and make predictions, for example, about the weather, making weather recording instruments to use to measure the rain water or to see how the wind blows.

There are daily opportunities for children to explore media and materials ranging from using paint in different ways to making collages. Children enjoy making two dimensional 'hedgehogs' using straws and paint and during these activities children are beginning to describe the texture of things and to comment on colours. Staff provide a range of activities to help children use their imagination and enjoy stories based on themselves and people and places they know well. This is particularly evident in the role play area and with the dressing-up clothes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. There are opportunities for children to talk about their homes and families, they show care and concern for one another and often speak on behalf of younger children. There are opportunities for children to celebrate some festivals such as Harvest and to go into places of worship such as the church. Staff talk to children about different charity events they take part in so they begin to understand how they can help others.

Staff know children very well and value their individuality, taking account of their home backgrounds and helping them to value others. Although there are a few resources in the setting that reflect people's similarities and differences, these are not highly evident and are not used skilfully around the nursery to reflect its equal opportunity policy. Some festivals such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year are woven into the planning and aspects of these are experienced by the children so they learn a little of how others may celebrate important dates in their calendar.

The setting has a detailed policy on special needs and welcomes children who may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Observations and record keeping enable staff to monitor a child's needs and progress and funding may be sought for one to one help for some children. The setting has its own Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and liaises closely with the area SENCO as well as therapists, health visitors, psychologists and social workers. The aims are to work with parents and specialists to help children to progress. There is evidence that staff are implementing visual strategies around the setting, for example, learning sign language and displaying visual timetables to help with communication.

Children's behaviour is good because they learn simple rules, such as to help tidy up at tidy up time. Children are praised and encouraged for good behaviour by staff and they build their confidence and self-esteem. Staff manage a wide range of behaviours positively and according to children's levels of understanding. There is a named person for behaviour management who ensures staff are consistent.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents of children receiving early education are provided with relevant information about early learning goals and have access to the planning. In the rooms there are displays with information about the aims of the activities and what children have learned from them. For example, a drawing display helps parents to see how their children are developing their representation skills. From time to time they draw new pictures of themselves which are attached over the top of the previous one so parents can see their progress. Parents are kept properly informed of their child's achievements and progress through regular feedback both formally and informally. . Parents know what their children have been doing during the day by notices up in the entrance area and through their communication books which staff write up everyday. Parents are invited to comment back through the books and if they wish to do further work with their children at home the staff are willing to help them with ideas. Additionally, there are open days for parents when they are invited in to see their child's work and to speak to their key worker about the progress

Contact sheets are sent home daily for younger children so parents are aware of what they have eaten, how long they slept for and their general well-being during the day. Parents are invited to look at the policies and procedures available in the reception area and there is a complaints procedure which is consistent with the National Standards and details the name and address of Ofsted.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management is good. The delivery of the early education, the planning and the way staff record children's progress is monitored by senior staff in the setting to ensure it is effective and consistent for children receiving funding for early education. Staff know each other well and work together confidently to put the planning into practice and help children to progress towards the early learning goals.

Staff take turns to evaluate the focussed activities effectively so they understand what is working well and how to make improvements if necessary. A variety of good quality resources help them plan activities effectively and help them find new ideas and keep up-to-date with current research, and staff attend cluster meetings with other early education settings. The manager is currently working towards a Foundation Degree in Early Years Childcare and Education and the teacher in the pre-school is working towards the Early Years Professional Status. In this way they will continue to bring new ideas into the setting for the benefit of the children.

The setting has robust recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure staff are suitable to work with children and most of the staff in the setting are qualified in childcare. There are formal induction procedures in place and new staff are required to familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures. They are invited to attend regular staff meetings and the minutes are recorded with items identified for action. Staff appraisals are carried out to identify any further training needs and regular in-house training is offered as well as external courses. More regular one-to-one meetings are currently being implemented to ensure staff remain motivated in their roles so children's care is improved.

Organisation of time, space and resources is satisfactory. Staff ratios are met and managers organise cover when there are staff absences, using bank staff and offering overtime or time off in lieu to existing staff for continuity of care for children.

The setting monitors its own effectiveness by using the self-evaluation form and building up a file of improvements as they work through each one and weaknesses identified in previous inspections have been tackled. The setting is committed to improving the quality of care and education for all children and is ready to implement changes to make the improvements. Overall children's needs are met.

Records meet requirements and are satisfactory and most policies are appropriate, however, not all currently meet the requirements of the National Standards.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection to improve the standards of care, the setting was required to: ensure there was a written statement of the procedure to be followed in the event of a child going missing or lost; review the organisation of sleeping babies to enable them to sleep peacefully at the same time as non-sleeping babies are playing; to improve the organisation of whole group times in the toddler room, to enable staff to tailor activities that accommodate the children's wide and varied ages and stages of development.

The management team have written a statement of the procedure to be followed in the event of a child going missing or lost, they have reviewed the organisation of sleeping babies so that they are able to sleep more peacefully whilst other babies play and have reviewed the organisation of whole group times in the toddler room so that staff can tailor activities for all the children to meet their different needs.

Early Education

At the last inspection the setting was required to increase the detail in planning to ensure all staff are aware of how to meet the specific learning outcomes of an activity and how children are grouped so teaching can accommodate different children's levels of understanding.

The learning outcomes are now detailed clearly in the planning and relate to stepping stones. Most activities take place in small groups which helps accommodate different children's levels of understanding.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standards 2 (organisation), 5 (Equipment), 6 (safety), 7 (Health), 8 (Food and Drink) and 12 (Partnership with Parents). An unannounced visit was carried out on 26 September 2007 and as a result three recommendations were set under Standard 5, 6 and 12 as follows:-

assess the risks to children in relation to staff and children wearing outdoor shoes in the nursery and take action to minimise these

review and monitor the use of equipment in the baby rooms to ensure activities are consistently provided to help children's development in line with the aspects and approach described in the 'Birth to Three Matters' framework

monitor communication/contact diaries to ensure any emerging concerns may be identified and dealt with as part of the complaints process when necessary.

Ofsted is satisfied that the registered person will take the appropriate steps to address the concerns and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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 of the 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- revise the policy relating to the exclusion of ill or infectious children and make sure parents are made aware of it
- ensure the consistency of food is suitable for babies and that staff give them opportunities to feed themselves to promote their independence and development
- ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. (This refers to including what to do if allegations are made against staff and to ensure existing injuries are consistently recorded)
- improve staff's understanding of how to plan and provide a suitable range of activities for children, which are appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs and ensure their progress is recorded (this refers to children and babies under two and a half years)
- ensure children's individual needs are met (this refers to babies between 12 and 18 months old in their sleeping and eating routines)
- ensure resources that reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability are used effectively throughout the setting

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):

- review the effectiveness of whole group activities to ensure more able children are not distracted by those who have a lesser concentration span.

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