

Exminster Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	106118
Inspection date	11 January 2008
Inspector	Brenda Joan Flewitt

Setting Address	Deepway Centre, Deepway Lane, Exminster, Exeter, Devon, EX6 8BG
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Telephone number	01392 833320
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Registered person	Exminster Pre School
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Full day care
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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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Exminster Pre-school was registered in 1981. It is a parent committee run group which operates from the village hall in Exminster, Exeter, Devon. The group have access to the main hall, with kitchen and toilet facilities. There is an enclosed garden available for outside play. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday during term times. Sessions run from 09.15 to 11.45, with a lunch club offered until 13.30 during the winter term, and 12.45 during spring and summer terms.

On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, during spring and summer terms only, afternoon sessions are offered at the nearby primary school. This group is known as 'Cygnets' and is a separate registration. Many children attend both groups.

A maximum of 30 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 43 children on roll. Of these, 41 receive funding for early education.

There are 12 members of staff employed to work with the children. Of these, most hold, or are working towards, relevant early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children's health is compromised with regards to emergencies and medication being administered. The medication records are not clear and lack important detail. Written parental permission is not obtained to seek medical advice or treatment in an emergency.

Children develop good procedures for their own personal hygiene. They learn to use the easily accessible toilet facilities independently, and routinely wash their hands before handling food. Children are protected from the spread of infection through staff procedures, and there is a clear sickness policy which informs parents that children must not attend if they have an infectious illness.

Children enjoy a healthy lifestyle. They take part in daily activities that promote their good health. This includes a physical 'warm-up' at register time to help children prepare to use their 'listening skills'. They generally have fresh air and exercise planned in to the day as they use the outside area. This includes using large equipment such as wheeled vehicles, bats and balls, climbing frames and balancing equipment. If bad weather prevents outside play, children enjoy inside physical activities such as parachute games. For example, all children stretch and bend as they excitedly shake the parachute up and down to bounce the soft toy 'pets', attempting to make them fall through the hole.

Children learn to make healthy choices in what they eat. The 'café' type snack system means that children choose when to eat and drink, and select from nutritious options that always include some form of fruit with carbohydrates. They develop practical skills in using equipment as they pour their own drinks or spread foods on bagels or bread.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children's safety is not adequately safeguarded because Ofsted have not been informed about the change in committee. Therefore, the vetting procedures have not been carried out to ascertain their suitability.

Children play and learn in generally safe and secure premises. The good security system means they are protected from uninvited visitors, and cannot leave the premises unsupervised. Children move around freely and in safety as they choose their activities because the space available is organised effectively. They use equipment and resources that are kept in good condition and well organised.

Children learn what is expected if they must leave the building in an emergency, as they are involved in practising the fire procedures on a regular basis. Staff are clear on their roles and responsibilities and fire exits are clearly marked. This all helps promote the children's safety in a real situation. Children are kept safe on outings through staff's routine procedures which include an increased adult-to-child ratio, and using high-visibility tabards and wrist straps. Children learn to be aware of safe routines for crossing roads, as they are involved in looking and listening for traffic.

Overall, staff have a sound understanding of recognising signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow with concerns. Staff regularly update their knowledge through training.

However, the policy does not include procedures to be followed in the event of allegations against staff, and existing injuries are not recorded as routine.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and secure. They enjoy the time they spend at the pre-school and make good relationships with staff and each other. Children develop confidence in making their needs known as they can be sure of a friendly response. They are encouraged to develop independence in practical skills such as managing their own snacks, hand washing and clothing. Children use a good range of equipment and resources which are arranged so that children can select for themselves from a full range, which is changed on a weekly basis.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The experienced team of staff have a good working knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this to plan a broad range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning. They use a variety of teaching methods to help children learn and develop. There is an effective key worker system and a good balance of adult-led and self-chosen activities. Staff know the children well as individuals through recorded observations and through the support they provide for activities. Children are challenged appropriately, and therefore, make good progress in their learning. The 'Cygnets' session offered to children who are starting school provides more structured activities in the school environment.

Most children use language well to communicate, they like to talk about events in their lives and often initiate conversations with adults and each other. Children learn to recognise their written name through daily routines as they self-register and select their name card at snack time. Some children are writing their names using recognisable letters. For example, a child wishes to name her drawing, she goes to the kitchen to ask for her name card, takes it back to the table and copies her name, proudly showing an adult her achievement.

Children develop good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They use their senses to explore a broad range of materials and objects through planned activities such as messy play, construction, art and craft and cooking. For instance, a group of children enjoy making biscuits. They like to feel the texture of various ingredients as they transfer them to their individual bowls using spoons, they discuss whether ingredients are 'wet' or 'dry' and are encouraged to think about changes that happen as different foods are added. They use tools such as rolling pins and cutters to shape the dough and enjoy taking the finished items home to taste. Children have regular opportunities to use technology in the form of a computer and cameras. Older children attending 'Cygnets' benefit from additional adult support to develop their computer skills further. Children learn about their local environment through visits and walks around the village, and visitors in to the group, including police officers and fire fighters, help them know about people in the community who help them.

Children have daily opportunities for expressing themselves and being creative. There are various resources readily available for children to complete artwork and use writing materials. The role play area is used effectively to help children use numbers and writing for a purpose, as they act out real life and imaginary situations. Children like to sing familiar songs, which often include early calculation such as counting how many 'cheeky monkeys' are left after one has been 'snapped' by 'Mr Crocodile'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals. Staff get to know children well through effective communication with parents, and as they support their activities. There are good systems in place to help support children with additional requirements. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator attends ongoing training and liaises with parents, staff and connected professionals to help children be fully included.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging to a community. They see photos of themselves and their work displayed in the setting and have individual, named coat hooks. They visit the nearby school for various events, and those who attend the 'Cygnets' group become familiar with regular activities within the school. Children learn about their local environment through planned activities which include visits and outings, and start to have an awareness of the wider world as they explore various celebrations. Children behave well. They know what is expected through clear explanations and familiar routines. They receive constant praise and encouragement from staff, which helps build their self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the positive relationships established between parents and staff. Parents receive useful information about the setting by way of a prospectus, notice boards and newsletters. Partnership with parents is good. Parents have the chance to have an active voice in their child's care and education by being a member of the management committee. Parents are well informed about their child's progress and are welcomed in to the group. They have access to their children's progress records on application and are invited to formal parents' evenings to talk with their child's key worker. The daily two-way diaries provide a good opportunity for parents and staff to share what they know about the child, achievements and other information to meet individual needs. However, the information gathered on the initial registration form does not clearly link to children's starting points in the Foundation Stage.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The provider does not meet the regulation which requires them to inform Ofsted of changes in the registered person. Regulations with regards to keeping records have not been met. The registration system does not clearly record hours that children and staff attend, and medication records are not clear enough. There is a breach of regulation in that important records are not readily available for inspection. These include the complaints record, and staff records which evidence their suitability. Therefore, the setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

There are satisfactory staff recruitment procedures that include applicants undergoing a criminal records check, and applying for references to judge their suitability to work with children. However, there is no system for obtaining information about any health issues. The staff are well qualified and experienced. They work well together as a team to provide sessions that run smoothly so that children know what to expect. Therefore, they settle well and feel secure.

Leadership and management for the provision of nursery education is good. There are effective methods in place to help monitor the provision for nursery education. These include regular staff meetings where issues and individual children's progress are discussed. There are strong links with the school. Staff meet termly with the head teacher and reception staff. Together

with the regular visits and activities within the school, this helps children's smooth transition as they start school. Foundation Stage advisors visit to offer support and advice with regards to planning and individual children. Annual staff appraisals help identify any training and development, which is well supported.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last care inspection recommended that the complaints policy was updated to include Ofsted contact details.

The policy includes up-to-date details for contacting Ofsted. This helps promote partnership with parents by supplying information openly to parents.

The last nursery education inspection recommended: that planning focuses on the methods to be used to ensure that children's individual needs are met, that they are supported in their learning and that they are grouped appropriately; that use of everyday activities was improved to consolidate children's mathematical understanding and encourage mark making for a variety of purposes, placing less emphasis on worksheets; and that opportunities were improved for children to value and explore different aspects of their lives and cultures including enjoying their home language.

Planning has been developed to include 'focus sheets', adult-led activities and children's progress are discussed and evaluated at each staff planning meeting. Children's progress is effectively supported through the key worker system.

Children use maths within their play to help them make sense of what they learn in other planned activities. For example, the role play area is set up as a pet shop, children buy and sell 'pets' which are labelled with numerals. A mark-making table is available every day, and resources are provided within role play situations to encourage children to write for a purpose.

Children who come from families who use different languages are supported in accordance with their parents' wishes. Staff research words to use in the group to help children settle and feel included. Parents are requested to supply information about cultures and celebrations, so that these can be explored with all children.

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.

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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:

- keep a clear written record of medicines administered to children, and obtain written parental permission to seek medical advice or treatment in an emergency
- ensure the registration system records the hours of staff and children's attendance
- ensure that all records relating to day care are readily accessible and available for inspection at all times
- ensure Ofsted are informed about any changes in the registered person, so that suitability checks can be carried out.

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):

- develop systems to obtain information from parents, to inform children's starting points in the Foundation Stage.

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