

# Explore Learning Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY347636
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 May 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Jayne Utting
<b>Setting Address</b>	Tesco Stores Ltd, Kingston Park Centre, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE3 2FP
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2140333
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Explore Learning Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<b>Type of care</b>	Out of School 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Registered in 2007, Explore Learning operates from a one room unit within the Tesco Superstore at Kingston Park, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. It is an educational provision which focuses on supporting children to develop their knowledge and learning. Children from any area can attend the provision as it serves a wide area. Explore Learning is registered to provide care for 35 children aged from four to eight years at any one time and there are currently 204 children on roll. Children's sessions last a maximum of one hour and 15 minutes. Explore Learning opens seven days a week, in term times the provision opens from 15:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday, 10:00 to 18:00 Saturday and 10:00 to 16:00 Sunday. In school holidays the provision opens from 12:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday, Saturday from 10:00 to 18:00 and Sunday from 10:00 to 16:00. Explore Learning has sole use of a purpose built area, including one main room plus an office and one toilet and washbasin for sole use of the children and staff. Additional toilets are available within the store. The group is managed by a centre director and also employs two assistant directors and seven part-time tutors, all of whom are graduates.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a clean environment and are aware of good hygiene practices, such as washing their hands after visiting the bathroom. This good practice is reinforced by staff and reflected in a variety of wall posters displayed within the toilet area. All children have access to paper towels and anti-bacterial handwash, reducing the risk of illness and cross infection. All senior staff hold a valid first aid certificate which helps safeguard children's welfare. Good hygiene standards are maintained by staff who have a clear understanding of related policies and procedures which are well implemented. For example, staff ensure that the resources and equipment used by children are kept clean and in good order through regular checks and cleaning routines. This helps maintain a healthy environment for the children. A clear written policy regarding sick children and the effective recording of all accidents and emergency contacts further promotes children's health and well-being, positively safeguarding children.

Children have access to fresh drinking water throughout the session. Although children do not have food within the facility, the importance of a healthy lifestyle is actively promoted through a variety of themes and topics, particularly within the 'Surf Club'. For example, children recently completed a wall frieze depicting their favourite fruits and vegetables. Staff and parents discuss any specific dietary requirements a child may have whether for religious, cultural or medical reasons and the relevant information is recorded.

Children's opportunities for physical play are limited as this is primarily a facility for computer based learning. However, they do have sufficient opportunities to take a break from the computer and move around the room. In addition, children's fine motor skills are encouraged well through the use of the computer keyboard and mouse as well as access to a variety of writing materials and craft tools within the 'Surf Club'. Children have also completed a number of topics focusing on sport and keeping fit and so understand the connection between exercise and a healthy lifestyle.

### Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a well organised, safe environment. The premises have been fitted out specifically for computer based learning and so care has been taken to ensure work stations are safe. For example, all wires are channelled up between the desks with no trailing leads and all electrical equipment is regularly tested. This, combined with a specific risk assessment for the use of computers ensures risks are minimised. In the 'Surf Club', children have access to a good range of safe, well maintained toys and equipment suitable to their age and stage of development. A wide selection of activities are set out each day at child-height and children are encouraged to be completely independent in their play, helping themselves to paint, glue and craft resources as necessary.

Children are well protected because the setting has good safety procedures which are understood and effectively implemented by staff. There are effective security systems for entry into the facility and children sign themselves in and out of the setting observed by a parent or a member of staff. Their attendance is also recorded on the setting's computer. There is an up to date record in place of persons with permission to collect children and parents let staff know if there

is someone different collecting the children. Visitors are required to sign in and out of the setting with staff ensuring that visitors have no unsupervised access to children. Internally, many safety measures have been taken, including smoke alarms and socket covers. There is a detailed, recently reviewed risk assessment in place which is reinforced through the daily completion of a visual safety assessment of the facilities and resources, this being undertaken prior to the children's arrival. These daily checks are not currently recorded. There are good fire safety procedures in place with records kept of practise evacuations. These fire tests are timed to ensure that all staff and children participate.

Children are well protected by staff who are confident and secure in their knowledge of child protection policies and procedures. Suitable information and a clear written policy are in place, which ensures children's welfare is appropriately protected. Most senior staff have undertaken a safeguarding children course.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in an extremely welcoming, stimulating and inclusive environment where they are acknowledged and respected as individuals. Children are clearly happy to be at the centre, eagerly choose a zone to work in and know their password to log on.

Children concentrate well on the learning programmes and are appropriately challenged. Time spent with the child and their parents when they start at the centre and the use of continual assessment systems to monitor their ongoing progress, ensures that each child accesses a learning programme to meet their individual needs. The level of competency is increased as the child completes a variety of tasks in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics.

The use of maximum ratios of 1:6 ensures staff are always close at hand to support the children. Extremely attentive to their needs, staff are skilled at responding to children who need help and noticing when a child might be having difficulty with a particular question. Staff then spend time with the child working out the problem together, ensuring each child receives the individual time and attention they require. Children complete challenges as they work through the computer programme and receive Lizard cards which they can save up and trade for a prize. Children put their scores on a lizard challenge board, which enables them to see their progress, thereby building their confidence and helping to develop a positive attitude to learning. Upon completion of a challenge, children receive a certificate of achievement. This is presented in front of all the group who applaud them, ensuring that their achievement is recognised.

Children enjoy playing in the 'Surf Club' area at the end of each session. They are able to take part in a variety of activities including board games, art and crafts and computer games. Topics each month, such as the Olympics, Harry Potter and healthy eating further extend children's learning in a relaxed fun environment.

The centre also provides a number of specialist workshops, such as creative writing. Older children have the opportunity to debate issues that have been in the media over the past weeks and are invited to air their views on current topics.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Staff work hard to ensure that the individual needs of all children are met and that they are cared for in a consistent and appropriate manner, collecting good comprehensive information from parents in order to achieve this. Children learn about the wider world and other cultures through a variety of computer programmes and themes, such as the Olympics. However, there are few resources and books depicting images of positive, non-stereotypical roles, racial and cultural diversity or disability.

Children's behaviour is very good. They learn about sharing and valuing others through the excellent example provided by the staff. Staff are always there to gently support, praise and encourage children in their learning and activities, thereby developing their self-esteem, confidence and sense of belonging. Staff are calm and composed when they speak to children and employ good behaviour management techniques, explaining clearly and calmly why certain actions are not acceptable. The children are very happy and content in the group and respond well to encouragement from the staff. Practice is well supported by a detailed policy on behaviour management and recent relevant training.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are welcomed into the facility and there is an extremely positive attitude towards inclusion. Staff ensure these children are sensitively helped to fully participate in all activities which are adapted appropriately. The setting is proactive in ensuring appropriate training is taken, thereby developing their expertise in relation to the standard of care they offer to the children.

Parents benefit from clearly written information about the setting which gives details of important policies and procedures as well as academic information relating to the computer programmes. Parents receive feedback at the end of each session as well as a detailed progress meeting every six to eight weeks, ensuring they remain up to date with their child's ongoing progress. Very positive comments have been received from parents which include 'staff are good role models', 'excellent one to one support' and 'staff get to know children as individuals as well as learners'.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The setting has a comprehensive collection of policies and procedures in place which are understood by all staff and shared with parents, although the safeguarding children policy lacks some essential detail. Otherwise, all relevant records are in place, easily accessible and up to date ensuring individual care is provided. Documentation is well organised and confidentiality maintained. Positive links with parents ensure they are kept up to date about their child's learning and progress, and important documents, such as the registration certificate and public liability certificates are displayed prominently for parents and visitors to see.

Effective recruitment and vetting procedures are in place ensuring children are well protected and good induction systems and regular staff appraisals are established. Priority is given to ongoing personal development and staff are well supported and given clear direction through the focus and strong leadership skills displayed by the centre director. Staff ratios are high and there are systems in place to ensure these are maintained. The three senior members of staff all hold degrees and are working to gain childcare qualifications relevant to the ages of the children attending.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

### **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):

- develop safeguarding children policy to include procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff
- develop the range of resources throughout the setting to promote diversity and provide positive images of race, culture and disability.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)