



Explore Learning

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY304041
Inspection date	05 December 2005
Inspector	Melanie Calway
Setting Address	Sainsburys, 110 Oxney Road, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE1 5NG
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Registered person	Explore Learning Ltd
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	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.

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?

Explore Learning opened in 2003 and moved to its current premises in 2005. It is one of eight Explore Learning Centres to be opened. It operates from a one-room unit, within Sainsbury's Supermarket, Newark, Peterborough. The provision serves children from a wide catchment area.

Explore Learning is registered to provide 30 places for children between 5 and 8 years, although the centre can accommodate children up to the age of 14. There are currently 196 children from 5 to 8 years on roll. Each child's session lasts a maximum of 1 hour and 30 minutes and children may attend for 2 sessions a week. The group

supports children with special educational needs.

The group opens 7 days a week. Sessions during term time are 15:00 until 20:00 Mondays to Fridays, 10:00 until 18:00 on Saturdays and 10:00 until 16:00 on Sundays. Sessions also run during school holidays with the centre typically open from 10:00 until 18:00.

The group employs 15 staff with 5 staff working each session. The 3 core staff have completed degree courses and are in the process of undertaking further training in early years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because they are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment. Children use the toilet independently where individual paper towels are provided to reduce the risk of cross infection. A sign above the sink reminds children to wash their hands and staff also remind children verbally. There are clear procedures in the parent brochure and in the policies to remind parents to keep children, who are ill, away to reduce the risk of infection. Children's medical needs are met as four members of staff including the manager are trained in first aid and can care for injured children appropriately. Consent has been obtained for emergency advice or treatment so the staff can seek help in an emergency. Medicine is not normally administered as children only attend for one and a quarter hours but emergency medication will be administered if necessary and staff will seek any specialist training required. Procedures state clearly how medication should be recorded although the medicine record has not been set up. Children are able to rest and wind down after their tuition, in the Surf club area where a bean bag is provided in case they are tired. Children can move about freely during the session if they need to. Children can access fresh drinking water independently from a water dispenser and are actively encouraged to do so, especially when they first come in.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright and welcoming environment. The main room is a computer suite with an additional area where some alternative activities are available. A large colourful lizard chart, which is the club's incentive scheme is displayed on the wall, as well as some examples of children's writing to make the room child-friendly. The computers are arranged on desks with stools of appropriate height for the children attending. Children's safety is promoted because there is a thorough health and safety policy in place. All staff are given health and safety training as part of their induction and so understand their responsibilities. A written risk assessment includes the measures taken to reduce risk. Children learn how to keep themselves safe as they are reminded of safety rules, which are also published in the parent brochure.

For example they are asked to put items away after use and to treat equipment appropriately. Children are protected from the risk of fire as a clear evacuation plan is displayed in the room. Regular drills are held and children are talked through the procedure to ensure they understand it. A risk assessment is currently being carried out on the collection area as this is the supermarket car park. To keep children safe, staff practise evacuating to this point without the children. The room is kept secure as there is a lockable gate in the counter which is manned by the staff and a system for recording visitors. Children's welfare is safe guarded because staff are clear about their responsibility to report child protection concerns. The relevant contact numbers are displayed in the office. The setting ensures that all staff are vetted and the open plan environment adds to children's safety as they are never on their own with adults.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children come eagerly into the setting and quickly settle to work on the computers, where they start on programmes of English and Maths tuition. They are made to feel welcome as staff greet them and chat to them about their day. Their independence is encouraged as they sign themselves in. Support is given to younger children to help them put down the right time. They are then invited to hang their coats up and help themselves to a drink of water before they start. Some of the coat hooks are too high for smaller children to do this independently. Children benefit from plenty of adult support, especially at quieter times, as the tutors move around the room and respond to queries or requests for help. Children are able to choose what to work on and can work independently. Programmes and targets are set in advance in consultation with parents and children. Children are encouraged to practise areas where they feel less confident. Children's confidence and self-esteem are promoted well as staff give children praise and encouragement for their achievements. Staff say 'that's brilliant' and do high hand claps with children. A child attending a taster session is told that it doesn't matter here if you get things wrong, you can practise things you find tricky at school. An incentive scheme is used to help motivate children and reward them. Children learn to respect each others' achievements as they watch and applaud while certificates are given out. After an hours tuition children are able to wind down in the Surf club area, where some alternative activities such as drawing, books and games are offered. Children are encouraged to socialise and play games with other children and adults at this time. However these activities are not presented attractively enough to encourage children to use them or access all of the resources independently and as a result some children continue to play on the computers.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are made to feel welcome in the setting whatever their background or level of ability. A notice on the wall wishes children from different cultural backgrounds a happy Diwali or Eid festival so children learn to develop a respect for other cultures. Tutors work with children on an individual basis and help children to progress from their different starting points. Children with special educational needs are well

supported. The setting has worked with children with a range of conditions and is proactive in including all children, for example hearing loops are made available for children, who find headphones difficult to use. Staff attend training to ensure they have the skills to work with children with differing abilities. Children behave well. Staff provide good role models and talk to children quietly and calmly. Children and parents are asked to agree to the rules of the setting before starting so children know what is expected of them. Inappropriate behaviour is handled sensitively. Children are helped to progress because communication with parents is excellent. Clear and attractive information about the aims of the setting are available in the parent brochure. The manager meets with parents before children start and regular consultations are held to keep parents up to date with their children's progress. A complaints procedure is in place and parents know how to communicate their concerns. A complaints log has not been set up in line with recent changes in regulations.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by suitable and experienced staff. The manager and two deputies are graduates who are also undertaking in-house childcare training to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to work with children. They cascade this training to all other staff. All staff are vetted and a rigorous recruitment procedure and ongoing staff appraisals means that their suitability is monitored. Staff are deployed well to meet children's needs. Most of the necessary documentation is in place and is maintained to a high standard. Clear policies and procedures are in place and available for parents and staff. Overall the needs of the children attending are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the first inspection since registration.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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

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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):

- organise and resource the Surf club area better to make the alternative activities more attractive to children and to further develop their independence and creativity
- set up a record of complaints by parents in line with new regulations.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk