



Excel Childcare

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY229507
Inspection date	19 October 2005
Inspector	Christine Jacqueline Davies
Setting Address	96 Forest Hill Road, London, SE22 0RS
Telephone number	0208 299 6387
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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 is owned by a private provider and has been registered since 2002. It operates from premises located in East Dulwich, within the London Borough of Southwark. The nursery serves families in the local community of East Dulwich. The nursery serves families from the local community and surrounding areas.

Children are accommodated on the ground and first floor of the premises and are grouped according to their age range. There is also a separate portakabin which is used by the children. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open weekdays from 08.00 to 18.00 throughout the year. Both full day and sessional places are available. A maximum of 35 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 24 children aged from 0 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 14 children aged 3 and 4 years receive funding for nursery education. The setting supports children who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 9 staff, including the manager, of which 7 of the staff hold an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children are cared for in a clean environment. Good hygiene routines such as wearing disposable gloves during nappy changes and ensuring the no-shoe policy in the baby room is adhered to, reduce the risk of spread of infection. However the nappy changing facilities in the 'portakabin' do not provide sufficient ventilation which poses a risk to children's health. Children are learning the importance of personal hygiene but are not consistently encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating snacks or after using the toilet.

Procedures are in place for administering and storing medication, however staff are not secure in their understanding of this, so as a consequence are unable to implement this procedure effectively. For example, some staff are giving children unlabelled, un-prescribed medication which conflicts with nursery policy and compromises children's safety and well being. Staff do not rigorously apply medication procedures when obtaining parental consent to give medication. For example, medication charts are signed in advance by parents and blanket consent has been obtained so that medication can be given to children on an 'if needed' basis. This means that children's welfare is not safeguarded. A record of accidents is maintained and there are at least two staff on the premises who hold a current first aid certificate. This enables staff to respond to accidents appropriately should an accident occur.

Children are beginning to understand the importance of a healthy diet. Staff prepare a broad range of snacks, which includes fruit and vegetables to help children develop healthy eating practices. However the good health of children is not entirely promoted as not all staff responsible for food handling have received basic food hygiene training. Menus are planned in advance and lunch is provided by an outside catering company. Meals are varied to meet individual needs and preferences. Special dietary requirements are complied with which ensures children remain healthy. Children have daily opportunities to take part in physical play activities, helping them to keep fit and maintain good health. However, this is not well planned and consequently opportunities are not necessarily based on building upon children's existing skills.

Staff are following the Birth to three matters framework well in the baby room and the children settle well. Children have good relationships with the staff who interact in a gentle and supportive manner encouraging children to feel happy to go to them for cuddles and reassurance, developing healthy independence to support their emotional well-being. They are able to rest and be active according to their individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a generally safe environment. Staff undertake regular risk assessments of the premises and equipment used, helping to protect children and keep them safe from harm. Children benefit from a good range of safety measures, for example, buzzer entry system, fire extinguishers, and a secure outdoor area. However staff are not always vigilant in protecting children from potential hazards in the pre-school room kitchen, as safety gates used to prevent access to this area, are not always secured. There is sufficient child size furniture to encourage children's independence and children are able to access toys and equipment which meets safety standards. Children are generally safe as they are always supervised very closely when participating in activities and are never left unattended. They are encouraged to move around safely, such as not running indoors and to be aware of others and are learning the importance of rules and boundaries to help keep them safe, such as helping to tidy away toys, or using outdoor apparatus safely.

Children benefit from using the 'wrap around service' which enables part time children to attend another early years provision such as a nursery class, helping to promote continuity in children's care and education. However, off site, children's safety and welfare is compromised, as the registered person has not obtained written parental consent for children to use local transport or minicabs, when being dropped off or collected from another setting. Staff working with children receive some training to help them be aware of child protection issues should concerns arise, however, current procedures are not in line with local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

There are major differences between the quality of experiences offered to children under 2 years and those provided for children aged 2 to 3 years. Children under 2 years are based in the baby room. They receive lots of cuddles and have a strong bond with the staff that care for them. This increases their sense of well-being. They benefit from routines which are consistent with their experiences at home. Staff have recently attended training in the Birth to three framework and individual staff are identified to take the lead on this, successfully adapting activities such as singing, storytelling and mark making to promote younger children's learning. Young children's physical development is well promoted within the nursery, as staff support them with praise and encouragement as they practice mobility skills. They play

imaginatively using all their senses; developing early communication skills as they attract the attention of staff who respond to their sounds, promoting their confidence and self-esteem.

Children aged 2 to 3 years do not benefit from a good range of activities. Although children are familiar with the daily routine and can make some choices about their play, opportunities provided are limited and do not sufficiently retain children's interests or concentration. This results in children becoming easily bored and restless and flitting between activities. Staff have an insecure knowledge of child development when planning activities and are unable to effectively support children to learn new skills. This hinders their achievements. Children have insufficient opportunities to enjoy and experiment with a wide range of natural and malleable materials such as sand, water and clay, which consequently hinders children's knowledge of new concepts, ideas and tactile sensory experiences.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is inadequate. Children do not experience consistent opportunities to make good progress and extend their learning, because staff have an insecure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Although staff record activities under each area, not all aspects are covered sufficiently and lack detail. Staff do not use the stepping stones to clearly identify children's achievements and plan the next step in their learning. As a result, children are not suitably challenged and make limited progress.

Despite this, the children demonstrate growing independence skills and are able to select resources with confidence. They show a good level of personal and social skills and are able to make close friendships with their peers. Children behave generally well and are aware of boundaries set within the nursery. Children communicate generally well, and are confident speakers. They engage easily in conversations with each other and adults, steadily developing their confidence and self-esteem. Children enjoy stories and singing songs which helps to develop their memory and aid their listening skills. They engage in activities such as drawing and sewing which helps to develop their hand-eye coordination and hand writing skills. However, there are many missed opportunities for children to write spontaneously and use writing for various purposes, for example, writing lists, labelling their own work or writing stories.

A selection of activities to support children's development in maths such as water play, number dominoes and puzzles are available to children. However, staff do not consistently use opportunities to help children develop their understanding of calculation, measuring and comparison in terms of length and weight. Children are able to count independently between 1-10 which helps build their confidence, but have little opportunity to use this knowledge to solve simple number problems during everyday practical activities.

Children are able to explore their creativity through everyday activities, for example, when using sand, water, and paint but there is little thought to extending children's imagination as these activities are poorly planned. Opportunities for children to experience the roles of others in the community are insufficient as role play resources

are poor. So as a consequence hinders the development of their imaginative skills and awareness of others.

Children have insufficient opportunities to learn about the local community, different cultures and the natural environment as few activities are provided to strengthen children's awareness of the world in which they live and develop their self esteem. Children have regular opportunities to develop their physical skills when playing in the garden and are increasingly able to negotiate space and have control of their bodies. However, poor planning in this area means that some equipment, provides little challenge for those children who are more confident and able.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well and are generally happy and secure in their environment. They benefit from consistent care, and home routines are followed which ensures that their individual needs are met, promoting their well being. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff regularly praise children and recognise their achievements, such as when they tidy up or complete a task. This helps to raise children's self esteem and confidence. Children are generally well behaved, and polite in response to the expectations of staff. Resources that promote a positive view of the wider world are limited, however a small range of books and puzzles and dolls, reflecting diversity, help children to understand and explore their own ideas and beliefs and help them to become aware of differences. The nursery welcomes children with additional needs and actively promotes inclusion. There is a named special needs coordinator, who is familiar with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and the procedures for accessing external support as necessary.

Parents are welcome in the group and are able to receive appropriate feedback with regard to how their child has been throughout the day. Parents are able to discuss their child's individual needs regarding feeding, eating, sleeping and activities completed. However, parents do not receive sufficient information about their child's individual development as they do not have access to assessment records and staff have not identified clear targets to build on. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is inadequate. Formal meetings regarding children's progress are held on a yearly basis. Parents are aware of the early learning goals, as some information is displayed in the preschool room. However plans are not routinely shared with parents and do not identify individual learning intentions or targets. So as a result, parents are not always actively encouraged to be involved in their child's learning which limits the children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Procedures are in place for the recruitment and vetting of staff so that adults providing care and looking after children are suitable to do so. The induction

programme enables staff to become familiar with the groups policies and procedures, however, procedures are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all staff are secure in their understanding of administering medication, and child protection. Satisfactory record keeping is in place so that children's care needs are addressed and well met. However, children's welfare is not fully safeguarded as parental consent to use local transport has not been obtained. Children are able to move around the premises while being directly supervised, to select resources and use play equipment. However the schedule of activities for children over 20 months old is poorly organised and provides children with little variety and choice, hindering their learning and development.

Leadership and management of nursery education is inadequate. Staff are not given sufficient support to deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum. This means that areas of weakness are not addressed by managers and staff are not helped to develop their skills and knowledge. Staff are not confident in their understanding of how children learn and how to provide for children to ensure they progress. Although some staff are qualified and experienced they do not assess the impact of the activities on the children and how these can be improved. The management team do not have systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision. This has an adverse effect on children's development and progress and results in inconsistencies in children's learning. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection identified four main areas for improvement: the deployment of staff in the toddler room to ensure that minimum staffing levels are met; the planning of activities to ensure that children's needs are met and that they helped to progress in all areas of development; monitoring of children's progress and the use of observations to provide for their individual needs; the range of natural and tactile materials for babies and toddlers to have sensory experiences and toys and equipment on offer to the 3 and 4-year-olds.

The registered person was also required to ensure that Ofsted is informed about any changes to the person in charge or to adults working on the premises which has now been implemented.

Since the last inspection, some improvements have been made. The registered person has ensured that there are always a minimum of two staff in the room for toddlers at all times which enables children's welfare to be safeguarded. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework to guide planning and observations are now in place. However not all staff fully understand how to effectively to monitor and record children's progress, to help promote younger children's learning. Equipment such as musical toys and collage materials have been purchased but the range of tactile and sensory experiences for younger children remains poor.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted has received one complaint, since the last inspection relating to National Standard 2: Organisation. The complaint related to staff deployment and the supervision of trainees under 17 years within the premises, to ensure the safety, welfare and development of children. We carried out an investigation on 22 July 2005. We found no evidence that the provider was not complying with the National Standards. We took no further action 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 other than those made to Ofsted.

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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:

- ensure that procedures regarding medication are understood and implemented by all staff
- plan and provide a suitable range of activities for children age 2-3 years, which are appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs

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:

- ensure rigorous systems are in place to monitor and evaluate nursery education provision
- develop assessment procedures to identify individual learning needs of children and track their progress and ensure that these are shared with

parents

- increase staff's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to improve the quality of teaching and children's learning

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 *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk