



Explore Learning

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY307430
Inspection date	06 December 2005
Inspector	Sheila Dawn Flounders
Setting Address	Sainsburys Retail Park, Tachbrook Park Drive, Warwick, Warwickshire, CV34 6RH
Telephone number	01926 422800
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Registered person	Explore Learning Ltd (4117281)
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 is one of several settings run by Explore Learning Ltd to provide computer based mathematics and English tuition for children. It opened in 2004 and operates from a specially fitted room inside the Sainsbury's store in Tachbrook Park, Warwick. A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. The facility is open each weekday from 15.00 to 20.00 during term time and in school holidays from 10.00 to 18.00. They are also open from 10.00 to 18.00 on Saturdays and 10.00 to 16.00 on Sundays all year round.

There are currently 180 children aged from 5 to 14 years on roll. Children come from

a wide catchment area and attend for a maximum of 1 hour 15 minutes. The setting currently supports a number of children with additional needs and is also able to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 18 staff, most of whom hold or are working towards an academic qualifications. The full-time staff are working towards an early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean environment where they are encouraged to be responsible for their own personal hygiene. They are provided with liquid soap and individual paper towels to allow them to wash their hands without the risk of spreading infection. Occasionally staff check to see if they have done so correctly which helps the children to learn about healthy living. Children stay healthy because there is a robust sickness policy in place, which means they do not attend when they are ill and parents are made aware that they may need to collect them early if they become unwell. Children are further protected from cross infection due to the regular cleaning routines, with anti-bacterial wipes used to clean the headphones, which most of the children use, and the surfaces around the work stations. Children have good access to drinks during their time at the centre and are able to go across to the water dispenser and help themselves throughout their session. They do not have other drinks or food due to the nature of the activities and the limited length of their stay. Children have their health needs met because the setting works with parents to ensure they are aware of any allergies the children have and any life saving medication that may be necessary. Other medication will not be administered. There is always a first aider on site to treat any accidents, although the first aid kit does not contain appropriate gloves to use during treatment. Children do not have opportunities for physical play whilst attending the setting and parents are aware of this as their purpose for attending is computer based learning. However, they do have sufficient opportunities to take a break from the computer work stations and move around the room as they access the craft activities or go over to move their stickers on the achievement wall.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment where as yet they have had no accidents. Documentation is in place ready to record any accidents but does not currently have space for parental signatures. Children use premises which were fitted out specifically for computer based learning, with care taken to ensure that the work stations are safe, such as all the wires being channelled up between the desks as they are grouped together and perspex used for the partitions. Children access suitable and safe equipment which is regularly checked and they can use adjustable chairs, although a specific risk assessment for the use of

computers has not been undertaken. Other suitable risk assessments are maintained and staff do a daily check of the premises. Children are kept safe within the premises due to the good systems in place for entry, so that staff have to use a buzzer to release the gate opening mechanism thus preventing unauthorised entry. Adults bringing or collecting children do not normally enter the setting, they remain at the other side of the reception desk. Children are only allowed to leave with people nominated by their parents. Children learn to protect themselves by the regular emergency evacuations which are timed to ensure that all children and staff participate. They are further protected because staff understand their role in child protection and know when and how to take action, although no one has attended training on the local procedures. The organisation of the session ensures that children are under constant supervision.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop confidence and self-esteem as they make their own way through the learning programmes, with only as much adult support as they require. Staff are always close at hand with maximum ratios of 1 to 6 maintained. They are skilled at seeing when a child needs assistance and then they work through the problem together, either on the computer or using paper. The programmes in use vary from simple sums at the start of a level or for younger children, through to problem solving scenarios; from simple word insertion activities to complex comprehension activities and story writing ideas. Children are interested in what they do and are keen to move onto the next levels, asking to go on 'even harder' problems. They spend a maximum of an hour working on the computers and then happily make their way to move their markers up the 'lizard' wall and then over to the quiet area. Here they either engage in craft activities, with adult supervision available if they require it, or read a book. They are confident to ask questions of the staff about what they are doing and build up good, positive relationships with them. Staff are able to explain problems at the correct level of understanding for each child. Children decide which part of the programme they want to tackle next from a pre-chosen selection loaded by staff into their own database on the computer, according to their ability and progress. They are able to work at their own pace with built in rewards when they achieve an acceptable score at the end of each session, which can eventually be exchanged for gifts. They constantly acquire new knowledge and skills and respond well to the challenges within each level of the programmes, with the rewards motivating them to continue their individual programme.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs met well, including those with additional needs. They are for example, able to use different chairs and decide if they want to use the headphones or not. They attend at various times to suit their own commitments, but not more than twice in a week. Parents provide detailed initial information about their child to staff and are well informed about individual progress at the end of each

session, through reports and during regular 'parent conferences' where staff discuss what the next stage is for each child. Children have a sense of belonging in the setting and happily give some of their creative efforts to be displayed on the wall as well as taking the rest home to share with their families. They particularly enjoy going over and moving their stickers up the various paths on the 'lizard' wall and will usually remember where they are next time they attend. Children understand reasonable behaviour and get on very well with each other and with the staff. They have been made aware of the rules of the setting and parents are encouraged to ensure that they abide by them. Children develop self-esteem and respect for others as they all join in to congratulate those who receive an achievement certificate for finishing their particular challenge with clapping and cheering. Those receiving the certificate proudly go and show it to their parents. Children are aware of their own needs, such as when they want to have a break from the computer or when they want to get a drink. They are encouraged to realise that the needs of others are different, such as not disturbing those who are still in the middle of a session when they have finished. Children become aware of wider society as they access books and computer programmes which provide positive images of diversity.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The centre is well organised with all necessary documentation, policies and procedures in place and accurately maintained. These work to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and help them to make a positive contribution to the setting. They are all available to parents. All paperwork is confidentially stored either in the office or behind the reception desk. The centre maintains high staff ratios and has good systems in place to get extra cover for emergencies, staff sickness or holidays. They have robust vetting procedures which ensure that children are only cared for by suitable people. Staff receive induction when they start and regular appraisals with the manager through which they are able to access ongoing training opportunities. Many of the part time staff are students studying to degree level and the full time staff are also working to gain childcare qualifications relevant to the ages of the children attending. Staff have a good awareness of what their role is and know what the programmes the children follow involve and thus what they need to do to support them in their learning. Good use is made of space within the centre to provide plenty of work stations, so that children do not often have to wait to use a computer even though they attend at flexible times, alongside a dedicated area for the craft activities at the end of the sessions. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At registration the setting was asked to make adjustments to their policies to include the procedure to be followed if a child was to become ill, which they have since done. Also to meet any requirements set by the Fire Officer when he visited, however he made no recommendations.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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):

- ensure that parents sign any accident or incident records
- extend the risk assessments, to include the use of the computers by children
- ensure that staff are aware of local Child Protection procedures
- ensure that gloves are available for first aid treatment.

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