



Home from Home Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	129350
Inspection date	15 September 2006
Inspector	Jane Mount
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Registered person	Elizabeth Curtis
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 good. The registered person meets 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?

Home from Home Kindergarten opened in 1995. It is one of two privately owned nurseries and cares for children from two years to under eight years. The other nursery which is close by cares for the under two's. Home from Home Kindergarten operates from the Cricket Pavilion in Northchurch, near Berkhamsted. It has the use of a large playroom plus two other rooms, a kitchen and toilet facilities. Outside play facilities are also available.

A maximum of 26 children aged from one year to under eight years may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 52 children on roll and includes five who receive funding for early education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities. They are also able to support children who speak English as an additional language but currently none attend.

Home from Home Kindergarten is open from 08:00 to 17:45 each weekday for 50 weeks of the year. Children can attend a variety of sessions, including before and after nursery and school care for children up to eight years. The setting serves the local and wider catchment areas.

There are six staff who work with the children. All staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a qualified teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a healthy, balanced diet. They enjoy nutritious meals and snacks with meals freshly prepared and cooked on the premises. Menu's are displayed to inform parents and they take account of children's individual dietary needs. Mealtimes are used as a time for sharing and social interaction and good table manners are promoted by staff. Children participate in mealtimes and their independence is encouraged as they pour their own drinks and serve their own vegetables at lunch time. Children have opportunities to learn about healthy eating through discussion and play. During a recent 'healthy living' topic they visited a local supermarket. Children were able to see a varied selection of fruits and vegetables for sale and a selection were bought. They delighted in making soup on their return to nursery.

Children's health is promoted and cross-infection minimised as staff follow clear health and hygiene policies and procedures. For example, staff wear disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies, tables are cleaned before and after eating and staff always wash their hands prior to preparing or handling food. Children are cared for in an environment where they learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. Support and guidance from staff helps children to gain a clear understanding of good hygiene practices to ensure they stay healthy. For example, staff help children to wipe their noses and dispose of tissues appropriately and older children are encouraged to wipe their own noses with tissues easily accessible. Most children understand they must wash their hands after visiting the toilet or before eating and when asked some children are able to explain the reason why it is important.

Children are able to take part in a varied range of activities which contribute to their physical development and promotes a positive attitude towards exercise. They are able to develop self-confidence in their physical skills as they use a varied range of indoor and outdoor equipment on a daily basis. Resources allow them to run, jump,

climb and balance. Children show expertise as they ride their bikes and scooters skilfully around obstacles or throw and catch balls. Children can rest or sleep according to their needs and this is always done in close consultation with parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a child friendly environment where they can move around safely because staff have a sound knowledge of health and safety procedures. Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised because staff are vigilant and any potential risks are identified and addressed through risk assessments. Efficient safety precautions are in place, such as effective supervision of children in the outside play area and regular emergency evacuation practises. There are good security systems in place and supervising entry to the nursery is well managed by staff. The outer door is locked with a door buzzer and coded button system in place and all visitors are asked to sign in and out. This ensures no unauthorised persons enter and that children are not at risk.

Children can independently access a varied range of safe resources and activities. Toys and equipment are developmentally appropriate and sufficiently challenging so children are interested and motivated in their play. Areas are organised to encourage children's independence and to promote their development and learning. For example, low level storage units are used to encourage children to freely access toys and equipment. The trays generally have written labels alongside pictures which easily informs children of the contents of the trays. Resources are well maintained and regularly checked by staff to ensure they are clean and safe.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a sound knowledge of child protection and give priority to children's safety and welfare. There is a comprehensive child protection policy in place which all staff are aware of and know how to implement. Children are protected from harm and neglect because staff are aware of recording and reporting procedures if they had any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children feel at ease in the nursery environment and separate happily from their parents or carers. The daily routine has a balance of adult led and child initiated play. They experience a varied range of activities and play opportunities which contributes positively to their overall development and they enthusiastically explore and investigate their environment. Children's learning is promoted through the staff's strong knowledge of child development and the 'Birth to three matters' framework which they implement well. Staff use the framework to plan and organise play for younger children and children's assessment records are also linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Children's independence is encouraged as they are able to move around freely and

make independent choices about their chosen activity. They have regular opportunities to experience creative play such as paint, sand and water. They delight in using a variety of colours when painting a picture or enjoy exploring the texture of sand in the sand tray. Children show an interest in books and can be regularly seen sitting in the book corner looking at their favourite book. They listen attentively at story time and join in confidently when asked about the story. Children's communication skills are supported well by staff who ask open ended questions and children listen and respond. For example, at circle time they discussed the weather and all the children were interested and involved in the discussion. Children actively engage in imaginative play and delight in dressing up and having a tea party or taking the 'baby' outside to play in the garden.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound understanding and knowledge of the Foundation Stage which ensures children are able to take part in activities that enable them to progress in all areas of learning. Children are motivated in their play and making good progress towards the early learning goals with resources organised to allow children to make choices and gain independence. Staff provide opportunities to encourage children to think and to demonstrate what they know and understand and are also able to sensitively intervene to provide explanations when needed. Staff build trusting relationships with children and are very supportive. They talk about safety and behaviour within routines and children's behaviour is managed in a calm manner which helps to promote children's self-esteem.

Staff observe and assess children to identify their achievements and progress over time. However, observations are not always flexible or spontaneous and may not always accurately reflect children's achievements as they are not incorporated into the daily routine. Children's assessment records are systematic and informative and linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals. The information gained from children's assessments is used to inform future planning. Curriculum plans are linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals. Short term plans show clear learning intentions and are evaluated, however do not show how activities will be adapted to suit individual children who learn at different rates or who have a particular need.

Children arrive happy, quickly settle and engage in activities. They are aware of boundaries and behavioural expectations, for example, sharing and taking turns. Children show independence skills through being able to access the environment. For example, going to the toilet on their own or choosing resources to play with. Children are regularly praised by staff and children eagerly participate in activities and are excited to learn. Children have regular opportunities to experience music, imaginative play and explore varied materials and media on a daily basis. As part of a music topic they delight in making 'Guiro's' and then using them to make music along with other musical instruments such as shakers, tambourines and cymbals which are available on the music table. Children can access drawing and writing materials. Children are keen to use their imagination and enjoy talking to each other on their mobile phones. Mathematical concepts are reinforced through books, singing and counting during the daily routine. Children show confidence and understanding in their mathematical learning through varied activities which involve numbers, shapes,

patterns and problem solving. For example, talking in a small group about the differences between a rectangle and a square and then successfully being able to find similar shapes in the nursery and matching them on their return. Children explore concepts such as quantity and volume through sand and water play.

Children listen and respond with enjoyment when listening to stories, songs and rhymes and they are able to concentrate well to the end of a book. They understand that print carries meaning and are becoming familiar with the written word, such as, on labelled toy boxes or on their name bags. Children are beginning to link sounds to letters through the use of 'Jolly Phonics' and when playing alphabet lotto are confidently able to say that 'm' is for milk and 'r' is for rabbit. Children's physical skills are fostered with regular opportunities to exercise within the daily routine and physical play is incorporated in the planning of children's activities. They show control as they run and jump and they are able to move with control and coordination as they ride their bikes. Children have access to resources that develop their knowledge and understanding of technology and the world. For example, they confidently use a tape recorder to record their voices during a body percussion music session and delight in rewinding the tape back to listen to it again. Children learn about past and present through talking about each others families. They develop a sense of belonging as they regularly go for walks in the local community. For example, buying stamps from the post office before posting a letter or visits to the library.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others is through the varied range of activities and resources that they take part in. For example, children begin to appreciate the customs and cultures of others through learning about festivals such as Divali. Displays and posters throughout the nursery also reflect positive images and help children become aware of the wider society. Children have regular opportunities to learn about the local community. For example, visits to the library to find reference books for topics, walks in the nearby countryside to observe the changing seasons and visits from the local community policeman.

Children behave well throughout the nursery. They understand responsible behaviour and are beginning to learn right from wrong. Children are learning to play together and to share toys and resources and are developing an understanding of each others needs. Children are beginning to take turns and are learning to share. For example, during a music activity children understood they had to wait their turn to try a particular musical instrument and knew they would have their turn. Behaviour is dealt with in ways appropriate to the child's level of understanding with staff giving clear explanations as to why some behaviour may be inappropriate and the affects it may have on others. For example, it was explained to a child they needed to be careful with the book because if it was torn no-one else would be able to look at it. Children are taught to be polite to others and the staff are good role models. Children can be regularly heard saying 'please' and thank-you'. Staff have systems available to provide appropriate care and support to children who have English as an additional language but at the time of inspection there were no children attending. There are

effective strategies in place for children with learning difficulties or disabilities. The special needs coordinator is pro-active in ensuring that appropriate action is taken when a child is identified or admitted with a particular need. All children are fully included and their families are supported. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the effective relationships that staff have developed with parents and carers and this significantly contributes to their well-being. A clear settling-in programme ensures children settle well and become secure in their surroundings. Children's individual needs are effectively met as staff obtain information from parents prior to the child starting at the nursery. Children's daily achievements are discussed with parents and parents also receive written information of their child's day. An informative notice board, newsletters and a prospectus are also used to inform parents about the provision. Information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage is shared with parents verbally with some written information also available. Staff actively encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning. For example, through requests for items from home for themes and topics to support children's learning. Parents are welcomed into the setting and open mornings are used to inform parents of children's development and progress. Parent questionnaires are used as a way of monitoring the quality of the care and education provided. Parents spoken to at inspection praised the nursery and felt the environment is welcoming and stimulating. They spoke positively of staff and felt fully informed of the progress their children are making.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a setting where their needs are met well because staff, time and resources are effectively organised. Staff work well together as a team and are supportive of each other. Recruitment procedures ensure children are cared for by staff who have relevant experience, qualifications, knowledge and skills to do their jobs effectively. Children are safeguarded because appropriate checks are completed on all staff and information is recorded correctly. Any persons, such as visitors, who have not been vetted would not have unsupervised access to children and all staff are fully aware of this.

Clear induction systems ensure staff are fully informed of the settings policies and procedures and these are implemented well. Training needs are identified through annual staff appraisals and staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Children are cared for by staff who have a sound knowledge of child development and all staff hold an early years child care qualification. Staff are well informed and keep up to date with current child care practices through regular staff training. Documentation for the efficient and safe management of the provision and to promote the welfare, care and learning is in place. However, there is not a written policy on taking and collecting procedures for children attending local schools and nurseries.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. The management team

which includes the provider, manager and deputy work well together. They have a clear vision of the needs of the children and the nursery and are positive role models. Staff are supported through regular staff meetings and information from staff meetings is used to monitor and evaluate the quality of care and education provided within the setting. All issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was set one action which was to ensure the conditions of registration were adhered to at all times. This related to children from Home from Homes nearby nursery for children under two years visiting prior to their second birthday in preparation for moving up to the older nursery when they are two. Children's safety and well-being are safeguarded as the provider immediately stopped all transitional visits and applied to Ofsted for a change to their registration so they could care for children aged from one year at the older nursery. This has been agreed and children approaching their second birthday are again able to complete transitional visits prior to commencing at the nursery.

At the last inspection for nursery education the provider was set two recommendations. They were to ensure older and more able children are offered appropriate challenges and to increase opportunities for children to build and construct. Children's development and learning are promoted because activities for more able children are planned for to ensure they are sufficiently challenging. Also, children are able to independently select from a variety of resources which develop their building and construction skills, such as, lego and duplo.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted 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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 a written policy which includes procedures for taking and collecting children to and from local schools and nurseries.

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 short term planning to ensure activity plans are used more often and show how activities can be adapted to suit individual children who learn at a different rate
- ensure observations are more spontaneous, flexible and sufficiently linked to children's daily learning opportunities.

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