



## **The Early Childhood Bus**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY286969
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 April 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Maura Pigram

<b>Setting Address</b>	Heathlands Drive, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 5AY
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<b>Telephone number</b>	01727 766707
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**E-mail**

<b>Registered person</b>	Edward James Johnson
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
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<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care
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## 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.
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### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Early Childhood vehicle registered in 2004 and serves the local area of Hertfordshire and surrounding counties. No children were in attendance at the time of inspection. The vehicle is available to supply childcare for children of parents attending conferences and special occasions such as weddings. It is also used by parents on other occasional times. A maximum of twelve children may attend at any one time from birth to eight years. Children up to eleven years may attend. A variety of sessions operate and times and location vary to suit the needs of children and parents.

The children have use of two levels which include child height work and play defined play areas, a secure outside area, a disabled toilet and changing area. There is a fully fitted kitchen which is used by the staff and a disabled access.

There are systems in place to support children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language. Four staff are employed and all including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. All staff attend ongoing training and some are working towards higher qualifications in childcare.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The provider demonstrates a clear understanding of how children's health is promoted. There are clear and detailed systems in place to gather comprehensive information from parents regarding medical needs, dietary needs and allergies. These are fully discussed with parents. Parents of young children and babies may supply food for their children if they wish. Through discussion and menu samples, the provider demonstrates a sound understanding of providing a balanced and varied diet including the need to have drinking water available at all times. Nutritious meals and snacks are offered which include fresh organic fruit and vegetables. As a result of this, evidence suggests that the children's dietary needs are met and they are well nourished.

Children who attend are protected from cross infection because there are sound systems in place. The provider has a detailed and informative policy in place regarding exclusion of children who have a contagious illness. The provider talks about using resources from the Health Promotion Unit to develop children's awareness of healthy living. The team also use everyday activities to help the children make healthy choices. Examples of this include promoting good personal hygiene habits, providing healthy snacks such as grapes, bananas and bread sticks and introducing the children to related story and activity books.

The provider outlines how children are given ample opportunities for physical play outdoors. He explains how a secure outdoor area is provided with suitable resources such as wheeled cars, soft play cubes for climbing and a trampoline for jumping. Through discussion and photographs the provider shows how children and the team explore the nearby area such as the grounds the vehicle is parked in. During this time the children take pleasure from climbing trees or playing organised games. When they are outside the listen to their hearts going fast after physical play and learn how to recognise when they are thirsty or tired through the interaction from the experienced staff. Children can rest or sleep according to their needs.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are cared for in a secure and welcoming indoor environment. The provider has taken action to ensure that risks in the vehicle have been minimised, so that children can play safely. A sound understanding of maintaining children's safety means that they are able to move freely around the vehicle. Potential hazards have been addressed through the use of a safety gate and electrical socket covers. Children's safety away from the vehicle is supported through the close supervision of the staff and suitable explanations to children on how to keep themselves safe when they are outside. This develops their understanding of how to stay safe. Evacuation procedures are practised with the staff and children on a regular basis, although these are not recorded. This means that monitoring of this procedure with the children is not fully effective.

From discussion and photographs seen, the provider demonstrates a sound awareness of enabling the children to play confidently and safely through staff closely supervising and supporting when necessary. Children are kept safe because resources and toys conform to safety standards and are stored safely, small pieces are kept away from younger children and older children are made aware of this. There are robust systems in place to ensure resources are clean and checked for damage regularly.

The provider talks about how children's welfare is protected and takes positive action to ensure all staff are well informed of procedures to follow if they have any concerns. A detailed child protection policy is in place and staff have attended relevant training. Risk assessments are carried out on venues visited. However, daily risk assessments are informally completed and not recorded. This means that staff take some steps to minimise potential hazards to the children.

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

The provision is good.

The provider demonstrates an effective awareness of the importance of enabling children feel secure and settled. For example the provider ensures that favourite activities such as sand, water and painting are easily seen when the children enter the vehicle. Younger children have bright and high quality resources such as interactive wooden sensory toys, soft animals and puppets to play with.

The setting has a broad range of suitable resources which are accessible to children of differing ages. This means that they participate in a stimulating range of activities that promote their development and learning. The provider talks about developing children's language and understanding through reading stories, exploring items together and sharing of experiences. Self-esteem and enjoyment is very well promoted as effective use is made of both indoor and outdoor areas. Areas inside the vehicle are set out into play and learning zones such as an art and craft area, a home area, an area for babies and younger children and a very accessible and comfortable book area. Here children are able to choose from a wide range of books including ones which give moral messages. Babies can enjoy exploring items from treasure baskets.

The detailed information obtained from parents at registration gives staff useful

knowledge to organise activities suitable for the children attending. Individual needs are very well met as the setting carries out effective planning which includes starting points, learning outcomes and links to the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Photographs seen of happy and involved children show them making models of robots using junk materials. The provider talks about how this activity developed from the children's ideas. Throughout the process they are encouraged to talk about their pieces of detailed work. This means that the children are valued and listened to. Talking about the activity means that children's language and understanding is developed and they are helped to make decisions. The provider discusses daily opportunities to develop physical skills such as using the secure outdoor space and the local area on which the vehicle visits. Examples of this include Tewinbury Farm and Putteridge Bury Conference Centre. On such visits activities are organised to suit the interests of the children such as exploring a maze or the grounds of the property.

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

The provision is good.

The provider make good use of the registration form completed by parents to ensure children's individual needs are met. Prior to starting the detailed form is discussed with parents and staff begin the process of getting to know the children and their family. Detailed written records of younger children's routine such as how long they have slept, what they have played with and what they have eaten are maintained and shared with parents. Verbal information also takes place daily such as what the children have enjoyed doing whilst at the provision. Parents and carers are invited to stay with their children to ensure that they feel settled and secure. There is an informative notice board and they receive comprehensive information about the provision on enquiry. They are given details about who to approach if they are unhappy about any aspects of the setting.

The provider demonstrated a through understanding of behaviour management. Good examples were given of how the team would approach a variety of situations for children of different ages. The children are valued and included because the team provide ample opportunities for them to participate in worthwhile activities. Photographs were seen of children enjoying and fully participating in painting their individual designs on the vehicle. This gives them a sense of self-esteem, ownership and belonging.

The provider showed a sound understanding of promoting children's understanding of diversity. Children are encouraged to talk about special occasions and festivals celebrated within their families. Bi-lingual books and a wide range of resources such as musical instruments and dolls to reflect different cultures are freely available. Children with special needs are well supported as some staff are very experienced in this area. Activities are adapted to ensure they participate fully and close communications with the family are sought in order to provide the best care for the children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

There were no children present during the inspection. Through discussion and the documents seen such as planning of activities and the evaluations of these, the provider demonstrates that children are looked after within a safe and secure environment where they can rest, play and eat in comfort. They are provided with relevant and organised activities to promote their development and stimulate their interest.

Most documentation is in place and is comprehensive, parental consents are in place. However, the daily effectiveness of these cannot be assessed as no children or staff were present at the time of inspection.

The provider showed a clear understanding of the benefits to children by employing experienced and qualified staff who are committed to ongoing training. The high ratio of staff exceeds the required ratios which mean that children are cared for individually or in very small groups. A key worker system is in place meaning children and parents have a familiar person to communicate with. The provider has outlined how he uses an operational plan to monitor and improve provision however, this has only recently included staff appraisal. Systems are in place to ensure staff working with children are suitable to do so and have Criminal Record Bureau checks.

Evidence suggests that the needs of all children are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by the 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.
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<b>WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?</b>
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### **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):

- devise a system to record daily risk assessments
- maintain a fire log book detailing how emergency evacuations are managed and any problems resolved

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