

# Alphabets Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	156084
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 April 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Virginia Cooper
<b>Setting Address</b>	15 York Avenue, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent, ME5 9EP
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<b>Registered person</b>	Sally-Ann Baker
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Alphabets Day Nursery is run by a partnership. The same partnership also part-own two other nurseries. It opened in 2001 and operates from three rooms in a house in Walderslade. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 57 children from babies to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports children with disabilities learning difficulties and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 11 members of staff. Of these, 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications and five are working towards a higher qualification. The setting receives support from a mentor from the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies and toddlers are attached to their carers and are emotionally well supported. The staff generally promote the good health of the children in their care. They regularly clean surfaces with anti-bacterial spray and procedures are in place to ensure the preparation of food is undertaken carefully to prevent cross infection. Children learn about good hygiene practice through the daily routine, they wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating to prevent cross infection. There are two bathroom areas, both have two toilets each. The toilets are not in cubicles, children sometimes use the toilets at the same time, and the toilet bowls are close enough that it is possible to touch one another, increasing the risks of cross infection. A plastic, streamer style curtain provides some privacy from outside the room. Their privacy is compromised, however, when two children use the toilets at the same time.

An effective policy is in place to ensure any required medication is administered safely. Staff obtain prior written permission from parents before administering medicine; this is generally on a case by case system. Very occasionally, however, staff administer pain relief to reduce a temperature using the written permission the nursery has obtained on a previous occasion. Although this is after a phone call to the parents this is not the intention of the parents when they give the written permission. Written records are kept of any medication administered and parents sign the entry ensuring they are kept informed. Staff obtain sufficient information from parents about each child's state of health or any medical conditions to enable them to provide an appropriate service.

Nearly all staff hold a current first aid certificate. There is always a member of staff present on the premises, or when they go on outings with a current first aid certificate who can administer first aid in an emergency. A named member of staff is responsible to ensure the first aid box is checked and replenished as necessary. If a child has an accident the details of the incident and any first aid administered is recorded and parents sign the entry ensuring they are well informed.

Parents understand through discussion and the policies and procedures that the nursery does not look after children who are ill or infectious to protect the other children who attend. If a child becomes ill staff make them comfortable until the parents are able to collect them. Information about common childhood illnesses is provided by the nursery for parents.

All staff are aware of any children with food allergies and are careful that children are not given any foods that may cause an adverse reaction. All the children eat meals and snacks the staff prepare on the premises; the children help staff prepare snacks encouraging them to take an interest in the food they eat. Older children serve themselves at dinner time, encouraging their independence. Each day the manager writes on a board what the children will eat and the different food groups to enable parents to see for themselves that the children are receiving a healthy, balanced and nutritious diet. The cookery book staff use for some of the meals is left out to enable parents to look at the recipes and repeat at home when their children particularly enjoy something. All the children of the nursery come together at meal times; staff sit with the children and assist them when necessary and encourage children to try new foods. The children enjoy the social interaction. Fresh drinking water is available at all times to prevent children becoming dehydrated.

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

The provision is good.

The premises are safe and secure; parents and children are greeted cheerfully at the door. Each room accommodates children at a similar stage of development enabling staff to provide appropriate activities and learning opportunities. There are cosy areas where children can rest and relax. Children do, however, have the opportunity to come together at meal times and at the end of the day which gives siblings the opportunity to see one another.

The furniture and equipment is in good condition. Some resources are unusual and provide great learning opportunities, for example, dolls with tongues that stick out especially for medical role play. Nursery tables and chairs enable children to undertake tasks and eat meals easily.

All staff have undertaken health and safety training and this helps them understand the importance of maintaining a safe environment for the children. A daily check ensures staff minimise any risk to children by using suitable equipment or procedures. The risk assessments for fire safety and checking the premises are very thorough. A named member of staff undertakes safety checks for the whole nursery providing some consistency. Children are reminded not to run indoors to keep themselves safe.

All staff are familiar with the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. They are clear about the child protection procedures to follow if they have concerns about any child to ensure the welfare of children.

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

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily at the pre-school; staff greet them enthusiastically and take the time to talk to them and their families about something personal, illustrating how well they know the children and what is important in their lives. Staff are kind and caring in their interactions promoting children's self-esteem. Babies and toddlers get lots of support from their carers. When they look for reassurance, staff notice quickly and ensure their needs are met promptly; they soon settle with a smile or some kind, soothing words.

Staff working with the children under three use the Birth to Three Matters framework to plan appropriate experiences; the toddlers have a good range of tactile play materials and the baby room borrow these. The baby room are asking parents to help them produce treasure baskets to provide play for the babies that promote their natural curiosity. The outdoor area is very well used and children regularly play in the fresh air.

## **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The plans cover all six learning areas. Staff know the children well and talk knowledgeably about children's current, individual areas of learning. The plans evidence that children's individual learning needs are considered, however, much of the differentiation occurs spontaneously. Children are motivated to learn and are happily engaged in their activities. Children enjoy being able to free flow to the outside area for much of the session. The outdoor play area is well used; and children undertake both planned and spontaneous activities. Staff are comfortable experimenting how they deliver activities to improve the quality of the teaching and learning. They try new ideas and evaluate the results; one member of staff is very keen to encourage children to take more control of their learning

and to increase the opportunities they have to initiate learning experiences. Children are able to select resources for themselves and work independently. They are confident about asking for help when they want assistance and staff respond appropriately helping them extend their knowledge and skills. Staff encourage children to celebrate their success, discuss what they have learnt and discuss the activities they enjoy.

Children play purposefully in an atmosphere that is busy, fun and frequently spontaneous. They pay attention to staff and are able to concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate. Children take turns and share successfully. Their behaviour is good; they are very sociable and relate well to staff and one another. They celebrate a variety of festivals and are beginning to learn about their own and other people's cultures and beliefs.

Children love adults to read stories to them and regularly sit in the book corner to look at books alone and with friends. Staff are thoughtful and provide relevant information books when they are working on a particular topic, teaching children that books are a source for locating knowledge as well as for pleasure. The environment is richly labelled; some children are beginning to read competently. Children regularly have the opportunity to recognise their names. Children practise forming written letters correctly in many different ways; they write in sand, on whiteboards, using chalk on blackboards and are encouraged to write in role play situations.

Children count regularly and most can count beyond 10 competently. Children are familiar with written numerals and some can recognise numbers that are meaningful to them, for instance, their age. There are puzzles of varying difficulty that promote children's matching and sorting skills. They enjoy activities that help them explore shape and pattern; they can follow a pattern to reproduce mosaic style pictures. Most children know their colours; staff naturally refer to colours regularly as children play.

Children have plenty of opportunities to explore and investigate objects and materials using all of their senses. They play in dry and wet sand every day and appreciate the different qualities of both. Staff encourage them to notice their environment; a blossom tree in the garden helps them appreciate the changes that occur with the seasons. They are planting a herb garden and growing sunflowers. They experiment growing things in different environments to discover which is most successful. They have the opportunity to plan a project and build and construct with a range of objects and materials. Children use a range of construction toys; they learn how to use cogs to make things turn helping them understand how things work. Children love to use the computer; they develop good mouse control and understand how to make the programme work successfully.

Children are very keen to play outside in the fresh air. They develop spatial awareness through various activities; they ride bikes and hit balls with bats. They climb up and down the slide carefully and with confidence, they travel through, over and under various climbing equipment, balancing carefully when necessary. They regularly use hand held tools; children competently use scissors and enjoy shaping and moulding malleable materials. Staff discuss healthy lifestyle choices with children, for instance, which foods are healthiest and the importance of regular teeth brushing.

Staff foster children's imaginative play by providing interesting role play opportunities. Children have easy access to an array of art and craft materials that are all available at their height encouraging them to use different materials creatively. They use instruments regularly and explore rhythm, tone and pitch. They choose the music they want to play and join in ring games enthusiastically, singing and moving to the music.

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

The provision is good.

Children come in to nursery happily and settle quickly. Parents know who their child's key worker is and communicate easily with them exchanging information about their child's progress. There is a family atmosphere within the group and children have the opportunity to get together at different times of the day giving siblings the opportunity to see one another. Staff introduce children to the concept of recycling helping them become aware of the importance of caring for the environment. A nominated member of staff takes responsibility for equal opportunities and ensures the images throughout the nursery reflect diversity positively. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are welcome and integrated into the pre-school. The manager arranges relevant training to help staff provide appropriate care, for example, sign language training. Staff understand that a close relationship with parents of children experiencing difficulties is extremely important. This good working relationship paves the way for nursery staff to work cooperatively with outside agencies when appropriate, for the benefit of the children. The nursery ethos is to make inclusion as easy as possible for the children and parents. The special educational needs co-ordinator has recently left, another member of staff is taking over this post and the manager will secure training for her as soon as possible. The staff have a good relationship with the area special needs advisor who will always help if they require support.

Children behave well and respond positively to the praise and encouragement from staff. The boundaries are consistently applied, for example, children understand that they take turns when playing games or serving their lunch. Staff manage children's behaviour sensitively, their age, stage of development and level of understanding are all taken into account. All staff are very kind and patient with the children and nurture their emotional and social development. Staff understand that children's ability to socialise, communicate and co-operate with one another is every bit as important as their educational progress.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are delighted with the service the nursery provides; they are full of praise for the staff and confirm that they always feel able to discuss their children's progress. The development records are presented to parents in a very attractive format that is personalised. There are photos included and evidence explaining how children have met particular targets. One parent explains that the nursery staff are very supportive and made her feel less isolated after moving to an area where she has no family close by. All parents, from babies to the eldest are encouraged to contribute to their children's records. They are able to take their child's 'learning story' home at any time. All parents are provided with good quality information about the provision. There is an abundance of information throughout the nursery that is of interest to parents. The manager copies interesting articles about children's development or childcare for them, noting the source of the article, keeping parents updated with latest initiatives. Newsletters are sent home regularly informing parents of the forthcoming topics and giving information about the curriculum. The policies and procedures are always available for parents to read, these include a complaints procedure. Parents confirm that their children are very happy at the nursery and that the staff are dedicated. Parents feel able to stay until their child is settled.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Procedures are in place to ensure all staff hold a current criminal records check and are suitable to look after children. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and most hold a relevant qualification. They are encouraged to attend courses and update their training. Children are appropriately grouped and the key worker system is working well providing good support and care throughout the day. The pace and routine of the day is good; children are busy and interested in what they are doing. They have easy access to a wide range of resources. All required documents are in place for the safe and effective management of the setting, and stored confidentially. The manager ensures that the number of staff working directly with children is sufficient and minimum ratios are maintained at all times. The setting meets the needs of the range children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management are good. The owner and manager use the self evaluation form to review how the nursery staff meet the five outcomes for children. All staff contribute to evaluating the service provided and this helps them improve the care and education for all children. Management encourage staff to put into practice what they learn on courses. Staff feel valued and it is positive that when training inspires them they are able to experiment with new ideas and discover for themselves what does and does not work well. There are good induction procedures to prepare staff undertake their role effectively. The staff are happy and work very well as a team; they exchange information about their key children regularly ensuring all staff are aware of the areas of learning the children are concentrating upon. Staff are supported with ongoing training and have regular meetings and appraisals to discuss their work. The owner has helped to set up a group where they meet with other nursery staff to exchange ideas and information, helping them remain updated.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection a recommendation was made that relates to protecting children's privacy when they use the toilet. The owner understood this to be about the fact that the rooms that house the toilets did not have doors and parents or visitors to the nursery could therefore, see into the room. Vinyl, streamer style curtains were fitted over the doorway to address this issue. The recommendation is partly addressed; however, children's privacy inside the room is still compromised if more than one child is in there, as the toilets are not housed in cubicles. The toilets are positioned extremely close to one another. Children can touch one another and this increases the risk of cross infection. A similar recommendation has been raised after this inspection.

Another recommendation was to increase the images that reflect gender and disability positively; the nursery has many posters about the rooms and this recommendation is addressed helping children value diversity.

At the last education inspection one recommendation was made relating to increasing children's personal independence. There is much evidence from this inspection that indicates how children's independence is fostered. For example, serving their meals and drinks, accessing resources and making choices about the activities they undertake. This recommendation has therefore been addressed and children demonstrate a higher level of independence.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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 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 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):

- provide children with privacy inside the rooms where they use the toilet, protecting their dignity; take positive steps to prevent cross infection in the toilet area, in particular, assess the risks of the proximity of toilets
- assess the risks and necessity of keeping and using the written permission to administer preparatory pain relief to a child at some time other than when the parent gave that permission

#### **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):

- continue to develop the methods used to plan for children's individual learning needs

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)