

# Home from Home Day Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123566
<b>Inspection date</b>	31 May 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jill Nugent
<b>Setting Address</b>	52a Bernard Street, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 5QN
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<b>Registered person</b>	Linda Collins
<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?

Home from Home Day Nursery School opened in 1989. It operates from four rooms in a purpose built nursery in St Albans. It is open every weekday from 07:15 to 18:45 all year round. Children share access to three outdoor play areas.

A maximum of 35 children may attend the nursery at any one time. Currently there are 54 children on roll, of whom 21 are funded for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

A total of 12 members of staff work with the children. All staff hold relevant early years qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well because the nursery has appropriate medical procedures in place. Children are excluded if ill so as to protect others from infection. Young children sleep according to their needs so that they do not become overtired during the day. Children are well taken care of in the event of an accident as staff have good access to first aid equipment. They are attentive to hygiene and ensure that all rooms are kept clean. Children's nappies and bedding are changed according to set procedures in order to avoid cross-infection. Older children are becoming aware of good hygiene practices. They are reminded to wash their hands after going to the toilet and clean their teeth after lunch. These procedures contribute to keeping children healthy.

Children enjoy a variety of healthy and nutritious meals. They develop their social skills whilst sitting in groups enjoying lunch. Babies are encouraged to feed themselves independently. Children are becoming aware of healthy eating because snacks and meals include foods such as fresh fruit and vegetables. Parents and carers are well informed about how well children have eaten. Staff liaise closely with parents regarding children's allergies, and special diets, so that children's needs are met. Children have access to drinks throughout the day. Overall, they are well nourished.

Children enjoy good opportunities for regular physical activity. Babies and toddlers are able to move freely around their rooms and like to pull themselves up on to the sofa. They enjoy using a variety of resources in a small outdoor play area. In this way they become more confident and develop their coordination skills. Older children have fun in their outdoor area, especially on the climbing equipment and in the playhouse. They also enjoy the use of the large car park area where they develop more physical skills using equipment, such as bikes and balls. Therefore, children keep fit and healthy.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. The rooms are bright, with comfy furniture, and resources are easily accessible. Children's safety and security is promoted well as staff carry out regular risk assessments in order to minimise potential risks. Safety gates are in use where necessary and cleaning materials are kept out of reach of children. However, the kitchen door is generally left open and gives direct access to the laundry where other cleaning materials are stored. This poses a safety risk to children who access the toilets independently. There are good fire precautions in place and children take part in regular fire practises so that they know how to evacuate the building in an emergency. When young children sleep they are checked regularly by staff. Adults in each room are able to alert senior staff if help is required and access to the nursery is monitored closely. Therefore, children keep safe and secure at all times.

Children use a wide range of suitable and safe resources and equipment. These are checked regularly for safety and replaced if necessary. Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussion about the use of different resources. They learn to keep safe when out and about and near roads. When the car park is in use for outdoor play staff make sure that the main gates are locked securely. Children keep safe on walks in the local area as staff maintain good adult child ratios and put labelled stickers on children for extra security. Staff have a good

understanding of child protection issues. They ensure that children only leave the premises with a known adult. There are procedures in place for logging any concerns and information is available to staff to enable them to seek advice. Consequently, children are well protected.

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

The provision is good.

Children are settled and happy in the nursery. Very young children enjoy the company of staff as they sit on the floor exploring toys and materials together. They respond cheerfully to adults who initiate singing and music sessions. Older children show much interest in the activities on offer in their rooms, for example, junk modelling, sand and water play. They are gaining confidence as staff engage them in conversation, enhancing their play. Children's self-esteem is boosted when staff show interest in what they are doing and praise for their achievements. Their individual needs are met appropriately through the provision of activities that are relevant to their age and ability. Staff offer good support, helping children to get the most out of each activity. Consequently, children enjoy a variety of experiences.

Staff plan an interesting range of activities for children using the 'Birth to three matters' framework and based on a selection of themes. These give children good opportunities to develop skills and learn to be imaginative and creative. For example, children take part in activities using particular colours and shapes, listen to stories and participate in role play. Children are able to explore, and make connections in different situations, for example, when playing with bubbles, painting or making music. There are particularly good facilities for exploring mark-making indoors and outdoors. Children's work is collected into scrapbooks alongside recorded observations on their progress. This information is especially useful when children move up to the next room.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing well in all six learning areas. They show much interest in the organised activities and persist at self chosen tasks. They are developing good relationships and are confident. At group times they enjoy listening to familiar stories. They have good communication skills and are able to represent ideas in different ways, for example, creating pictures after talking about what they would like to be when they grow up. Older children are developing very good early reading and writing skills. Staff make use of a phonics and reading scheme, name cards and a blackboard to encourage children to become familiar with letters and words. Children increase their awareness of writing for a purpose when making books about themselves. Children are learning to count and use numbers. They compare shapes, weigh and measure. Staff encourage them to join in number rhymes and in this way increase their awareness of simple calculation.

Children are developing a good knowledge and understanding of the world. For instance, they learn about their own bodies, use their senses in different activities and have access to a variety of computer games to support their learning. They explore materials in a range of creative activities, for example, shiny shapes, pasta and paint. They learn new techniques in adult led activities but also have opportunities to draw and paint freely. When painting flowers, they learn how to look closely in order to produce the correct colour and shape on paper. Children practise their manipulative skills in activities, such as, threading and cutting. They enjoy organised physical activities, for example, music and movement, obstacle courses and team games. They learn to move in different ways, thereby developing body control and an awareness of themselves in space.

Staff plan a variety of interesting and stimulating activities within the six learning areas. Their daily written plans show clearly what children are expected to learn and also the role of the adult in focusing that learning. Each theme is developed across the areas in order to reinforce children's learning, for example, making alphabet letters in different ways and visiting a local shop to purchase flowers. Staff are effective in actively involving children in planned activities and encourage them to think through open-ended questions. They respond to children's interests and use these to promote further learning, helping them to understand new ideas and words. Staff assess children's progress towards the early learning goals through a series of observations and tick sheets. They collect photographs and examples of children's work and this produces a very useful tool for working out children's next steps in learning. Overall, the planning and assessment systems work very well in providing children with an interesting and relevant educational programme.

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

The provision is good.

Children feel valued and included in the setting. Staff keep a check on individual children to ensure they are happy. All children have the opportunity to take part in all activities and they develop a real sense of belonging. They enjoy chatting and playing with each other in a relaxed atmosphere. They receive good support from staff who are very aware of children's individual needs. Children are made to feel special when asked to help a member of staff. They are learning to respect others, and their needs. They are discovering a wider society through the nursery's involvement in worldwide projects, for example, child sponsorship and world book day. They learn about diversity through celebrating festivals. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are given choices within the setting and this helps them to become decision makers. Staff encourage children to make their own choices from resources and to select from materials when creating pictures and models. Children are also asked to contribute ideas to the recently improved menus. Their behaviour is very good. They share fairly, and take turns, and are well aware of their boundaries. They are encouraged to share their feelings if involved in an incident. This helps them to reflect on their actions and learn to behave in an appropriate way. There are very good procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff ensure that their transition to primary school is eased through purposeful communication.

The nursery works closely with parents and carers. They offer home visits and help with settling children in to the nursery. Parents are well informed about the provision through information in the brochure and on notice boards around the setting. They receive good information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework which helps them to understand the play provision for young children. Parents are given a daily or weekly feedback sheet, depending on the age of their children. These inform them about what their children have been doing at nursery. However, they are not given clear information about the nursery's complaints procedure or how to contact the regulatory body. If unable to raise a concern in the correct way, this may impact on children's continuity of care.

The partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is good. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage of learning and are able to view the current written plans. Staff write a monthly newsletter telling parents about each topic and giving them ideas of how they can support their children's learning at home. Parents have opportunities each term to discuss their children's progress at consultation evenings. This close working partnership with parents is of benefit to children in helping to further their development.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The nursery's policies and procedures work well in practice to promote the outcomes for children. All the necessary policies are in place and reviewed regularly. Regular meetings keep staff up to date with any changes. Information about children is kept securely in the upstairs office and all paperwork is filed tidily. Attendance records for staff and children are maintained. All written planning is prepared in advance so that it is readily available to staff. The documentation provides a good framework for the nursery's practice.

Staff are well qualified and committed to the ongoing improvement of their provision. There are good employment and induction procedures in place for new staff and they are regularly appraised in order to monitor their professional development. All staff are encouraged to attend training courses and, since the last inspection, have trained in Health and Safety, 'Birth to three matters' and Communication skills. Staff have a high regard for children's well being and are aware of their responsibilities within the setting. They work well as a team, following daily routines which provide opportunities for children to play and learn in different situations. They supervise children closely, thereby ensuring good health and safety. Overall children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The nursery manager has arranged for qualified teacher support with the written planning and is helping the pre-school leader to gradually take on responsibility for this himself. Staff meet together to discuss ideas for activities using the basic plans provided and are supported by the manager in implementing the programme successfully. She monitors the educational provision through observation and this alerts her to areas that can be improved. Recently she has worked on improving staff's professional development, using team building exercises, and this has had a positive effect on the outcomes for children. Her effective leadership contributes to children making good progress in their learning and development in all areas.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the previous care inspection the nursery was asked to extend their child protection policy, ensure that children's attendance registers include hours of attendance, keep a written and signed record of all accidents and request written permission for seeking emergency advice or treatment. The child protection policy now includes all the necessary information and the times of attendance are recorded appropriately. A record of accidents is maintained and signed by a parent. The necessary medical permission is requested. These responses have improved the health and safety outcomes for children.

At the previous nursery education inspection the nursery was asked to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, ensure that planning is differentiated for children of differing abilities and provide opportunities for children to use their imagination in creative activities. Staff have undergone training in the Foundation Stage, extended their written planning in liaison with the early years teacher and introduced imaginative creative opportunities, such as outdoor painting, drama and music. This has contributed to an overall improvement in the nursery education.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection 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):

- ensure children's safety with respect to the kitchen and laundry room
- ensure that parents are given up to date information about the complaints procedure.

#### **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 staff's involvement in the planning and implementation of the Foundation Stage.

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)