

# Alexandra House

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY281026
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Linda Dawe
<b>Setting Address</b>	20 Crownhill Fort Road, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 5BX
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<b>Registered person</b>	Alexandra House
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<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

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?

Alexandra House is a charity run organisation operating from purpose built premises to the north of the centre of Plymouth. Service provision includes full day care and overnight care. It was registered in April 2004.

The centre originally opened to support service families, but day care provision is now available to all families in the local area. Alexandra House is open for 51 weeks a year. The day care service is open from 08:00 to 16:30 on Mondays to Thursdays and from 08:00 to 12:00 on Fridays, with families able to use the facility for full or half day sessions. The overnight care is available for emergency respite care for referred service families only, during the week and for two weekends a month.

There are currently 67 children aged from three-months-old to three-years-old on roll. Children are cared for by nine equivalent full-time staff. Sleeping in staff cover the overnight care provision. All staff have a level three qualification in childcare with the exception of one member of staff who is working towards this. The manager, who is supernumery, is a qualified primary school teacher and a registered social worker who also has a Certificate in Management Studies.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are protected from any risk of cross infection or food poisoning as a result of staff being proactive in the areas of health protection. For example, children are taught to wash their hands thoroughly, high risk foods are stored appropriately and baby food is stringently prepared according to recommended guidelines.

Children are provided with lots of opportunity to learn about the importance of healthy eating as they are provided with snacks that are nutritious and rich in vitamins such as fresh fruit. Healthy eating is reinforced with the use of colourful posters and discussions between staff and children about the things that they eat. Children's health also benefits from the excellent use of the large garden where children can climb, run and balance using a variety of outdoor equipment.

Children's good health is promoted further as staff ensure that accident and medication records are completed in a timely fashion, contain appropriate detail and are shared with parents. Parents are alerted to any infectious diseases within the nursery to enable them to make informed choices about their children's care. The nursery staff are proactive in finding out information about childhood illnesses and disease to inform both themselves and children's parents and carers.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety and well being is a high priority in this nursery. Premises are kept extremely secure so that no-one can gain unauthorised access. There are stringent procedures in place to ensure children can be evacuated quickly and safely in the event of an emergency, all fire exits are clearly marked and fire blankets are easily accessible. Staff staying overnight have access to a panic button linked to the local police station to summon help quickly should it be needed.

Sleeping babies and toddlers are kept safe as staff check them regularly both physically and by using baby listening monitors. Regular risk assessments ensure that the nursery building and its garden are free from hazards so that children can move around freely and safely. Although overnight care facilities are not used often, bedrooms are well equipped and appealing for children with ample bathroom facilities available. Excellent use is made of the ample space within the nursery to provide children with a wealth of activities. There is a very good selection of high quality toys and resources that children can access freely. Activities are presented in a way that is appealing to children and as a result they play enthusiastically.

Robust procedures are in place to make sure that staff caring for children are suitable to do so. Children are safeguarded because staff are clear about their role in child protection and therefore able to put into place appropriate procedures when necessary.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy, safe and well cared for at Alexandra House nursery. They are warmly welcomed as they arrive and settle quickly to the activities offered to them. A wealth of photographs displayed around the nursery provides evidence of the children partaking in a wide variety of activities that they clearly enjoy. Staff use the Birth to three framework well to provide a wide range of purposeful activities that are appropriate to the ages and stages of development of the children that attend the nursery. The nursery is currently reviewing its assessment tools and this remains an area of development to ensure that individual children's progress is monitored and planned for.

Babies are cared for in a safe and stimulating environment. For example, they are enthralled as they play with a variety of pieces of material, feeling the different textures of cloth such as net and suede under the watchful eye of the staff. Babies are also given regular opportunity to mix with the older children, which means they become familiar with other areas of the nursery and all staff. As a result when the time comes for them to move from the baby room this happens seamlessly.

All children are constantly occupied and busy, whether it be exploring their senses as they taste different citrus fruits, developing their large muscles as they play outside or learning about rhythm as they sing songs and rhymes together at circle time. Overall children are enabled to make progress across all areas of their development as a result of the well planned, stimulating and varied activities that they undertake.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are confident and feel secure as a result of familiar routines within the nursery. Babies individual needs are met as staff follow their home routines after gaining this information from parents and carers. Parents are fully involved in all aspects of their children's care as informative contact books are sent home and returned each day. These books contain useful information on the child's day, for example, how much they have eaten, nappy changes and sleep patterns. Parents are also invited to complete them with information that nursery staff would be helpful in caring for their child that day. Children are provided with toys and resources to give them an awareness of diversity appropriate to their ages. For example, tasting Indian foods and making Chinese dragons at Chinese New Year.

Children with any learning difficulty or disability have their specific needs met with staff being able to provide them with additional help and support, working closely with parents and other professionals when beneficial.

Very good relationships between the children and staff are apparent. Children receive lots of positive attention and as a result their behaviour is very good. Reward stickers are used to boost children's self esteem and children learn a sense of responsibility as they are encouraged to tidy away their toys when they have finished playing.

Children benefit greatly from the very positive relationships that the nursery builds with their parents. Parent representatives sit on the nursery committee and new parents are provided with lots of information about the care their children will receive. Parents clearly feel welcome

to discuss their child with staff at any time and are very positive about the response that they receive.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's care benefits from the fact that the nursery constantly evaluates their practice. Regular training is given to staff to improve their knowledge and skills and weekly team meetings held to discuss any issues regarding children's care. Thorough induction procedures are in place for new staff to make sure that they can implement policies and procedures effectively. The nursery committee adopts an open and honest approach in order to reassure parents that their children's care is of the highest priority.

Children are well supported as a result of the effective way in which staff are deployed throughout the nursery and the high staff ratios. Staff are keen and enthusiastic and work well together for the good of the children. For example, quickly coming into the garden to help out when a child hurt themselves and needed reassurance and minor first aid treatment. Policies fully meet all legal requirements and are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to current practice.

The nursery is led by a skilled manager who is confident to put children's needs first, regularly reviewing and adapting procedures and practice, seeking help and support from outside agencies where appropriate to do so. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the nursery were asked to make sure that parents are fully aware of all the relevant policies and procedures. There is now a copy of the policies in the entrance hallway for parents to access at any time and each parent is provided with a handbook containing relevant information about their child's care.

They were also asked to provide a suitable range of toys, in order to meet the developmental needs of younger children. This recommendation has been fully met and the nursery is now very well equipped with an excellent range of suitable toys that fully meet younger children's developmental needs.

As a result of these improvements children's care has been enhanced.

## **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

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):

- devise an effective system for using observations to plan the next steps for children's individual play, learning and development

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)