

Home from Home Day Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Tina Kelly
Setting address	52a Bernard Street, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 5QN
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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Description of the setting

Home from Home Day Nursery School opened in 1989. It is owned and managed by the registered provider. It is situated in St. Albans very close to the town centre. The setting operates a Baby Unit comprising of Fledglings and Birds offering places to children aged from three months up to nearly three years. Children in the Bee group are in transition between the baby unit and the Pre-Preparatory Unit which provides for Badgers and Owls up to the age of five years. Both units have free-flow play to the outside, there is an additional large outside play space that is shared throughout the day. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register to provide care for a maximum of 43 children in the early years age group. There are currently 68 children on roll. Opening hours are every weekday from 7.15am to 6.45pm all year round.

The registered provider holds a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Early Years Professional Status, a degree and a diploma in Child Psychology. Other senior staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 4 and have Early Years degrees and Early Years Professional Status. Room leaders and other staff hold NVQ at Level 2 and 3. One member of staff is the designated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). There are two unqualified classroom assistants. The setting benefits from a strong support team of a chef, caretaker, handyman and a full-time administrator.

In 2010 the nursery achieved Hertfordshire Quality Standards (HQS) accreditation, this is a county led scheme that ensures childcare providers are constantly improving and developing through a process of self-evaluation.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The highly qualified staff team are very successful in supporting and promoting the children's welfare and learning to a high standard. Children feel safe and secure, they are cared for in a welcoming, stimulating environment. The setting fully promotes inclusive practice by finding out about the children's backgrounds and individual needs. Very effective partnerships with parents and other early years agencies contributes significantly to the progress and development of all children. The evaluation process that has been established along side the HQS accreditation is very comprehensive and shows that the setting consistently reviews and develops their practice to ensure that outcomes for children are maintained to a high standard and the setting is able to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- reviewing children's records with regards to names and dates and ensure the chronology of observations and assessments show clearly the children's starting points and overall progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

There is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding children amongst staff as they receive regular training as part of their employment at the nursery. Thorough safeguarding policies and information from the Local Safeguarding Children Board are on display around the setting to ensure staff and parents are aware of their commitment to providing a safe environment for all children. The registered provider and senior staff have attended workshops on the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) requirements. The information is on display in the staff room. All staff and bank workers have appropriate background checks to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Exceptionally well managed documents and working directives ensure the well-being of the children and the very smooth running of the nursery. Children's overall safety is managed to a high standard with appropriate risk assessments in place to ensure any potential risks to children are identified and minimised.

The ethos of the nursery is to provide a home from home experience that is accessible to all sections of the community. The Early Years Foundation Stage is implemented very effectively, there is a very good balance between adult- and child-initiated activities. Daily activities are mainly led by the interests of the children. At circle time discussions about events at home, favourite activities and ideas promoted by the children's own experiences are the basis for play. All aspects of the early learning goals are planned for whether with impromptu or planned activities. Excellent resources and are readily available to ensure staff are able to support and extend the children's learning. A committed team of well-qualified staff have an excellent understanding of how children learn. The partnership with parents is exceptional. The Parent Staff Association has parents as the lead committee members, they encourage all parents to be involved and contribute to the setting. Social evenings, fundraising and a charity ball are frequent events planned and supported by families. Regular newsletters, information in reception and email systems are used to share information.

The leadership and management of the setting is exemplary. There are high aspirations for the setting, staff's professional development and outcomes for all children. Having recently attained the HQS status the setting has a well-established process for evaluating all aspects of the nursery provision. Highly effective partnership with other early years support services and agencies ensure all children's needs are exceptionally well met. There is a clear and achievable process for evaluating all aspects of the setting. Parents are included in the process with their views being sought on a regular basis. Ideas and comments are taken to

team meetings, these notes are included in the settings self evaluation process, this process is highly effective in promoting continuous improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are cared for in a very warm, welcoming and interesting environment by a caring and motivated staff team. The setting provides an inclusive setting where children including those with special educational needs and /or disabilities and English as a second language thrive and make excellent progress towards the early learning goals.

The lay out of the setting ensures both babies and pre-school children have ready access to an extensive and age-appropriate selection of toys and resources both in the home rooms and in the outside play areas. Staff work with parents to meet young children's home routines. There is a separate baby sleep room that provides a quiet environment for young children to rest. The process for assessing the children's achievements, recognising their starting points and planning for their future learning is extremely well established. However, in some of the children's portfolios there is a lack of consistency with regards to chronology, names, date of birth and how long the children have attended the setting. This means that at times there is not a clear view of the children's starting points and overall progress.

Children are keen and active learners. The self-registration system and the use of their name cards, with photos which are used throughout the sessions have established a strong sense of self-esteem. Art work around the setting shows children have many opportunities to express themselves with an extensive range of materials and styles. The children's individual interests are the basis for the days play and learning. They have free access to the outside play areas and are encouraged to make use of all areas of the Pre-prep area of the nursery to extend and develop their play. Children are motivated as they are encouraged to take part in a broad range of activities that they have chosen themselves. The making of a 'volcano' had been introduced by children whose families had been affected and some children's own holiday and family travels had been disrupted. The activity introduced children to new words and experiences, they watched with great interest as the lava flowed out from a clay volcano made earlier in the nursery. Children were very keen to take part in adding the different and safe household ingredients to try to make the flow faster. Their language and problem-solving skills were fully extended, their understanding of the wider world was well supported and the use of books and articles about volcanoes later in the day promoted their learning.

Children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle is promoted to a very high level. They show an exceptional understanding of the importance of following good personal hygiene routines. This is extremely well supported and developed by staff who when asking children if they need the cloakroom to join a 'train' collecting children as they go around the room. Children are eager to take part, making the cloakroom routines fun. Appropriate hand washing, teeth cleaning routines and readily available tissues with gentle reminders from staff ensure children

understand both the process and importance of good personal care. Children have soft indoor shoes, outside shoes and Wellington boots which promotes children's independence as they get ready to go out to play and help in maintaining a clean play environment. Snack and lunch times are an important aspect of the nursery day. The setting of tables, counting the children and talking about how many children will be at lunch promotes both social awareness and mathematical thinking. Home cooked meals are fully adapted to meet the needs of any dietary requirements. The nursery chef talks to the children about what they have enjoyed and if they would like more. All children eat well, they serve themselves and help to clear the tables. Babies weaning and mealtimes are well managed as their individual routines are respected. They sleep when they need to, the nursery routine is adapted to meet their needs.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Good manners and kindness are praised, staff are excellent role models. The setting is very aware of the individual needs of all children, they recognise that children learn in different ways, activities and routines are adapted to ensure children feel valued and can take responsibility for their own play and actions. The lay out of the setting and provision of very good quality resources and toys enables all children to work extremely well both independently and in groups. They are encouraged to use their initiative and develop negotiation and co-operation skills in playing and interacting with their peers. All children receive an enjoyable and challenging experience across all areas of learning.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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