

Home from Home Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	129350
Inspection date	02/10/2008
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Setting address	Northchurch Cricket Pavillion, Dudswell Lane, Northchurch, Hertfordshire, HP4 3TQ
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Home from Home Kindergarten opened in 1995. It is one of three privately owned local registered provisions under the Home from Home umbrella. It operates from Northchurch Cricket Pavilion. The premises consist of a large playroom, bathroom, kitchen and office area. Down a few steps, the kindergarten uses the changing rooms as a small group room for the older children, art and craft area/sleep room and after school club. There is a fenced outside play area, some of which is a covered veranda and the children are able to use the cricket ground. It serves the local and surrounding area.

The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. There are currently 43 children from one to five years on roll for the Early Years Register. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently have no children attending who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week for 50 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 08:00 until 17:45. Seven staff work with the children. Six staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3 including one staff member with an Early Years Professional Status qualification. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification and two are working towards degree level qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

A well qualified and committed staff team provide a generally positive atmosphere and mostly safe and welcoming environment where children are generally settled, happy, well nourished and well behaved. The senior management team are beginning to identify improvements needed in some aspects of the provision to benefit the children although systematic self-evaluation is not yet in place to monitor all aspects effectively and identify priorities for improvement. Consequently, a minority of children's individual needs are less well met and adults miss opportunities to ensure children reach their full potential because some policies, procedures and planning are less well developed to maintain a consistently comfortable, supportive and challenging environment. Children particularly benefit from the commitment to provide choices and opportunities to grow and develop outside. There are positive relationships with parents that help staff to know the children well and some procedures to involve parents in their children's learning.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- lead and encourage a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and

informed discussion to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality and consistency of provision for all children

- review systems to ensure that the individual needs of all children are always met (this refers to key working; sleep routines; valuing linguistic diversity; and ensuring that schedules, routines and activities flow with children's needs)
- improve the quality and consistency of observation, assessment and planning systems and involve parents, to ensure that children achieve as much as they can in relation to their starting points and capabilities
- improve the indoor environment to ensure that every area is comfortable while providing a stimulating environment and resources suitable to extend children's learning.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting have clearly defined recruitment and vetting procedures and staff undergo suitable induction and mentoring processes therefore generally have a sound knowledge of safeguarding children's welfare. They mostly understand the established range of policies and procedures and have some good strategies to promote healthy eating, to support active learners and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are good adult-to-child ratios that enable sustained interactions although procedures for key-working, resources and environment, daily routines, daily risk assessments and promoting linguistic diversity are not always clearly defined, monitored or tailored towards individual children's needs therefore at times, a minority of children's needs are less well met.

This is the setting's first inspection under the Early Years Foundation Stage framework therefore the culture of reflective practice and systematic self-evaluation is not yet in place to accurately identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development. However, the adults are committed to continuous improvement through training and improving staff qualifications which has a positive impact on children's confidence and behaviour. Staff meetings are used to cascade information from training and to informally discuss areas to develop. Senior management have some informal plans to improve the provision in the future. For example, to further develop the community outdoor area and the assessment system to monitor children's progress in their learning and development against the Early Learning Goals. The setting has partially addressed issues identified from the last inspection therefore areas such as the transportation policy, short term planning, and arrangements for spontaneous observations of children have been improved. However, observations are not yet used consistently to inform assessment and planning therefore staff miss opportunities to ensure all children are challenged and stretched in their learning and development and that parents are consistently involved in their progress.

Parents are provided with general information on the Early Years Foundation Stage and encouraged to share information through informal daily discussions and

occasional open days therefore staff know the children well. There are some strategies to encourage parents to be involved in children's learning and development. Families of older children also have opportunities to take care of 'Bruno' the nursery teddy, and write a diary on his adventures.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Staff promote valuable aspects of children's learning and development outside and encourage healthy dispositions by offering free-flow access between indoors and outdoors for children to play and exercise in the fresh air. The large community field is frequently used to extend physical skills including running, throwing and catching. Children can use the small paved and covered area in all weathers. They learn to peddle the bicycles or experiment with the different properties of wet and dry sand, using their imagination with Small World dinosaurs. They can learn on a larger more active scale than is possible indoors as they paint patterns with large brushes and water. They feel the effects of the weather as they try to fly a kite and experience the wind blowing their hair, learning from first-hand experience. However, learning is not always delivered in practical ways. For example, children are expected to describe the weather during group times inside when children cannot see through narrow high level windows. The oldest children enjoy group times indoors that provide formal instruction particularly in number and phonic work. However, for most, this lengthy adult-led session limits their full participation. Consequently, staff become more directive as many children lose interest and become restless in rooms that are unwelcoming and without soft furnishings.

Adult interactions with the children are, however, mostly positive and respectful which helps children make progress and develop good habits of behaviour. For example, staff are good role models and offer strategies to help children find solutions to minor disagreements. They know the children well and engage in meaningful conversations with the children during free play as children talk about their likes and dislikes and express their ideas confidently. As a result, children enjoy coming to nursery and are forming secure relationships with the staff. However, staff do not recognise how their good knowledge of children from diverse backgrounds with various home languages, can be actively encouraged and thus promote their identity. Children are generally happy and busy especially during free play. They can decide what they want to play with and make choices from the range of adult-determined resources available during free-play sessions both inside and out. They enjoy using a range of creative media to develop ideas independently. For example, arranging patterns by sorting and sequencing coloured feathers when making a collage. However, the links between observation, assessment and planning are not sufficiently robust. Consequently, children receive general guidance rather than focussed interactions to challenge and guide them towards the next steps in their learning and sometimes, resources are not sufficiently broad to expand children's thinking skills. For example, there are limited amounts of writing for a purpose and props to support stories, role-play, and information technology (IT) especially linked to the current theme of 'people who help us'.

Children's security is given a high priority and risk assessments of the indoor area, outdoor area and for outings protect the children from most risks. However, not all hazards are monitored each day therefore, when older children visit the toilet independently, they can potentially access uncovered electric sockets and some furniture that is not suitably stored. Children are well supervised and the floor is protected by soft mats as they explore different perspectives on the indoor slide. Children confidently participate in fire drills and talk about this at group times which helps them to understand aspects of health and safety. They enjoy meeting representatives of the fire and police services who are invited to the nursery as part of the theme 'people who help us'. There are opportunities for young children to sleep, undisturbed in a quiet room after lunch although sometimes, disorganised routines and ineffective staff deployment and key-working do not always fully meet their emotional needs or the needs of young children taking part in transition visits from the nearby baby unit. Meal times are generally social occasions when children meet together with siblings and friends from school. Procedures are in place to ensure children's dietary needs are recognised and met and children are beginning to communicate their likes and dislikes when provided with a suitable range of wholesome meals and snacks including fresh fruit and vegetables. Their independence is encouraged as they serve their own vegetables and, when prompted, staff provide appropriate cutlery to help their emerging self-care skills.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met