



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	505383
Inspection date	28 April 2006
Inspector	Paula Jane Hayhow
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Childminding

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.

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?

The childminder was registered in 1985.

She lives with her husband and three children, two of whom are over 17 years and the third is aged 14 years. The family live in a property in Ampthill, in Bedfordshire. The first two floors of the house are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden and two parks available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding three children under five, one of whom attends full time and the other two attend on a part-time basis. She does not provide overnight care. The local schools and shops are within walking distance. The childminder attends the local toddler groups.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean home and their health, welfare and overall development are well promoted. Their dietary needs are clearly understood and documented. The children are offered nutritious snacks and meals because the childminder has a good understanding of healthy eating. Their diet is well balanced and the childminder prepares meals using fresh ingredients and ensures that foods offered are low in sugar and salt. Children are learning about the importance of personal hygiene, such as washing their hands before eating, after going to the bathroom or craft activities through daily routines. The childminder is able to promote this area as she has a good understanding of health and hygiene, making sure that toys and equipment are regularly cleaned, particularly the younger children's toys, thus consistently preventing the spread of infection.

Children take part in a wide variety of physical activities, contributing to their good health. They are learning about developing control of their bodies through regular opportunities for outdoor and indoor activities. These include playing in the garden with a wide range of toys, such as ride on toys, hobby horses, seesaw, rocking horse, car, slide, bats and balls. Indoor activities include obstacle courses and dancing. The children also visit the park where they go on nature trails, collecting leaves, feathers and conkers for craft activities such as leaf rubbing and Indian headdresses. The children are beginning to understand their own needs, for example they know when they need a drink or rest and they will approach the childminder for help when needed. Younger children are able to participate in the activities offered because the childminder uses her experience and knowledge of child development to adapt the activities to a suitable level. She pays particular attention to providing a stimulating environment for the children, allowing space for them to safely explore a range of movements, such as reaching for play materials, posting shapes in sorters and playing musical instruments, thus encouraging both their physical and intellectual development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and generally safe environment and are therefore able to move around independently and freely. The childminder is aware of risks, both in and out of the house, and has taken positive steps to minimise these, for example, she ensures that the children are safe on outings, she has taught them about road safety which is practiced daily on their walks. The children's safety as regards fire is well promoted as the house has been fitted with interlinking smoke detectors and children undertake regular fire drills. However, the children's safety could be affected as they have access to the wires on the vacuum cleaner and the low glass window in the craft room is unmarked. The children use safe resources and equipment and the childminder makes sure that these are stimulating and appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the children.

Children are able to independently select activities from a wide range of good quality toys and equipment. The childminder sensitively supervises the children's choice of toys and activities,

ensuring that they are safe and appropriate for their age and stage of development. The children's welfare is promoted as the childminder has required procedures and documents in place, for example, she has a good understanding of the child protection procedures knowing what needs to be recorded and who to contact should there be any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and have settled in well. The childminder plans and regularly changes the activities, sometimes two or three times a day, to provide the children with a stimulating environment. The children happily choose activities and resources, some of which have been specially adapted for the younger children such as the minimized cooker. The children have built up good relationships with the childminder who joins in enthusiastically with their play and demonstrates that she thoroughly enjoys their company. They also have opportunities to socialise with other children through regular attendance at music and story sessions.

The childminder is able to use her knowledge of child development to adapt activities so that they are appropriate and promote children's learning, ensuring that all children spend their time purposefully. The childminder is particularly good at responding to the children's sounds, questions and interests. The children are therefore given age appropriate explanations, increasing their understanding of their environment. The children's independence is well fostered as they freely make choices about toys, books and activities and help out with homely activities such as planting vegetables pots of strawberries and tomatoes to be harvested later in the year.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are able to feel valued and respected because the childminder ensures that she is aware of their individual needs and she is able to meet these consistently. The children's daily routines allow time for meals, rest, quiet and active play, interaction with other children through visits to the toddler group. The childminder has a positive relationship with the parents keeping them well informed of their child's progress through the use of daily conversations and daily diaries. Children play well together and are beginning to show care and concern for each other, actively learning about sharing and turn taking through games and the encouragement of being helpful and kind to one another. Their behaviour is good and they are confident within the childminder's home, contentedly making choices about their play. This is further reinforced by the childminder's understanding of the importance of setting consistent and appropriate boundaries for all children.

The children's awareness of society and the wider world is being well promoted through visits to the parks, farm, zoo and shops. The childminder understands the importance of providing a range of positive images and resources to encourage the children to respect differences. The children regularly participate in activities some of which have a world wide theme such as Chinese New Year, Diwali and Christmas. Stories and books also encourage children to learn and talk about the world around them.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder organises all aspects of her work effectively, helping the children to feel comfortable, relaxed and at home. The play area is set up to aid the differing needs of the children, such as having access to a play room where craft activities are carried out. Activities are easily accessible and rotated frequently throughout the day, thus developing the children's independence and confidence and allowing them opportunities to initiate their own play and learning. The individual needs of the children are well met by the childminder through her procedures to ensure that she has all relevant information on the children. She regularly discusses and reviews this with the parents. However, children's welfare could be affected as the attendance register does not always document the exact times the children attend and this could possibly lead to misunderstandings between parents and the childminder.

The children's emotional and physical development is promoted through the childminder's attention to detail in planning and organising her daily work, which ensures that children are offered a range of stimulating activities and opportunities and that all are able to participate.

Overall, the needs of all the children who attend are being met.

Improvements since the last inspection

The childminder was asked at the previous inspection to obtain written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. The childminder now has this permission in place for all the children she child minds.

These measures further improve the children's safety and welfare.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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):

- ensure that the children cannot access the low unmarked window and the vacuum cleaner wires
- ensure that the register is filled in with actual times the children attend

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