



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123357
Inspection date	12 June 2006
Inspector	Christine Pettitt
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 has been registered childminder for over 12 years. She lives with her husband and three children in the St Albans area within walking distance of shops, parks, schools and local woods. The family live in a four bedroomed house, the childminding takes place on the ground floor of the premises. This includes a lounge, dining room, kitchen, and cloakroom. There is a secure garden which has a fenced off area for children to play, including paved and grassed areas.

The childminder currently cares for five children, three of these are under five years. Two children attend on a full-time basis. After school and holiday care is provided. The childminder has a current first aid certificate. She attends local toddler groups with the children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a bright, hygienic and well maintained environment. They are learning effective hygiene practice through observations of the home, the childminder's hygiene procedures, and routine personal care. Older children know they should wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet and remind younger children to do this. A brief sickness agreement signed by parents makes them aware of when children should stay at home if they are unwell.

Children enjoy mealtimes together and chat as they eat their lunch. A healthy balanced diet is offered including fruit and vegetables. Children are learning about healthy eating through encouragement to eat fruit, apples are provided for children to eat on the way home from school. Discussions about healthy foods take place as they are involved in growing vegetables in the garden, in cooking activities and during mealtimes. Children know that fruit, vegetables and milk are good for you. Drinks are provided throughout the day for children to help themselves and are provided for them as they walk to and from school.

Children engage in daily physical exercise as they walk to the nursery, schools, shops, toddler groups and parks. They delight to play in the park and climb on the climbing frame, use the roundabout and enjoy imaginative play on the equipment. They greatly enjoy garden play where they confidently jump on the trampoline, play throwing and catching bean bags and balls, hiding and finding bean bags. They ride tricycles and confidently use a scooter. There is a broad range of garden play equipment. Children have a rest or sleep according to their needs. They rest after garden play and listen to a story and look at books.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in an environment where their safety is managed well through the childminder's conscientious approach and constant supervision. Safety precautions include those such as socket covers and smoke alarms being in place and hazardous materials are inaccessible to children. Children are aware of what to do in the event of a fire.

Children are learning about safety through reminders as they play and routine procedures when on outings. They know they must hold onto the buggy on the side away from the road, and to stop and look both ways at the kerbside before crossing roads. Children are talked through these procedures each time they cross roads including children in the buggy. A 'walk to school week', was used by the childminder to extend children's knowledge by involving all ages to observe road signs, road crossings and other items of interest they were required to look for on the way to school.

Children's welfare is promoted through the childminder's knowledge of child protection. She has attended a basic child protection course, has the required booklets and contact numbers. She is aware of the procedures to follow. The childminder has a current first aid certificate and

the required resources to use in the event of an accident. This means accidents would be handled competently.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, relaxed and confident in a stimulating environment. They benefit from a wide range of activities in the home and on outings. These include free play, story time, creative activities, role play, garden play and outings to toddler groups, the park, library and shops. Children access independently an excellent range of play equipment both indoors and in the garden. These are suitable for the ages of the children attending. Children learn through the thoughtful interaction and consistent input of the childminder, as she encourages learning as they play.

All activities are used to encourage children's development. A child shows sustained interest as he explores a box of Duplo. He finds a model to use as a garage, as he puts some cars in the garage he is asked how many cars can he fit in. He enthusiastically looks for and finds the red and white cars when asked. He identifies objects shown to him and is encouraged to say what they are. This encourages his number and language development. Children enjoy garden play and confidently throw and try to catch a bean bag. An older child jumps on the mini-trampoline and tries to catch the bean bag as she does this. She counts the jumps she does on the trampoline, counting to one hundred with few prompts from the childminder. Children are pleased to help when they visit shops, they find the products and put these on the counter. They delight to plant vegetable seeds in the garden, and observe their progress. On walks they look at trees, collect items such as sticks, flowers and stones and make a miniature garden when they return. They look for numbers on houses, signs and in shops. These experiences mean they have many opportunities to progress in all aspects of their development.

Older children attending after school are relaxed through experiencing a calm, friendly atmosphere. They do their homework, watch television and play together, they enjoy drawing, role play and garden play. During the holidays they visit different parks and farms. They delight in the experience of travelling by bus to these. Children's emotional needs are met through the warm, welcoming, caring approach of the childminder. Her manner shows children they are valued and promotes their confidence and self-esteem. They approach the childminder for reassurance, ask her questions and show delight at her involvement in their play. The childminder provides individual attention for younger children regularly and encourages children in skills towards independence, such as putting on their shoes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are behaving extremely well and respond to the childminder's requests willingly. This is promoted through the warm relationship which exists between the childminder and children. Children are aware of the boundaries and receive enthusiastic, genuine praise for acceptable behaviour. Expectations of children's behaviour are age-related and older children are expected to behave more responsibly, for example, when walking to school. Explanations are given to

children if their behaviour is unacceptable, they are advised of the correct way to behave. They are encouraged to apologise if they have upset another child. This promotes happy relationships between children.

Effective partnerships with parents have been established. New parents are given written information about the family and the childminding arrangements, however in some areas this lacks detail. The arrangements are discussed in-depth and parents are asked to provide written information of their child's routine to incorporate this into the childminder's day. This means children will continue to experience a familiar routine. Children are settled into the routine gradually, visiting firstly with parents and then spend a few hours with the childminder on their own. This enables children to settle successfully at their own pace. A daily sheet is completed for parents of young babies covering all aspects of the child's day. Verbal feedback is provided for parents each day and a communication book is used by the childminder and parents to convey important messages. This promotes consistent care for the children. Parents have provided references for the inspection and the comments indicate their appreciation of the care and of the stimulating environment which their children experience.

Children's individual characters, needs and preferred activities are known and met sensitively by the childminder. She is actively involved in working with parents to promote children's progress. Currently she is creating a story in pictures to provide a fun activity to encourage a child's speech. Individual attention is provided to engage in these activities. Children with special needs are welcome. Appropriate information and training would be accessed by the childminder to ensure their individual needs are met. Children learn about other cultures through discussion, resources and video tapes. They discuss different foods and festivals, such as Chinese New Year and make cultural objects of interest, for example, a totem pole. The library is used to borrow books which show the diversity of cultures.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are welcomed into an organised home where their needs are prioritised, and because of this they are happy and relaxed. The play areas are bright and child-focused which promotes children's desire to engage in play. A broad range of play equipment is displayed for children to choose and access independently. Children benefit through experiencing a consistent routine which provides stability for them as they know what to expect. Activities are provided which are planned to improve children's skills and development.

The required documentation is in place, is organised and completed regularly. Information regarding each child is kept confidentially. Consent agreements are used to ensure parents are aware of sickness arrangements, medication and complaint procedures. Some written information regarding arrangements is provided for parents. The childminder uses 'Birth to three matters', for reference and ideas. She has a current first aid certificate and has attended a child protection course. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the previous inspection the following recommendations were made: to improve fire safety and review the safety of low glass panels; to include the times of arrivals and departures in the attendance records; to make Ofsted's contact details available to parents; to provide a first aid box, with items checked and replaced frequently; to provide a written health policy detailing the procedures for the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious; to review the safety of the garden.

Times of arrival and departure are indicated on the daily attendance records as seen at the inspection visit. Brief consent forms include signed agreements with parents for procedures in the event of a child being unwell and Ofsted's contact details. The improvement in documentation helps to ensure the children's welfare.

There is a first aid box which contains resources which were recommended on the first aid course. These are checked regularly and are sufficient as seen at the inspection. The childminder now has a active smoke alarm on each level of the premises. Safety film has been placed on the low glass panels on a cabinet. The garden is safe and has a specified area for childminding which has fencing to prevent children accessing other parts of the garden. These precautions mean the safety of children is promoted.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints to report since 1st April 2004.

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):

- enhance and extend the written information for parents

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