



## Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123498
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 May 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Christine Pettitt
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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?

The childminder has been registered since October 2000. She lives with her daughter, in the St Albans area, close to shops, schools and parks. They live in a three bedroomed house where the childminding takes place on the ground floor of the premises. This includes a living area, a conservatory, kitchen and cloakroom. There is a first floor bedroom available for a child to rest.

The childminder currently cares for seven children, ages ranging from two years to ten years. They attend at varying times throughout the week, some attend before and after school only. The childminder has attended the 'Introduction to Childminding Practice' course and has a current first aid certificate. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are very warmly welcomed into a hygienic, well maintained environment. They are learning about effective hygiene practice through observations of the home, the childminder's daily practice and through routinely engaging in personal care. They know to wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals. Flannels and towels are changed on a daily basis, and crockery and cutlery are always sterilised in the dishwasher. A sickness policy ensures parents know when they should keep their child at home if they are unwell. This means procedures are in place to minimise the risk of infections spreading.

Children enjoy the social occasion of eating together. A healthy, balanced diet is provided, including fruit and fresh vegetables. Children are asked if they would like drinks of water or alternatives throughout the day. Full fat milk is offered for the children to drink or to make milk shakes. Food and drink are taken on outings after school or for picnics if the park is visited. Dietary requirements are known to the childminder, she ensures foods which meet the requirements are provided. Children learn about healthy eating through discussion at meal times and when shopping.

Children greatly enjoy daily physical exercise as they walk to local shops, parks, schools and the nursery. This is usually at least a twenty minute walk and takes place in all weathers, the childminder ensures children are dressed appropriately. Children are encouraged to walk by sometimes taking dolls in their buggies for walks. They discuss animals they see on the way. They delight to visit the park and use the park equipment, where they practice balancing, climbing, swinging. This means they have ample opportunities to extend their coordination skills and physical development. Children may rest after lunch or watch a video or enjoy a story in a quiet, calm, atmosphere.

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

The provision is good.

Children play in an environment where safety is given high priority. The childminder supervises the children conscientiously and each area is checked on a daily basis whilst ongoing home alterations take place. Safety precautions such as stair gates and smoke alarms are in place and all hazardous materials are kept in a locked cupboard. A chime alarm has been fitted as an extra safety precaution to enable the childminder to know if the porch door has been opened. Low kitchen cupboards contain safe things only. This means children can help themselves to crockery or required equipment safely as part of their learning experience. The childminder has decided the garden is out of bounds for the children until various safety measures she has identified are in place.

Children are learning about safety when they are on outings. They routinely use road safety procedures as they cross roads. Children know to wait, look, listen and think before they cross the road. They often play a stop and go game to familiarise children with responding if they are asked to stop quickly in an emergency. Children know they must hold onto the buggy when

out walking and to be careful of cars pulling out of driveways. They are learning home safety and know to be careful of the oven and of hot drinks.

Children's welfare is protected through the childminder's knowledge of child protection issues. She has attended a child protection course and is due to attend a refresher course soon. She understands signs which may indicate concerns and who to contact if necessary. The childminder has a current first aid certificate and the required first aid resources which are also taken on outings. This means any accidents would be dealt with competently.

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

The provision is good.

Children are extremely happy to enter the provision. They settle happily to their preferred play after a routine chat, cuddle and drink. Children independently choose from a variety of play resources and activities on offer. The childminder follows the children's choice using this to promote all aspects of learning. Children delight to engage in activities such as painting, craft, role play, music and singing, cooking, play dough, stories and puzzles. During free play children use paint at the table and concentrate, showing sustained interest in the picture which they are painting. They request help when engaged in doing puzzles and receive genuine praise when a puzzle is completed. They ask to have their face painted, they choose a picture from the book and select the appropriate colours required. Children use interactive toys and some are able to recognise letters and select the correct buttons. They enjoy looking at photographs of themselves and their siblings as babies and discuss this with the childminder.

Children learn effectively through valuable, first hand every day learning experiences. They delight to visit local shops to choose their lunch, or the post office to post letters. They visit the bank and the local charity shop. When engaged in shopping they excitedly help to look for items, enthusiastically count how many products they have in the trolley and recognise different colours and numbers. When children visit the park they sometimes collect leaves or feathers, and make these into collages or make headbands or duck pictures. Children love to explore the environment and spend time looking at ladybirds on stones or watching a baby bird learning to fly. After a visit to the zoo children draw pictures of the animals they see and talk about the different animals. Special events are celebrated by children making cards for their parents.

Children are happy, relaxed and settled in the childminder's home. An excellent rapport and warm affection between the childminder and children is evident. They respond happily to the childminder, approaching her confidently for reassurance, affection or to show her their paintings. Children's characters, stage of development and current home events are known in detail. These are acknowledged and their needs are met sensitively by the childminder. Skills towards children's independence are positively encouraged, such as learning to put on their own shoes and coats, use the toilet independently and counting out the cups and plates for snack. Children know they are valued through the childminder's welcoming approach, her genuine interest and her constant interaction with them.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are behaving very well. They are aware of the expectations of behaviour and respond happily to the childminder's requests, such as to help tidy away play equipment. They delight to help getting the plates and cups from the cupboards for meals, and buttering the bread. Children know they should share the toys, be kind and say please and thank you. Behaviour management is discussed with parents and strategies have been agreed by them.

Effective partnerships with parents have been established. New parents are shown certificates and discuss in-depth, with the childminder, their child and the childminding arrangements. There is currently no written information for parents. Children are settled in gradually, attending with parents for a while and then left for short periods with the childminder. Verbal information is given to parents when they collect their child including all aspects of the child's day. This means children experience continuity of care. A parent's comment in a thank you card indicates that they are extremely happy and appreciate the care their child receives.

Children's individuality regarding character, development, preferred play and needs are known to the childminder. Children delight to tell the childminder of exciting home events. They are prepared for new experiences such as starting school, through discussion. Children are made aware of other cultures as they ask questions when they notice differences between people, or wonder why they wear different clothing. These questions are answered through discussion and books. There are resources which reflect culture, religion and disability. The childminder has experience in caring for children who have special needs.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's well-being is promoted through an organised environment. Children experience a familiar routine, so they know what will happen next. This provides security and reassurance for them. Children play in an ordered and well maintained environment where safety precautions are in place and children are learning about safety issues. A range of varied resources are on offer which meet the developmental and age range of children attending and specifically provides for their play preferences.

The required documentation is available, organised and completed regularly. The childminder is aware of confidentiality issues and the information is kept securely. Each family has an individual file which contains the child information forms, contracts, consent for various issues, photographs of the children since their commencement at the childminder's and samples of their art work. Contracts are reviewed annually. The childminder has files containing information relevant to childminding for reference. The childminder prepared written information for the inspection under the five outcome headings.

Children's welfare is promoted through the professional approach of the childminder. She has attended a child protection course. Although she does not currently have the relevant information she is booked on to the 'Birth to three matters' course. A current first aid certificate is maintained. She has a new conservatory area for the children to play in and is in process of

providing storage space for play equipment within the room to provide an exciting, child orientated environment. Children's developmental progress is encouraged through the childminder using opportunities as children play to especially promote their language and number skills. She provides opportunity and resources for all aspects of children's development. Overall the range of children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Following the previous inspection the following recommendations were made: to develop knowledge and understanding of child protection issues; to ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources which promote positive images, equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice.

The childminder has attended a child protection course following the last inspection and is booked to attend a refresher course. She has the required information and has therefore extended her knowledge and understanding of child protection.

There is an appropriate range of resources which make children aware of other cultures, religions and disability. These issues are discussed as they arise in everyday situations when children ask questions about what they see. Children are encouraged to view other cultures and people with disabilities positively through looking at related books and resources with the childminder.

### **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):

- obtain 'Birth to three matters' information
- provide written information for new 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)