



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123274
Inspection date	08 June 2006
Inspector	Sheila Harrison
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder registered in 1992. She lives with her husband, 2 adult children and a son aged 12 years. The family live in a five bed roomed, chalet style bungalow in Park Street, St Albans. The family have a pet dog.

Minded children have access to the ground floor apart from the two adult bedrooms. Children can use the main lounge/dining area and a conservatory which leads to the garden for outside play. The spare bedroom on the first floor is used for undisturbed sleep.

The childminder is registered for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding three children under five full-time. No overnight care is provided.

The childminder walks or takes the car to take and collect children to the local schools.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning suitable hygiene procedures through a regular routine of hand washing after visiting the toilet and after stroking the dog. Children request to wash their hands after playing in the sand and can independently use the liquid soap dispenser.

Children's health is generally protected as the childminder has a secure arrangement with the parents for the care of sick children to ensure that infections are not spread. There is suitable documentation from the parents, including permission for medication, emergency medical treatment and records of accidents. However, the medication when given is not recorded. The childminder has a current first aid certificate. The first aid kit is suitably stocked and taken on outings. Children are learning about healthy living as they are encouraged to wear their sun hats and cream is applied frequently in the hot weather.

Children are well nourished as the children discuss healthy eating during sociable mealtimes. Parents provide the children's meals and the childminder provides frequent drinks and some fruit. Children's well-being is protected as she ensures she has up to date information on children's dietary needs and allergies.

Children enjoy sufficient amounts of physical exercise as they enjoy walking to school and taking the family dog for walks during dry weather. This gives them the opportunity to discuss the benefits of fresh air and exercise. Children have free access to the garden where they can play with the sit and ride toys and with a range of new bats and balls. Children exercise on the large trampoline whilst under close supervision. There are sufficient chances for children to rest and sleep in peaceful surroundings according to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a comfortable and welcoming environment. The childminder is aware of her responsibility to keep the children safe by assessing and minimising the potential risks. There is an appropriate safety net around the trampoline and the new garden area has a high secure fence. Children can move around safely and are protected as the childminder checks the safety of the premises before the children arrive each day. The childminder checks the park before the children start to play to ensure the surface is clear. Children are learning to keep themselves safe as they follow the house rules which are suitably explained to them. They are shown the new pond on the other side of the fence and the dangers of water are explained. The dog has a bed in the hallway and the children respect this as his own space. Older children occasionally practise the fire escape route. Children discuss and practice crossing the road safely on their regular walks to school and the park.

Children choose from a wide range of resources kept in good order and appropriate for their developmental needs. They ask for their favourite toys and activities which are stored at a low level in the conservatory. There is a suitable range for older children.

The childminder has improved her knowledge of child protection issues and has some of the required procedures and documents in place but the lack of a secure knowledge of the recording and reporting of concerns may not fully safeguard the children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and enjoy being with the childminder as she builds a strong relationship with the children contributing to their sense of belonging. The childminder knows each child's personality very well and can adapt activities to allow the children to participate together comfortably. Children play the colour matching game with the battery operated duck pond and they share equally the ducks with each other. They are confident to express their wishes and the childminder quickly responds by getting out the drawing materials. Children are relaxed as they are developing friendships with each other. They bring favourite videos from home to share at rest times. Children respond well to the childminder who is interested in what they do and say. Children make pretend tea and breakfasts with a tea set. This gives them chances to discuss their favourite foods. Children have ample opportunities to experience activities in the garden as they enjoy playing in the sand tray and they can draw on a larger scale with the chalks and an easel. During the school holiday children expand their games to include painting, cookery and making camps.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel comfortable and welcome as the childminder has a secure and long term partnership with the parents. Relationships are trusting and friendly with informal strategies for parents and childminder to communicate any day to day issues. The childminder knows the family well and this allows the children to talk confidently about their families and life at home. Children are beginning to respect others as they are learning about the wider world with a few multi-cultural resources and they celebrate their birthdays and other traditional festivals with the childminder.

Children benefit from a gentle and consistent behaviour management system. The childminder knows the different aspects of each child's personality and can use sensitive tactics to help children behave well. The childminder provides one toy telephone and asks the children to wait a very short while for their turn, then they are generously praised for sharing so well. Children learn the childminder's expectations and house rules. Good manners are fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel at ease within a well organised environment. The childminder effectively uses her time with the children to ensure their well-being. She maintains a high adult-child ratio being immediately available for cuddles and lets the children know they are important and valued. Children have time to have valuable opportunities for individual attention with the childminder whilst others are at nursery. They are fully supervised by trusted adults and the childminder

ensures all adults living in the house are suitably vetted. The childminder is committed to her role and is aware of recent changes to the regulations. The childminder has a complaints log and has seen the video on the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Overall the children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to improve her knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities and child protection issues. She agreed to ensure parents knew how to make a complaint.

The childminder has received information on child protection from the local authority to ensure she has a good understanding of the signs and symptoms and some understanding of the procedures.

The childminder has received from the local authority a pack of information and resources to extend her knowledge of equal opportunities. Parents are made aware of the complaints procedure and the childminder also noted the compliments received from the parents.

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 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 satisfactory. 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 records are kept of any medication given to children
- ensure any concerns are recorded and reported in accordance with the guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

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