



## Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123423
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 June 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Kim Wailling
<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 was registered in 1993. She lives with her husband and three adult children in Redbourn, St Albans, Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden and a private communal garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding five children under five and five children over five, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder walks and drives to the local schools and pre-school groups to take and collect children. The childminder has a dog and a cat.

The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's good health is very well promoted as the childminder has in place highly effective systems and ways of working which ensure that individual health needs are met. Parents, for example, are asked to complete individual profile sheets about their children, recording health concerns and possible food allergies. These are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Children are helped to develop personal independence skills. They are sensitively reminded to follow good routines, such as washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating. The childminder takes immediate action when children are ill to make sure that they receive appropriate care. Discussions with parents and carers about when it is appropriate to exclude children who are ill or infectious are rigorous which is underpinned by relevant documentation. Consequently, children's health and well-being are very effectively protected.

Children's health, if they have an accident, is well safeguarded. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate and documentation is kept to record accidents, which is clearly written and shared with parents. There are two well stocked first aid kits to deal with any minor injuries to children. These are checked and the contents replenished on a regular basis.

The childminder has an excellent knowledge of nutrition. Children are offered drinks frequently and have a choice of snacks, which includes fruit. Freshly prepared meals are eaten at the dining room table and during the summer months at a shaded table in the garden. Children report that the childminder is 'a good cook'. The childminder encourages children to finish their meals when sitting at the table and helps them to acquire independence skills, such as using a knife and a fork. She works closely with parents of infants under two to ensure that their dietary needs are met. As a result, children develop good appetites and are well nourished.

Children are offered excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills. Children have use of the childminder's garden and the adjoining private communal garden. They make good use of the wide range of equipment on offer. This includes a large ball pool and sturdy trikes for younger children to use. In addition, access to the adjoining well maintained communal garden provides challenge for older children as it has large spaces for children to run in and safe trees to climb. The childminder has recently received a box of small equipment from the local authority, which she is using to further extend children's physical skills and increase their knowledge about the benefits of exercise. This means that children's physical development is exceptionally well fostered.

Children can rest and sleep according to their needs. The daily routine is well organised to fit in with children's individual sleep patterns. There is space in the childminder's home for children under two to be offered undisturbed sleep. Children who do not require a sleep are offered a quiet time with the childminder, for example, sharing stories after lunch. As a result, children are well rested.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very clean, tidy and welcoming family home where a designated playroom has been built for their exclusive use. Children can move around freely. Younger children have safe and easy access to the enclosed rear garden which facilitates choice. Furniture and storage of toys has been arranged to create uncluttered spaces and room for play, for example, building a large elaborate train layout. Children use equipment, such as car seats, that are of suitable design and age-appropriate. The garden and adjoining communal garden are very well maintained so that possible hazards to children are minimised. The family dog is in good health and at the time of the inspection visit housed away from the areas of the house that minded children use. Overall, children are safely cared for in a well maintained and organised environment.

The childminder is aware of the need to be vigilant and ensures that at all times children are in sight or hearing. Children are encouraged to think about keeping themselves safe, for example, following safety rules when crossing roads. There is clear emergency evacuation procedure for children to follow which is practised on a regular basis. Children's welfare is satisfactorily protected as the childminder has a good understanding of child protection issues, however, documentation does not currently follow recently issued guidelines. This potentially limits the effectiveness of the systems in place to safeguard children's welfare.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are settled and are very happy at the childminder's home. They are secure and confident in themselves and with the childminder. The structure of daily routine, which for younger children includes walks and supervised visits to the communal garden, helps children to feel secure. Children and their parents and carers are invited to take part in an annually arranged visit to the seaside which further extends children's enjoyment.

Children show eager interest in the very wide range of toys and activities on offer. They can freely access toys and initiate their own play. This includes creating their own games, such as following each other when riding trikes, which are satisfying and rewarding to them. Children happily take part in planned activities, such as making props for impromptu concerts and drawing. The childminder has an excellent understanding of how to stimulate children's interests and keep children busily involved. She sits and plays with the children, engaging them in meaningful conversation. Children in her care describe her as 'silly, funny, fun and kind'.

The childminder is familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Children's learning benefit as the childminder is incorporating many of their aspects into her practice, for example, encouraging children to become independent learners. The childminder is very aware of children's individual needs, and sensitively fosters development. Children who are experiencing learning difficulties and disabilities receive a high level of support as the childminder works closely with their parents to ensure that good strategies are in place to maximise their development. Overall, children are offered an exciting

range of activities and experiences which means that all children make outstanding progress in their learning given their capability and starting points.

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

The provision is good.

Children are valued. They form positive relationships with the childminder and with each other. Children play happily together as social skills, such as sharing, are encouraged. Children are helped to manage their own behaviour as the childminder has a good understanding of behaviour strategies, such as asking older children to think about the consequences of their actions. This means that children behave well, cooperate with each other and are beginning to learn right from wrong.

Children have a sense of belonging as the setting has in place features, such as cupboards, to store children's personal belongings. Children are helped to gain an understanding of the wider community as the childminder has acquired an adequate range of resources, including art and craft manuals and story books from different cultures. In addition, children are taken on outings to places of interest, including an annual visit to the seaside. Photographs are taken of these outings which enable children to recall these experiences and events.

Arrangements to settle children into the childminder's care are negotiated taking into account the needs of children and the requirements of parents and carers for flexible childcare. Information about the setting is available for parents and carers and discussed before childminding commences. Consequently, children are well supported in the transition between home and the childminder so that they become confident and make good progress. The childminder knows of the requirement to record any complaints made in writing by parents, although currently no process is in place. Subsequently, documentation that supports the partnership with parents and carers is underdeveloped. As a result, potentially, parents and carers are not fully informed to enable all to work together to support the children's well-being.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the efficient organisation of the childminder. She is very committed to ensuring that a high standard of care is offered to children. The childminder offers both part-time and full-time places which means that siblings are often cared for together. This offers children continuity of care.

The childminder regularly updates herself on new childcare initiatives by accessing appropriate training. Most policies, records and procedures are in place which promotes children's well-being. These are well organised in a portfolio so that they can be accessed easily.

Children's enjoyment is well promoted as the childminder has organised her daily routine very well. This means that children are given time for unhurried play, rest, relaxed meals and snacks. Children feel very comfortable and at ease in the childminder's home. Consequently, children are confident to form friendships, initiate their own play as well as enjoying being involved in planned activities and outings. Overall, children's needs are met.

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

At the last inspection, the childminder was asked to review procedures for recording administration of medications and accidents. Separate records are now kept to aid clarity. This has enhanced systems for protecting children's health.

### **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 child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- devise a procedure to record any complaints by parents and carers.

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)