



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123346
Inspection date	15 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder registered in 1993. She lives in a four bedroomed house in a residential area of St. Albans, close to local schools, shops and other amenities. She uses all of the downstairs of her home, which includes a large family room with attached open plan kitchen, a ground floor toilet and a large garden.

The childminder lives with her husband and four children aged 17, 14, 10 and six years. The family have two cats and a rabbit.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children aged under eight years. She is currently minding three children under five and two children aged over five after school and during the holidays. No overnight care is provided. The childminder attends a local childminder group.

The childminder has completed her NVQ 3 in Childcare and achieved the Herts. Quality Standards award as a provider of Early Years Childcare and Education.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is encouraged as they are offered healthy snacks and nutritious meals. Children are helped to enjoy their food and the childminder promotes the healthy choices. They choose different types of salad leaves and the childminder informs children that the skin of the apple 'is the best bit'. Meals are prepared using fresh fruit and vegetables. Processed foods and sweets are given infrequently. The childminder is aware of the children's individual dietary needs and has a wide range of information on different cultural and religious diets. Dishes from different cultures are enjoyed and children experiment by using chopsticks. Parents provide the food for babies before they are fully weaned to ensure their individual needs are met. Mealtimes are relaxed social occasions and children help to lay the small table. There is time for occasional relaxed snacks in front of the television when older children come home from school.

Children are protected from becoming ill as the childminder recognises and reduces possible risks with a comprehensive process for sickness and dealing with bodily fluids. The childminder is well informed about each child's health with thorough documentation including permission for emergency medical treatment and records of accidents. She has a current first aid certificate. Sufficient documentation and first aid equipment is taken on outings to ensure the children's health and safety is promoted.

Children are learning how to keep themselves healthy with simple good health and hygiene practices. They know the significance of washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Children know it is important to drink more fluids and to wear sun hats and sun block in hot weather.

Children enjoy substantial amounts of challenging and worthwhile physical exercise. They enjoy physical play in the garden with a wide range of exciting play materials including a large trampoline. Children who are unsure of the demanding equipment are gently encouraged with plenty of appropriate reassurance. Children have frequent trips to the nearby park. They accompany the childminder on long bicycle rides on the Alban Way which allows them to ride on a path away from the road. They wear appropriate clothing for the weather conditions. On outings, the childminder rearranges the car seats to enable children to enjoy picnics even in wet weather.

Young children sit in their buggy to eat their lunch and for their afternoon nap under the close supervision of the childminder although this potentially does not fully encourage a suitable posture. Older children can sleep comfortably on the settee or on a small blow up mattress with the necessary bedding.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have sufficient amounts of space to move freely inside with easy access to the garden. Great emphasis is given to making a comfortable and inviting environment where the children's photographs and pictures are displayed at a low level. This ensures children feel valued and respected. The childminder has a wide range of resources which is rotated to maintain and extend children's interest. Children access a suitable range of toys and games freely for themselves which are stored attractively at a low level and children are encouraged to put one toy away before getting out more toys.

Children's safety and security is given the utmost priority by daily rigorous checks and risk assessments which ensure hazards to children are effectively minimised. The childminder ensures any adult in the house are alert to possible dangers to the children. The childminder gives high priority to helping children understand how to keep themselves safe. She closely supervises the trampoline and ensures the placing of large crash mats. Children understand the consistent enforcement of the house rules inside the home and in the garden. Children know that only one child is allowed on the apparatus at a time and the serious consequences of any equipment or children being underneath the trampoline. Children discuss the evacuation plan and how they would leave the premises. They practise crossing the roads safely on trips to the park and can explain the safety equipment they need to wear whilst riding their bicycles.

Children are very well protected from abuse or neglect as the childminder has a secure understanding of child protection issues. She has recently undertaken the advanced training course provided by the local authority and is clear about her responsibility to report concerns. Parents are aware of the procedures in place. Children frequently discuss stranger danger and the differences between good secrets, for example making father day cards and bad secrets that make them feel uncomfortable.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are eager to attend as the childminder provides a calm and stimulating environment where children are happy and confident. The childminder provides a range of structured activities such as baking and music. They frequently mix with others at local childminder groups and undertake various art and craft activities. Children are motivated to learn as their success is celebrated. They are encouraged gently to play successfully on their own or with others. The childminder plans experiences that are well matched to the children's interests and current affairs. Children discuss events that are important in their life for example starting nursery and they are currently following the countries taking part in the world cup. The childminder has increased the experiences for young children to explore and investigate with a treasure basket of natural and everyday objects in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children play with an exciting range of activities that provide high levels of challenge. They can recall exciting role play situations as they enjoyed setting up an opticians shop with appropriate props. Children's vocabulary is expanded and they are encouraged to read for a purpose during everyday activities as the childminder reads the names of the leaves in the mixed salad packet and children can discuss the differences in appearance and taste. Children's thinking is

encouraged as the childminder encourages them to observe the differences in the lighting to the pictures. The childminder plays and listens to the children. Children take an active part in the life of the setting as they choose the new resources, a new toy fire engine and playdough.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are well promoted as there is a superb partnership between the childminder, parents and other important adults and professionals. The childminder has provided a long term commitment to the families and has a secure backup procedure with adults that are well known and trusted by the families. There are very effective communication systems to ensure parents are reassured about their children's welfare at all times. The childminder will text the parents when they are unable to ring for example, after their child's first visit to nursery. Parents receive daily records of the children's day and the opportunity to comment in the diary. Regular half-termly meetings out of the children's earshot ensure a valuable two way conversation on the needs of the children. Discussions can take place immediately if the parent or childminder has any concerns. Parents are informed fully on the recent changes to regulations. The childminder is discussing with parents a developmental record scheme before introducing it to ensure it is acceptable and meets their children's needs.

The childminder demonstrates a clear and thorough understanding of caring for children with disabilities and learning difficulties. She has a system in place to gather information from the parents and other professionals regarding medical needs and behaviour management strategies. The childminder has attended various courses on different medical conditions and disabilities and is recruited into a local authority community childminder scheme.

Children have many valuable chances to learn about the wider world. They experiment with cooking dishes from around the world. Children celebrate important events in their lives and enjoy planning parties for each other's birthdays. They discuss and acknowledge other peoples festivals. Children are encouraged to feel valued and free from discrimination as the play materials reflect diversity and show positive images of boys and girls. Children recall visiting the book shop to choose and buy books for each other to share. They bring toys from home to have their own belongings around them.

Children benefit as the childminder manages their behaviour positively and consistently. There are clear and realistic boundaries and children know what is expected of them. Children are encouraged to share and to be kind to each other. The childminder is sensitive to the children's feelings. She praises and encourages them frequently. Good manners are encouraged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is enhanced by the childminders exceptional organisation. All procedures are robust and individual to the setting. Records are clear up-to date, easily accessible and stored securely. The childminder has a professional childcare qualification to NVQ level 3 and she enhances her skills by attending courses on specific subjects for example school governance,

Communication Matters and Managing Change. Information from the courses is used to inform current practice. For example, the childminder has introduced a password system for the safe collection of children between her, the parents and nursery. The childminder uses the time to good effect. The children have her full attention while they are present and when the children are attending school she takes the opportunity to research good child care practice on the internet. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to record any medication given and to make sure that any potential hazards in the downstairs toilet and utility area are inaccessible to the children.

The childminder has devised a medication form to record any medication given and to collect comprehensive health information. Daily risk assessments are undertaken to ensure all hazards are minimised.

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 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 the good health of children during their periods of rest or sleep

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