



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	495312
Inspection date	13 June 2006
Inspector	Paula Durrant

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 was registered in May 2001. She lives with her husband and their two daughters, aged three and seven years in a suburb of Welwyn Garden City. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding, which comprises of the kitchen-dinner and sitting room. The upstairs rooms used are the bathroom and one of the bedrooms, which is used only to provide a suitable area for undisturbed sleep. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to provide care for a total of four children under the age of eight years and is currently minding two children under the age of five years and one child over the age of eight years. A majority of the children in attendance are part-time. The family has no pets.

The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and where time is tight for collection on specific days she uses her vehicle. She regularly attends local toddler groups with the children, one of these is a childminder support group. The childminder also makes full use

of other community based amenities, such as parks; library and shops. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they become ill or have an accident as the childminder adheres to appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines. For example, children who are unwell are discouraged from attending in line with stipulated exclusion periods for childhood diseases. Appropriate measures, such as the childminder's maintenance of a valid first aid qualification and sufficient medical supplies to administer emergency aid all contribute to maintaining children's health care needs. Good practise, such as suitable storage and preparation of foods; use of antibacterial solutions to cleanse work surfaces and equipment means that children's welfare is not compromised as cross contamination is minimised.

Children learn to understand simple good health and hygiene as they follow the daily routine, such as when washing their hands. They know the reasons behind the hand-washing process as the childminder frequently introduces discussions about germs and the effects they can have on their bodies, making them poorly and unwell.

The childminder is flexible in the provision of foods in line with parents preferences. She is happy to combine a mix of packed meals provided by parents and her own provision of home cooked foods. Children benefit in receiving a varied nutritional diet. The childminder discusses provision with parents to ensure that individual dietary needs are complied with. Children benefit from healthy options, such as a balance of pasta; fish and chicken dishes. The childminder has knowledge of providing five portions of fruit and vegetables a day which she implements into her menus. Children remain well hydrated as drinks are offered at regular intervals throughout the day. Younger children have their cups replenished whilst older children are able to independently help themselves to juice or water using the external water cooler appliance on the fridge.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. Each day they walk to and from school and regular trips to the local playground and activity centres are frequent. They also have access to a secure and safe garden area which is suitably equipped with a range of challenging resources to develop increased control and coordination. Children rest and are active in accordance to their needs. Younger children sleep in line with home-care routines whilst older children sit quietly looking at books or watching favourite child-centred television programmes to recuperate their energy levels.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe secure family home where all necessary safety precautions remain in place. The childminder is highly vigilant undertaking daily checks of the home prior to children's attendance. Children remain in sight and hearing at all times.

Children access a diverse range of resources that are suitably maintained. The childminder abides to manufacturer's recommendations providing age appropriate equipment that holds a recognised safety kite mark. Children learn to keep themselves safe as the childminder explains house rules and road safety when out. Children are beginning to develop an awareness of fire safety as they follow the written procedure. However, the frequency of drills is variable and there is no formal record to evaluate how effective the procedure is when drills are undertaken.

Children's welfare is priority in this household. Children are cared for by a suitable adult who has a clear understanding of child development. The childminder has completed vetting checks and demonstrates a strong knowledge of child protection. She knows where and how to record and report concerns in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and settled in their surroundings. The childminder is highly attentive to the children in her care providing a range of practical age appropriate activities that inspire interest and promote challenge. She recognises individual preferences, such as the desire to play alone and to make independent choices in the selection of favourite play materials. Due to the childminder expert knowledge of child development significant emphasis is given to allowing children to guide their own play where they can freely access a vast array of age-appropriate equipment in addition to the childminder offering additional suggestions. For example, prior to lunch the childminder recognised that the children were becoming disinterested in playing with the dolls. She therefore offered an alternative activity of cars and a road mat. The children were keen to play with this using their imaginative creativity to line the cars up alongside the skirting board signifying a busy traffic jam.

The childminder is very competent in providing a range of stimulating activities which she prepares in readiness on her formal daily planner. Although planning mechanisms are in place to guide the childminder in promoting equal coverage of all areas of development this is not set in stone. The childminder is intuitive to the children's needs and recognises that on occasion other interests may take precedence. She is very skilled at taking her lead from the children and in implementing incidental learning. For example, children benefited from an opportunity to reaffirm number and name colours when printing with animal blocks and print pads. The childminder has knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs take high priority in this home-from-home provision. A strong working partnership with parents supports the individual care needs and delivery of service. Mutual respect, love and understanding all play an integral part of the childminder's practice. Children are exceptionally polite, courteous and respectful of the childminder and her home. They know the house rules and use social graces, such as 'please' and 'thank you' without prompt. Children play an active part in their own learning. They make independent decisions in their play and the activities that they wish to participate in. They have positive levels of self-esteem and respect the opinions and actions of others because the childminder consistently praises their efforts and re-affirms their achievements, guiding their social and moral development. Good systems for sharing information, such as the use of daily diaries and an informative portfolio ensures parents remain well-informed of their child's daily activities and the childminders working ethos. The childminder is yet to implement a procedure for recording parental complaints in line with current legislative changes.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a conscientious practitioner who has a secure understanding of child development and the way that children learn through play. She makes full use of her nursery nurse training and her life skills as a nanny and mother to implement activities that appeal and stimulate interest and a desire to learn. For example, she provides a balance of focused adult led activities in addition to promoting free choice in order for children to reaffirm and practise their skills. Children feel part of an extended family and are comfortable in this well-organised and inviting environment. They confidently make independent choices in their activities and extend their own play and learning in an imaginative way. The childminder effectively uses her written procedures and routines to promote the welfare, care and learning of all the children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was required to ensure written permission for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. Children's health is promoted as the childminder has implemented an additional supplementary appendix to her contract which holds the required consents from parents for seeking medical advice or emergency aid. Lastly the childminder was required to ensure that local authority guidance on child protection is available. Children remain safe as the childminder has acquired the appropriate guidance literature from the local authority on child protection.

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):

- improve current systems for emergency evacuation by recording the frequency of drills undertaken and a summary statement of how it was managed
- ensure there is a procedure in place for the recording of parental complaints in line with current legislative changes.

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