



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123379
Inspection date	07 September 2006
Inspector	Karen Molloy
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 1996. She lives with her husband and three children aged 16, 13 and 10 years in Harpenden, Hertfordshire, within walking distance to parks and schools. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The family have a cat.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding twelve children under five on a part time basis. The childminder works in conjunction with a local nursery to provide extended care for children. Those children that attend nursery in the morning attend the childminders home in the afternoon and children who are cared for at the childminders home in the morning are taken to the afternoon nursery session.

The childminder works with a childminding assistant and both adults hold an early years qualification. 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 cared for in a warm, clean and comfortable home where they learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. Children's independence is encouraged as they try to put their own shoes on and use the toilet. A poster in the toilet reminds children to wash their hands. New children are monitored to enable them to receive any necessary help. Children are able to access baby wipes and flannels, which contributes to their independence and understanding of good hygiene practice. Their good health is promoted as the childminder follows appropriate procedures such as regular hand washing, disposing of nappies and storing food correctly. Children are protected in hot weather as parents are asked to provide sun cream and sun hats.

Children are cared for sensitively when unwell. Any illness is discussed with parents and if children become unwell at the childminder's home, parents are contacted. The childminder sits with children who are unwell and ensures they are comfortable. Children do not attend for at least 24 hours if they have any infectious illness. This is made clear to parents and included in the policy information. As the childminder works closely with the local school nursery, she is keen to maintain their rules and keep consistency in the care she provides. Medication is administered for children that require this and prior consent is completed for any specific medication. However, there is no record for medication that has been administered. This may impact on children's well-being. Parents are reminded to keep the childminder up to date with current contact information in case of an emergency. Children are protected by a childminder that holds an up to date first aid qualification and maintains a first aid box.

Children benefit from a wide range of physical activities which contributes to their good health and promotes their physical development. They regularly enjoy fresh air and exercise as they walk to and from school and as the information states 'have been known to hop a good part of the walk!' Children use the garden daily and have access to a wide range of equipment that supports their learning outdoors. Particular movements are linked into themes, for example, children learn how to skip whilst looking at the letter 's' and reading the 'Skipping rope snake'. They develop good hand:eye coordination and other skills, as they play bat and ball games, balance on logs and experiment with different ways of moving and 'freezing'. During the winter or poor weather, children continue to enjoy physical activity as they sing 'Five little monkeys jumping on the bed' whilst jumping on a mattress indoors. Children develop a good awareness of their bodies and how they work. They look at x-rays and skeletons, draw round their own bodies and create their own x-ray.

Children rest and sleep according to their needs. They benefit from some quiet time where they watch TV or relax on the sofa with a blanket.

Children thrive on a healthy and nutritious diet. They enjoy a range of interesting and varied foods that are home cooked. Good practice is fostered through topics and the letter of the week, for example, 'f' for fruit. Children learn the nutritional needs of the day, what is good food or not good food. A recent project introduced the children to various exotic fruits and

vegetables, developing their knowledge of foods around the world. Children enjoy a variety of tasty and nutritional meals and snacks and drinks are readily available. Children are offered a 'healthy plate' including apples, carrots, lettuce and tomatoes and they are asked to choose at least one thing. Any special dietary requirements are recorded and taken into account, with menus adapted accordingly. Children's input on ideas for meals is encouraged and they are often involved in the preparation. At lunch time, children participate in laying the table before both children and adults sit down together. Children participate in cookery activities which helps to extend their food awareness further.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where any risks are identified and minimised. This means they are able to move around safely, freely and with some independence. Appropriate safety precautions are in place such as socket covers, safety gates and a secure front door. Attention is paid to fire safety with suitable measures in place, smoke alarms that are regularly checked, a fire extinguisher and a fire blanket. A fire theme provides an opportunity for children to focus on fire safety where they develop a fire drill and make a fire safety laminate to take home. A fire protection policy supports the good practice. Children are kept safe and are well supervised by the adults. The correct adult:child ratio is ensured at all times with extra cover organised over the busier lunch time period. Children are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, they are reminded not to lean on the chair and are reminded about not putting things in their mouth. Their understanding of safety is supported as they look at general safety in the home through a theme on houses.

Children are kept safe outdoors. They walk to and from school with emphasis placed on road safety. Children have made their own crossing and sing a road safety rhyme to reinforce this. Children use the garden regularly and this is kept safe. It is fully enclosed and is checked for animal faeces and general wear and tear of equipment. All resources are well maintained and offer children a good choice of safe and suitable activity outdoors.

Children have access to a wide range of toys and equipment that are safe and suitable. Toys and activities are planned in advance and children can choose from these resources. There are some further toys that are clearly labelled and easily accessible. Other equipment is stored in boxes and resources are rotated regularly to provide further choices. These are kept clean and well maintained. Children participate in washing clothes at the end of term and outdoor equipment is checked too.

Children are well protected by adults who supervise them effectively. They understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. The childminder holds current child protection literature and keeps records regarding any concerns. Parents are made aware of the childminders responsibilities regarding child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy and very settled. They are busy and absorbed in a wide range of activities that support their all round development. Activities and opportunities are well planned and well executed. Children can give explanations, recall past activities and retain information. Many of their previous activities have been documented in individual scrap books that are kept at the childminder's home. Children take great delight in going through these. They laugh, remember bits of detail and talk about the activities they have carried out.

Children's learning is actively promoted through stimulating and challenging activities. They have the opportunity to acquire lots of new knowledge and skills. As they become familiar with the letter 'a' they participate in various activities to support this such as apple printing and trying different apples. At snack time, children are able to remember the names of the 'Granny Smith' and 'Pink Lady'. Children learn about measurement as they compare their heights and roll balls to see how far they go, to gain some understanding of distance. Children develop a very wide vocabulary and their language and communication skills are promoted by staff who talk to them, ask questions, listen and acknowledge their comments. As they learn about the laptop mouse, a young child says 'that's very mysterious!' Information about the Foundation Stage is attractively displayed for both parents and children with photographs and explanations, making it a useful display.

Children experience a broad range of opportunities both indoors and outside. They become involved in imaginative play situations and show great delight in their roles 'I am the queen who is in charge of the house but they are making me work all night!' Adults support the children and ensure sufficient resources are available to enable them to develop their play. They have the opportunity to read, be creative, become familiar with letters and sounds and be active. Equally, children are given time to relax and unwind when they need to.

Children form positive relationships and relate very well to the childminder and assistant. They chat comfortably, share a joke and are confident to approach the childminder for support or to recall an event. In turn, children are greatly supported and encouraged by the adults. Children's confidence and self-esteem is given high priority as they are praised and acknowledged for their efforts and achievements. Children's independence is fostered as they make their own choices and decisions. They move freely from indoors to the garden, which is equally rich in learning opportunities. Children are encouraged to become involved in the planned activity which they are keen to do. Children ask for a story and sit down on the childminder's lap to read the book. There is lots of expression and the children are absorbed and their interest is maintained. Children play very well together and make good relationships with each other, they ask others 'which one would you like?'

Children's social skills are given strong emphasis and lunchtime provides a valuable time to promote this area of development. As children and adults sit down together, children are given responsibility in preparing the table. They are encouraged to try different foods and this is a relaxed, sociable occasion, where children and adults share their news.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for by the childminder who works with parents to meet children's individual needs. They are taught to be considerate to others and they demonstrate kindness, for example, as children are told an adult's name is not displayed, they say 'I'll make one for you.....and you'll be so happy!' Children are respected and valued as individuals. They are given a sense of belonging. Children get excited as other children arrive and the childminder takes all children to the door to greet them. They are excited and chatty and both the children and adults listen to each other and ask questions. At lunch time, children help to bring things to the table and they are asked where they would like to sit. Children are asked what they would like to drink and good manners are encouraged. Therefore children's individual needs are considered and they are offered choices and opportunities to help each other and promote good social skills.

The childminder is keen to ensure that all children within group feel included and will make adjustments accordingly, such as individual food requirements or learning key words in other languages. Resources such as books reflect different cultures and children participate in celebrating different festivals such as Chinese New Year. A positive equal opportunities policy supports the good practice. Children with special needs are fully integrated into the setting and the childminder works with parents to ensure their needs are met.

Children behave very well and are clear of the boundaries. They receive lots of positive reinforcement. Stickers and positive management of children's behaviour is effective. Children are taught by example and good manners promoted. They learn to respect one another and to treat others as they wish to be treated. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with using 'firm, clear and consistent language'. If children persist in unacceptable behaviour, they are given 'time out' and encouraged to think about their actions and asked to apologise, if appropriate. Children are encouraged to solve problems through discussion. They are helped to see the consequences of their actions and to consider others' feelings. Children participate in activities and games that promote good social skills.

Children are cared for by adults that work well in partnership with parents. Information is shared verbally about the children and parents are given the 'Roundwood Nursery Club' policies. Photographs and literature is attractively displayed for parents' information. Feedback from parents is very positive and comments include; '..... wonderful time-loved, stimulated, challenged and nurtured..... has grown and developed so much... kept her curiosity and enthusiasm. Huge amount of time and effort' '.....loved every minute!' and '..... have made her time fun, creative, educational and provided a safe and caring environment'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are generally well protected although not all household members over 16 have completed relevant checks and this may compromise children's welfare. Children are cared for by a childminder and assistant who have a good knowledge and understanding of child development and a high regard for the well-being of all children. Both adults have a childcare

qualification and the childminder holds a current first aid certificate. She keeps up to date through reading relevant magazines.

Children are cared for in a well organised setting. The adult:child ratio positively supports children's care, learning and play and the childminder works with an assistant to provide additional care and support. Children receive additional support over the lunchtime period when another childminder helps out. They are taken to and from nursery by whilst one adult stays at home with the other group of children. The environment is well organised including the activities and opportunities both indoors and outside. Table, chairs and resources are taken outdoors and children can dress up and enjoy role play both indoors and outside in the play house.

Policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement. Roundwood Nursery Club Policies details information on first aid and good health, behaviour, safety and equal opportunities which provides useful information for parents. Most of the required documentation is in place and up to date.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder was asked to devise an illness policy and share it with parents. This has been developed and impacts positively on children's well-being. This information is included in the policy information and is shared with parents to ensure they are well informed. The childminder was also asked to consider confidentiality in records. This has been addressed and records are maintained and stored appropriately.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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 all household members over 16 have completed appropriate checks
- ensure a system is in place to record any medication that is administered

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