



## Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123478
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 September 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Tina Kelly
<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 has been registered since 2000. She lives with her husband and five children aged five, seven, eight, 16 and 18 years old. They live in the Marshalswick area of St Albans in Hertfordshire. The house is within walking distance to schools, shops and the local parks.

Children access a playroom and dining area adjacent to the kitchen as well as the family lounge. Children do not use upstairs, there is a downstairs cloakroom. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The family have a small pet dog and some goldfish.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children under the age of eight, her husband is recorded as an assistant. At the time of inspection two children aged nearly three years old and eighteen months were being cared for.

The childminder is in regular contact with other childminders, she attends local carer and toddler groups.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and caring environment. Their individual needs are discussed with parents and recorded to ensure their requirements are met. Children are confident in their own personal routines as the childminder liaises closely with parents about important routines such as potty training.

Children's nutritional needs are well met as they are provided with a menu which offers fruit and healthy options for all. In fine weather picnic lunches are popular with the children but in the winter they are provided with cooked meals. Children are introduced to a wide variety of tastes and textures, they are keen to try new experiences alongside their friends.

Children enjoy exercise, they have many opportunities throughout the week to develop their physical skills. They walk to and from the school and are taken to the local parks and to the shops. Apparatus and ride-on toys in the garden develop and extend children's balance, stamina and co-ordination skills. At the time of the visit children put on some music and started to dance, this is an activity they take part in on a regular basis.

Children's health is maintained as the childminder keeps appropriate records with regards to their personal needs. A flexible routine ensures all children are able to rest and to play when they need to, their individual needs are well met.

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

The provision is good.

Children play in a secure environment. The childminder is aware of potential hazards and has appropriate measures in place to maintain the children's safety. Young children are becoming aware of their own safety as the childminder shows them how to sit properly on the small chairs and they are reminded to pick up dropped toys so as not to tread on them. Children have free access to a good selection of quality, well maintained toys, which are stored at low level so children can make choices about their play.

Children are taken out each day, they are learning about simple rules that will keep them safe when they are out in the community. They talk about road safety, to hold onto the buggy and to stay close to their carer.

Children's well-being is monitored and maintained as the childminder keeps appropriate records with regards to accidents and incidents. She is aware of her responsibility to inform Ofsted of significant events and acts appropriately if she has concerns. However, the childminder's practice would be further enhanced if her general understanding of child protection issues was developed. The leaflets and contact numbers provided for the local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) are not kept with the day-to-day childminding documents so they are not readily accessible for the childminder or to parents.

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

The provision is good.

Children have opportunities to access a good selection of toys and resources, they can make choices about their play. Young children look into the low level storage boxes and decide what they would like to play with, they are confident to pull out the boxes for themselves. They then sit and explore the contents of their chosen box, chatting and showing the toys to the childminder and the other children. Children are confident, they move freely around the playroom, moving the small children's furniture to make space for their play.

The childminder is part of a local support network with other childminders, they take the children out to local parks, they visit each others' homes and provide small groups of children with social events where they get to meet new friends. The childminders plan events for the children to play together. They may offer art and craft activities so they combine their resources which extends the children's opportunity to explore and use a wider range of materials.

Outings and visits with are an important part of the children's routine. They have opportunities to visit a local children's farm and the zoo where they learn about the animals and what is involved in their care.

Young children are encouraged to be aware of the other children's needs, they learn to share and co-operate with gentle support from their carer who explains what needs to be done to make sure there is enough space and toys for each child. Children are confident and friendly, they are learning good social skills in a well managed environment.

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

The provision is good.

All children are equally valued and respected within the setting. The childminder is very aware of their different characters, she adapts her plans and the activities to ensure they all have opportunities to play, learn and to explore. The childminder has routines and documents in place to help all children reach their full potential and to meet their needs including cultural or special needs.

Children's understanding of the wider world is developed as they are taken out in their own community each day. They are introduced to different cultures through various resources, books and world people.

Good relationships have developed with parents who are kept informed about their child's routines through daily discussions. Parents are not fully informed about the childminding service offered, they are not aware of the requirements of registration or the childminder's commitment to equal opportunities and child protection.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The childminder organises her week effectively around walking the older children to and from school alongside the various part time, but full day, care arrangements. The busy routines are well managed with children having time to take part in a wide range of play experiences.

Children's well-being is of high priority with appropriate documentation in place to ensure children's individual needs are recognised and met. Contracts are reviewed on a regular basis, the registration certificate is on display.

All members of the household have had the relevant checks, children are not left with adults who have not been appropriately vetted. The childminder's husband works alongside her as an assistant, he is often involved when walking to collect the older children from school.

Overall children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the time of the last inspection the childminder was given one recommendation: to ensure children have access to age appropriate furniture. The playroom now provides children with small tables and chairs so they can sit and play at a low level.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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):

- develop knowledge and understanding of child protection issues

- continue to develop the information for parents to include detail of the childminding service offered, a statement on equal opportunities and child protection.

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)