



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123672
Inspection date	26 September 2006
Inspector	Sandra Daniels
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 1997. She lives with her husband and three children aged ten, 15 and 17 years. They live in Sawbridgeworth close to local shops, schools and parks. The whole of the ground floor of the property is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years and is currently minding three children aged two, three and four years.

The family have a pet rabbit who is caged in the garden and goldfish in the house.

The childminder also runs a local toddler group on a regular basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's healthy growth and development is well promoted. Parents provide lunchboxes for children, following discussion with the childminder who advises against sweets and crisps and encourages healthy options to be included. Healthy choices of snacks, such as fruits, vegetables, and bread and provided by the childminder. Fresh drinking water is always available and the childminder reminds younger children to drink regularly. Children's individual dietary requirements are respected and followed, following close discussion with parents and accurate, detailed recording. Children learn to appreciate the values of eating healthily, as they discuss this with the childminder and reinforce it during imaginative play experiences.

Children have regular and frequent opportunities to exercise as they experience the elements and fresh air in the childminder's garden or a nearby park. They wear appropriate clothing to allow them to go out in most weathers. Children practise skills of climbing and balancing on the climbing frame, learn to throw and catch balls and delight in bouncing on the mini-trampoline. Children enjoy walking every day and develop an understanding of the benefits of regular exercise. Children are able to rest or sleep in a quiet, comfortable environment in the lounge, where they can be closely monitored by the childminder.

Children learn how to keep themselves healthy through practising simple good health and hygiene routines. For example, they appreciate the significance of washing their hands before eating and after playing with pets. There is a bathroom on the ground floor of the premises, enabling children to become increasingly independent in maintaining their own personal hygiene. Younger children are supported by the childminder who works together with parents to successfully toilet train them.

Children are well-protected against common childhood illnesses as the childminder recognises and reduces possible risks of cross-infection and takes action to prevent this. She wears disposable gloves when changing babies and younger children and nappies are double-wrapped and disposed of appropriately. Should a child become ill whilst in the care of the childminder, effective policies and procedures are in place to ensure the child is well cared for until collected by a parent. The childminder is knowledgeable about each child's health and has all necessary documentation in place to ensure that it is maintained. For example, parental permission to administer medications and to seek emergency medical advice or treatment should the need arise. Children are protected in an emergency as the childminder holds a current first aid certificate and regularly checks her first aid kit to make sure everything is available and in date.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are protected from harm and have the freedom to explore and play very safely in the childminder's home and garden as she takes time to identify and minimise any potential hazards. They begin to appreciate the importance of keeping themselves safe as they regularly practise an emergency evacuation procedure with the childminder. They are encouraged to behave

responsibly in the home, for example, children of all ages learn that is dangerous to throw toys and to run indoors. They are supported by the childminder to think of the possible consequences of these actions, giving them a greater understanding of safety issues. Children take turns to press the button for the 'green man' as they cross the road every day on the way to and from pre-school. They know they must hold hands or hold onto the buggy at all times when out walking.

Children are able to make independent choices from the extensive range of toys and equipment that is available to them. All resources are of good quality and are very well maintained. They are checked regularly to ensure there are no broken parts which could harm a child and children are encouraged to report any damage to the childminder. There is child-sized furniture for children to use safely, for example, a small table and chairs where they enjoy their snacks.

Children are kept safe as the childminder is vigilant in her supervision of them. Children always remain in her sight, whatever activity they are engaged in. The childminder has a secure knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and has efficient procedures in place to ensure children's welfare is continually safeguarded. The childminder is fully aware of her role and responsibility in the protection of children and this information is also shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and enjoy their time with the childminder. They benefit from secure, warm and comfortable relationships with the childminder and her family. Children enthusiastically engage in a wealth of interesting and stimulating activities and experiences. They are able to make choices about what they play with and thoroughly enjoy themselves as they learn and develop. The childminder skilfully provides a good balance between adult led and child initiated activities. She knows when to become involved in children's play and when to 'stand back' and allow children to express themselves as they develop and extend their own play. The childminder considers each child's individual interests and provides good support and challenges. For example, when playing with 'fuzzy felt' shapes, the childminder encourages children to recognise and name various colours and shapes. Children show pride in their achievements as an abundance of praise and encouragement is given by the childminder.

Children's creativity is promoted through many opportunities for art and craft activities where they can explore the properties of paint, glue, dough and sand. Children flourish as they play imaginatively in role-play situations with dolls, buggies and associated equipment. They relive past experiences and are given time to develop their play in this comfortable and flexible provision.

The childminder informally observes children's development in order to help them progress to the next steps. She uses the information from the 'Birth to three matters' framework effectively to support her practice with younger children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well met. They are given ample support, both verbally and non-verbally, in the form of cuddles, to ensure that they feel comfortable and secure. The childminder demonstrates a good understanding of caring for children with additional needs. She is fully aware of the need to adapt activities to ensure that all children can be included in all activities.

Children learn to respect themselves and others. They develop a sense of trust and feel valued as the childminder joins in with their play, supports their interests and interacts fully with them. Children's behaviour is managed positively and consistently. They are encouraged to share and take turns and to be kind to each other. The childminder is very sensitive to each child's feelings and encourages them to consider the feelings of others also. Children of all ages are polite and courteous, waiting to speak instead of interrupting adults' conversation.

Children are very settled and secure in this setting where the childminder has developed positive and effective relationships with parents. A flexible and long-term commitment enables parents to rest assured their child is well cared for and fully included into the life of the family. There is very effective two-way communication between the childminder and parents. Parents receive information about the service provided by the childminder and regular feedback on their child's progress and development. Any concerns are discussed openly and honestly and resolved quickly. However, there is not yet a system in place to record complaints made by parents and any action taken.

Children can predict the pattern of the day and are beginning to share responsibility for tidying up. They have many useful opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate differences and similarities. They discuss various festivals and use chopsticks whilst trying new foods at Chinese New Year. Children have opportunities to socialise with peers as they go with the childminder to a local toddler group which she runs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall children's needs are met. The childminder is very well organised. She is warm and affectionate towards the children in her care, who are comfortable and very happy. Children's development is supported as the childminder is committed to her role and enjoys her work with children. The childminder pro-actively develops her good practice by attending training courses to ensure she remains up to date with the latest trends and guidelines.

Children's welfare, care and learning are promoted as the childminder keeps all required records to maintain a safe and efficient provision, for example, accident records and daily register of attendance. Written policies and procedures work effectively in practice to ensure that children receive the best possible care. This also supports good working relationships with parents. Children are happy and secure and their individual needs are respected and effectively met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to ensure that records for children's attendance are completed daily and to ensure that the fireplace in the lounge does not pose a hazard to children.

The childminder keeps children safe by recording details of attendance daily. Times of arrival and departure are accurately recorded.

The childminder keeps children safe by ensuring that the fireplace in the lounge does not pose a hazard. The fire itself is never used when minded children are present and children are protected as the hearth is safe and free from dangerous objects.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1st April 2004. 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):

- keep a record of complaints made by parents relating to the National Standards and any action taken.

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