



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123742
Inspection date	14 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 satisfactory. 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 1992. She lives with her two children aged 11 and 13 years in a property on the outskirts of the town of Bishops Stortford. The whole of the ground floor of the property is used for childminding. Children requiring undisturbed sleep have access to a bedroom on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to provide care for a total of four children under the age of eight years, including an additional condition to care for four children under the age of five years on a Monday only until one of the children reaches five years. She is presently minding a total of five children under the age of eight years, two of whom are full-time. The family has a pet lizard kept in a secure tank in the lounge.

The childminder makes full use of local community based amenities, such as playgroups, parks and networking with other childminders. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a well maintained family home where they learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care through their daily routine. They know when and why they wash their hands as the childminder frequently talks to them about keeping clean and free from germs.

Children's health is potentially maintained in the event of a medical emergency as the childminder holds a current first aid qualification and ensures sufficient medical supplies are available in her first aid box. However, no consent from parents to seek emergency aid or advice should a major trauma occur means that children's health could be compromised in an emergency situation. All accidental injuries and medication administered are recorded in line with registration requirements. Parental consent is in place for the administration of medication.

Children receive a well balanced diet. The childminder takes account of the wishes of parents and the children's choices to provide nutritious meals and snacks that appeal to the children and meet their individual dietary needs. All foods are home cooked from fresh raw ingredients. Children remain well hydrated as drinks are always available and replenished periodically throughout the day.

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 gain plentiful opportunities to sit quietly and recuperate their energy levels during quiet times, such as looking at books or watching television following lunch.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

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 who rest are monitored periodically whilst they sleep. Although the home is safe and secure the childminder does not currently hold a valid public liability insurance on her property for childminding purposes as this has recently expired. This means that should an incident occur the childminder would not be covered against claims made against her.

Children access an extensive range of good quality resources that are maintained in good repair. 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. For example, children are encouraged to walk slowly holding the hand rail when going up and coming down the stairs in order to ensure they do not fall and hurt themselves. They know to sit still on the chairs at the kitchen table on all four legs because if they rock the chairs back they may bang their heads or hurt their backs. They know to hold hands when out walking and to keep their safety restraints secured until the car comes to a halt when travelling in the childminder's vehicle. Although children are beginning to develop an awareness of personal safety they do not know how to keep themselves safe in the event of a fire. The childminder herself has an informal procedure but this is not discussed or practised with the children.

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. Children develop positive levels of self-esteem as they experiment and reaffirm their skills, such as when playing with word puzzles. They persevere with their set task maintaining good levels of concentration as they connect the correct parts of the animal's body to form the figure of the animal and the name underneath. Lovely direction and support by the childminder provides plentiful opportunities to extend language skills, such as the linking of initial letter sounds when defining 'P' for 'Panda'.

The childminder is very competent in providing a range of stimulating activities which she prepares in readiness. Although informal 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 makes full use of her equipment and of the local community to ensure children receive a range of experiences in her care. This includes access to parent and toddler groups, local parks and activity centres. Children truly enjoy their time at this provision. They exude lots of confidence as they instigate conversations from activities they are participating in and reflect on from home-life experiences, such as a child talking about their imminent holiday with their grandparents. The childminder is unaware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework which could provide a supportive mechanism for planning activities for younger children in her care, hence further enhancing her current practice.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. The childminder works closely with parents to ensure appropriate care plans are adhered to. For example, she respects the wishes of parents who request their children do not eat chicken as a food group. Children have an understanding of the appropriate codes of conduct. They know to share and take turns when playing with equipment and to use social graces, such as 'please' and 'thank you' when receiving or requesting items. The childminder promotes a highly effective two-way communication system between home and her provision. For example, use of written daily diaries ensures parents/carers remain well informed about the service provided and their children's activities. The childminder has yet to implement a procedure for managing parental complaint in line with current legislative changes.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder uses her warm personality and her life experience to promote positive outcomes for children. She is able to enrich children's care, learning and play through her constant interaction and interest. All of the children receive individual attention and benefit from social interaction with children of varying ages and backgrounds. Children confidently choose activities and the childminder encourages them to extend their experiences. Children's welfare and education is effectively supported through the childminder's clear use of informal routines which cover the national standards. She stays up-to-date with changing practice via short courses and articles of interest in professional publications and childcare magazines. Although the childminder has a majority of her written documentation in place there are some minor omissions. For example, one minded child does not have a contract and there is no written consent from parents for emergency aid or for transporting minded children in the childminder's car. This means she is not fully compliant with her registration requirements as all children cared for by the childminder should have a formal written agreement with parents and carers which must be available on site for inspection at all times. Children's care could be potentially compromised in the event of a medical emergency and should a collision occur in the childminder's car she would not be covered by her insurance. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was required to ensure children's safety with regard to electrical sockets and television wires and to ensure that sleeping children are comfortable and checked regularly. Children stay safe as the childminder has reviewed her risk assessment systems, checking the house on a daily basis to ensure any potential hazards are minimised or eradicated. Children who sleep are checked periodically whilst they rest. She was also required to develop her knowledge of the referral process for child protection issues including contact numbers and local authority guidance. Children's welfare is upheld as the childminder has a clear understanding of the referral process for child protection concerns which includes current contact numbers and authority guidance.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted have received one complaint since the last inspection relating to National Standard 6:Safety. The complaint related to the supervision of children when out. Ofsted investigated the concerns raised by conducting a visit to the provision. Upon investigation the childcare inspectors were satisfied that they found no breach of the National Standards. No further action was taken. The childminder remains qualified for registration.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- devise a written fire evacuation procedure and ensure that drills undertaken are recorded
- ensure public liability cover is in place and valid
- improve the outcomes for children from birth to three by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- ensure there is a system in place for the recording and management of parental complaints in line with current legislative changes
- ensure all required records are in place and available for inspection, this refers to consents for emergency advice or treatment, permission to transport minded children in the car and contracts for all minded children.

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