



## Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	496880
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 August 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Jill Nugent

<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 registered in 2001. She lives with her husband and adult daughter in a house in Hatfield. She uses the whole of the house for childminding and there is a secure garden available for outdoor play. She has a pet tortoise.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time. She is currently minding four children, of whom, three are under five and one is over five. She holds the Hertfordshire Quality Standards award.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted because the childminder has all the necessary medical permissions in place and maintains her medical records appropriately. Parents are made aware of her sickness policy and are expected to collect children who become ill whilst in her care. This helps to protect other children from infection. Children are well taken care of in the event of an accident as the childminder has good access to first aid equipment. She supervises children closely and has not yet had to deal with any accidents. Children sleep according to routine, in a bed or cot upstairs where they are quiet and comfortable. Children are becoming aware of good hygiene practices. They know to wash their hands after going to the toilet and have individual flannels provided. They also wash their hands after touching the tortoise in the garden. Older children are learning to use the toilet independently and are encouraged by enthusiastic praise from the childminder. Children's nappies are changed in a hygienic manner. Their bedding is replaced weekly to ensure cleanliness. These procedures contribute to keeping children healthy.

Children have their dietary needs met. They enjoy a cooked dinner in the middle of the day and children who stay all day have a light tea. Dinner consists of a meal of meat and two vegetables and children enjoy eating together at the kitchen table. They learn about healthy eating and are always encouraged to have fruit at snack time. Children with allergies eat appropriately as the childminder takes their dietary needs into account. Children are offered drinks at intervals throughout the day. Overall, they are well nourished. Children enjoy opportunities for regular physical activity. They like to play in the garden with a variety of toys, including bikes, cars and a slide. They are looking forward to having a 'country cottage' erected in the garden. Young children have their emotional needs met. They benefit from much individual attention and cuddles. They often visit the local park and are developing confidence on the play equipment. Overall, children have plenty of fresh air and exercise to help them keep fit.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and secure environment. They play safely in the downstairs rooms and, if necessary, a safety gate prevents young children from accessing the staircase. They are able to move around rooms safely as the house is tidy and free from clutter. If children are sleeping upstairs, the childminder leaves the door open so that she can keep a check on them. They play safely in the garden because the sheds and back gate are kept locked. Children's safety is promoted through the actions of the childminder. She has made the low level glass in cabinets safe and fitted locks to kitchen cupboards. She is planning to have a conservatory built and has thought through how to keep children safe during construction. There are good fire precautions in place and the childminder has devised an evacuation plan. However, she does not practise this plan regularly with the children and, therefore, they are not fully aware of what to do in an emergency. The childminder carries out safety checks around her house and garden at regular intervals. Overall, children are safe and secure in her care.

Children use a range of suitable and safe resources. There is a large collection of colourful and interesting toys from which they can choose. These are sorted into labelled boxes and rotated with others stored in a downstairs cupboard to provide variety. All toys and equipment are regularly checked and cleaned. Children enjoy the introduction of extra resources, such as, a new box of lego. Older children can play with various toys and games, more suitable for their age group, in the spare bedroom upstairs. They know that they must not play with toys which have small parts when young children are around. Children learn to keep themselves safe as the childminder talks with them about safety in various situations, for example, near to roads and water. Very young children can explore safely because the childminder sits and plays with them. They keep safe on outings because she makes good use of a buggy and reins. She has a good awareness of child protection issues. She has attended training and has a recording system in place in case of any concerns. Parents are made aware of her responsibilities and a password system is in place for the collection of children by other adults. Therefore, children are well protected in this area.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are well settled and very happy in the setting. They are confident and develop independence. In free-choice play they are encouraged to select resources through the childminder suggesting different ideas. Children benefit greatly from her involvement in their play. She talks with them, promoting learning and making each play activity a pleasurable experience for all children. They respond enthusiastically to her as she shows an interest in what they do and say. She enhances their imaginative play, engaging them in much conversation. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities gain self-confidence through the childminder's careful attention to their needs. Children enjoy taking part in a variety of activities, including colouring pictures, making collages and baking cakes. The childminder interacts with them to extend their manipulative skills and increase awareness of colour and pattern. They are developing self esteem through much praise for their achievements. They relate well to each other and are happy to share and take turns when looking at picture books together. They enjoy spending time together quietly watching a television programme after lunch or, at other times, joining in songs and action rhymes with the childminder. Therefore, they have many good opportunities for stimulating play.

Children are involved in a wide range of activities which support their development and learning. The childminder promotes learning very effectively for children of all ages. She is particularly good at engaging children in interesting conversation and this creates a happy, learning environment. She makes good use of creative activities and sharing books to encourage children's thinking. For example, they recall a recent visit to the seaside when looking at pictures in a book. They benefit from her awareness of their individual needs. For instance, young children explore toys imaginatively while older ones busy themselves making pictures. Children are encouraged to learn about letters and numbers or do homework tasks after school. The childminder refers to the 'Birth to three matters' framework to help very young children make progress. Children develop communication skills through their efforts to respond to her questions, and imaginative skills in response to her suggestions during play. They attend

childminding groups each week where they can take part in activities and learn to socialise. Overall, children develop new skills and make progress in their learning in a vibrant setting.

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

The provision is good.

Children are valued and included, each one being treated as an individual. All children are included in general conversation and like to sit together at the kitchen table when taking part in creative activities. They chat about everyday topics and future events. The childminder draws individual children into the conversation, responding to everybody so that they all feel special. Children feel very much at home and consequently develop a sense of belonging. Young children are becoming aware of themselves as members of a group. They are helped to feel secure and re-assured through the childminder having a set daily routine. She always keeps a check on older children if they are playing in another room. Children learn to make their own decisions, for example, older children have written their own labels to accompany photographs of outings. They learn about a wider society through using resources which reflect diversity, such as dolls, play people and books. They talk about the customs of people who come from other countries. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive very good support from the childminder. She liaises closely with their parents to ensure that children receive the appropriate help to develop both physically and intellectually. Therefore, children's needs are met effectively.

Children behave very well and play harmoniously. A calm atmosphere prevails as the childminder keeps children happily involved and busy at all times. They are aware of their boundaries because she reminds them of the rules and encourages the use of good manners. Children learn to respect others and co-operate in tidying up before lunch. If behaving inappropriately, they are given some time away from a situation to reflect. Consequently, children learn to behave responsibly. The childminder works closely with parents and carers. Parents receive a copy of the policy statements and complete a consent form so that the childminder can ensure their well-being whilst in her care. They exchange information when children are collected and the childminder takes care to be confidential at all times. However, the childminder has not yet informed parents about the new complaints procedures. In the event of a parent being unaware of how to raise a concern, continuity of care may be adversely affected. Overall, children benefit from the working partnership between parents and the childminder.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The childminder's policies and procedures work well in practice to promote the outcomes for children. All her documentation is kept neatly in files and her written policies are clear and informative. Her public liability insurance is kept up to date and an attendance register maintained appropriately. She is committed to continually improving her practice through training. Since her last inspection she has completed the Hertfordshire Quality Standards and attended various workshops and short courses since registration. She ensures that her First Aid qualification is renewed when necessary.

Children enjoy plenty of space to play or relax in the living room. Older children also have access to the upstairs bedroom which has been converted into a playroom especially for their use. It contains a television, games and toys suited to their needs and interests. The childminder makes good use of her time, always involved with the children and promoting their health, safety and enjoyment. They go on many outings in the school holidays with the local childminder group, for instance, to the seaside, zoos and farms. The childminder's involvement with this group also provides children with cover in case of an emergency. Overall, children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the previous inspection the childminder was asked to obtain written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. This permission is now requested from all parents.

### **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):

- practise the evacuation plan regularly
- ensure parents are aware of the new complaints procedures.

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)