



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	130474
Inspection date	18 October 2006
Inspector	Anneliese Fox-Jones
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 has been a registered since 1992. She lives with her husband and two children aged 10 and 13 years. They live in a house on the outskirts of North Watford. Schools, shops and play areas are within a short walk.

The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding with limited access to upstairs. There is a downstairs cloakroom. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The family have two guinea pigs.

The childminder is registered to provide care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time. She is currently caring for four children at various times throughout the week.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's care is well fostered through effective health and hygiene routines. Children play in a clean environment. They show good responsibility for their own personal care and hygiene. They wash their hands independently after using the toilet and before eating. The childminder holds a first aid certificate and therefore can act appropriately if an accident occurs. Individual and personal information is discussed to ensure health and medical needs are identified and adhered to. However, effective systems are not in place for obtaining written parental consent prior to medication being administered. This potentially has an impact on the children's well-being.

Children are beginning to learn the benefits of a healthy diet. They are challenged as they learn through talking about different food groups and what is good for them. They are beginning to understand that biscuits are treats and vegetables and fruit are what they need to grow. Children are therefore well-nourished as they are provided with varied and nutritious snacks and meals. Children can access drinks whenever they need to which helps them recognise and respond to their body's needs.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities, which contributes to their good health. They benefit from regular walks, visits to the park and play in the garden throughout the year. They are encouraged through the childminder's enthusiasm for the outdoors and keeping active. Children experience a wide range of physical activities using both large and small equipment. For example, they enjoy playing football, ride bikes or scooters and are enthusiastic to bounce on the trampoline. Children also benefit from a dedicated play shed in the garden, where they can paint, manipulate play dough, set up the train track or play snooker. This means children have many opportunities to gain new skills and develop confidence and co-ordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and safe environment in which risks to the children's safety have been identified and addressed. Children use suitable and good quality equipment which is appropriate and meets children's differing needs and interests. Items are checked regularly to ensure that they remain safe and clean. Children have access to a dedicated play room and outside garden shed where resources are easily accessible and well organised for children of all ages. This allows children to freely move around and make choices.

Appropriate procedures on outings keep children safe. Children learn about road safety and they are closely monitored. Children learn to keep themselves safe within the home as clear boundaries and reinforced. For example, children are reminded not to sit on the sofa arm as they may fall onto the floor and hurt themselves. Children are generally safeguarded as the childminder has a sound understanding of child protection issues and procedures to follow should she be concerned. The childminder has some literature in this area to ensure that when concerned she complies with appropriate guidelines.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and happy. They enjoy the nurturing and warm relationship with the childminder from whom they receive great support and encouragement. Children experience a varied range of activities that contribute to their development inside and outside the home. They flourish in the childminder's care as she offers purposeful and challenging activities. Children ask questions and she extends their learning by offering appropriate answers to the children's level of understanding. The childminder is beginning to use the 'Birth to three matters' framework as a reference point and for additional ideas for young children.

Children's individual needs are met through a wide range of toys, resources and equipment. Children are involved, busy and interested in the activities provided. They readily use their initiative to independently select activities for themselves. Consequently, they are able to pursue their individual interests and develop their own learning opportunities. Children benefit from the childminder's positive attitude to providing a stimulating and resourceful indoor and outdoor environment. The outdoors is strongly encouraged all year round and children regularly play in the garden, visit local places of interest, parks and various groups. This provides children with access to different environments and opportunities to socialise with others.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and treated as individuals. They feel a good sense of belonging as they are at ease with the childminder and approach her for comfort, support and reassurance. A varied range of toys and resources increases the children's awareness of diversity. For example, books, puzzles and small world figures. Older children discuss various celebrations throughout the year from the knowledge learned in school. The childminder has a clear understanding that some children with special needs may require additional resources and support to help them reach their potential.

Children behave well. The childminder's calm and gentle approach helps children learn appropriate and responsible behaviour. Good manners and behaviour is positively modelled and encouraged by the childminder and rewarded by praise. If necessary children have timeout to think about their behaviour. The childminder works carefully with parents to meet children's individual needs and provide them with appropriate support. The childminder ensures that parents are kept informed through regular verbal communication. An additional welcome portfolio is provided for new parents regarding relevant policies and procedures about the setting. However, parents wishes and concerns can not be fully respected and acted upon as the childminder is not aware of the complaints system required in line with current regulations.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Space and equipment is prepared so that children can access resources easily and independently which enables them to make choices about their play. A balance of child-led and organised

play ensure that children have a range of different enjoyable experiences whilst they are with the childminder. Older children who attend after school are active in accordance with their needs. Children benefit from routines which make them feel secure and relaxed. They play, eat and rest as they need to.

Documentation is stored securely and information is shared appropriately with parents. Policies and procedures are in place to help keep the children healthy and safeguard their well-being, with the exception of attendance records which have been allowed to lapse. Consequently, this compromises the children's welfare. Effective communication that the childminder has with parents contributes to children's continuity of care. Overall the children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to develop information for parents. Parents are kept well informed and up to date of the childminding service offered as an organised portfolio outlines the childminder's policies and procedures. It also includes detailed information about the childminder and her family and picture evidence of activities carried out with the children.

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):

- obtain prior written parental consent before administering any prescribed medication to children
- improve knowledge and develop systems for the recording of complaints, in line with current regulations
- ensure an accurate daily record of attendance is maintained.

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