



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123712
Inspection date	08 November 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 outstanding. 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 1998. She lives with her husband and two children aged seven and nine years in Bishop's Stortford. Local shops, parks and a library are within walking distance and schools and pre-schools are nearby.

The whole of the premises is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for four children under eight years and is currently minding a total of eleven children under eight years, all on a part-time basis.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for within an exceptionally clean and hygienic environment where the childminder has excellent systems in place to prevent the spread of infection. For example, daily housework, disinfecting work-surfaces and equipment as it is used, hand washing routines and excluding children with infectious illnesses. Children learn about managing good personal hygiene through regular hand washing and using individual towels. The childminder explains to children that germs can be harmful to their health and shows them how to wash and dry their hands properly.

Children's health, medical and dietary requirements are met extremely well by the childminder. Parents provide details of the care required and are presented with written records of any accidents, incidents or medication administered. The needs of children with special dietary requirements are met with good care and attention. For example, nut products are avoided during cooking activities and the childminder keeps written instructions from parents. Children are very well cared for in the event of an accident. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate and is confident in her ability to respond appropriately to any medical emergency.

Children have excellent opportunities to learn about healthy eating habits through innovative activities and very good practice from the childminder. For example, they play games and look at books to help them to recognise healthy options which they identify and match up with foods they have for snacks and meals. Older children help to prepare snacks and lay the table for meals. Children sit at the table with the childminder who sees meal times as social times where they discuss what they like to eat and what foods are good for you. All meals and snacks provided are thoughtfully planned and presented to encourage children to enjoy them. Children delighted in designing their own pizza toppings, cooking and then eating them. Children can all access drinks throughout the day and the childminder reminds younger children to drink frequently.

Children's physical development and fitness is extremely well promoted by the childminder through good use of a broad range of toys and activities. For example, children enjoy exercise as they walk to and from school daily. In the childminder's garden children enjoy playing with bats and balls, scooters and sit-and-ride toys. Children are often taken to toddler groups and local parks where they can learn and practise skills such as running, climbing and balancing. They are encouraged by the childminder to recognise the benefits of physical activity as they discover that their hearts beat faster after exercise. All children are able to rest or be active according to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in premises which are skilfully organised by the childminder to ensure children's safety and security. All potential risks are identified and extremely effectively minimised through rigorous risk assessments and daily checks on furniture, equipment and

resources. There are fire safety precautions in place, such as a fire blanket and smoke alarms and children discuss and take part in emergency evacuation procedures. Children enjoy the story of the firefly and this reinforces their understanding of the potential dangers of fire and what action they would need to take to minimise the risks of fire in the home. The childminder is vigilant in her supervision of children, both inside and outside of the home. Safety gates are used, all electric plug sockets covered and dangerous substances kept out of the reach of children. The garden has high-sided boundaries and the gate is kept locked.

Children learn how to reduce hazards for themselves as they are encouraged by the childminder to behave responsibly. For example, they help to pick up toys and equipment from the floor when they have finished playing with them and they know not to run indoors. When out walking with the childminder, children learn how to cross the road safely. They know they must hold hands and stay within the childminder's sight when at the park.

All toys, equipment and resources are of extremely good quality and are very well maintained. Children of all ages can access toys freely and independently from toy boxes on the floor and book shelves. They do not have access to anything unsafe or unsuitable for their stage of development. Such toys are kept out of reach as part of the thorough risk assessment. This ensures that children of all ages can play freely and safely.

Children are exceptionally well protected by the childminder who has thorough systems in place to safeguard their welfare. For example, updated records from parents, which include details of adults authorised to collect children, close supervision and attention to detail. The childminder has an excellent understanding of her role and responsibility in protecting children and the necessary procedures involved in raising concerns. Parents are familiar with the comprehensive child protection policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children of all ages are extremely happy and settled in this setting where the childminder is exceptionally aware of, and sensitive to, their individual needs. Children feel very safe and secure as the childminder is relaxed, calm and very confident with them. They benefit from attentive care and an appropriate show of affection. Children respond positively to excellent communication and very well supported play. The childminder is highly skilled at encouraging young children to express themselves. She constantly talks to them, explaining what they are doing, asking questions and encouraging them to explore. Consequently, children's speech and language skills develop rapidly. Older children's vocabulary extends daily as the childminder introduces new words and meanings. Children thoroughly enjoy listening to stories, learning the meaning of words through the childminder's expressive reading. Children are totally enthralled as they listen to 'The Bear Under The Bed', a favourite story of theirs. They are able to predict what happens next and their interest is maintained throughout.

Young children clearly benefit as the childminder implements aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework in her practice. All children flourish and are enthusiastic and eager to learn as the childminder plans very worthwhile activities for them which cover all areas of learning, offering high levels of challenge appropriate to each child. Children develop a high self-esteem

and feel good about themselves as the childminder offers an abundance of praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements.

Children's creative development is exceptionally well promoted through a multitude of art and craft activities. They make things to take home, for example, today children are making remembrance day poppies. Children explore and investigate many materials, for example, play-dough, paints, sand and water. All children can select their own activities and resources as toys are organised thoughtfully to encourage their independence and confidence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for consistently and according to their parents' wishes in all areas of this provision. Superb partnerships have been developed between parents and the childminder, for example, an informative prospectus is shared with parents, detailing the service provided by the childminder. Parents complete record forms, contracts and consent forms which are updated regularly to ensure children continue to be cared for according to their wishes. Highly effective daily communication ensures that parents are kept fully involved and informed about their child's day with the childminder.

All children are cared for equally and fairly by the childminder who has excellent systems in place to meet their individual needs and routines. Children participate in a variety of activities designed to increase their understanding of differences and similarities amongst people and raise their awareness of each other's individuality. For example, tasting foods from different countries and playing with many resources which reflect positive images of different cultures and abilities. The childminder is proactive in providing any additional skills and resources necessary to support the full inclusion of all children in the setting. For example, she uses 'baby makaton' with children.

Children behave extremely well. They are developing an excellent understanding of what is expected of them and how to behave positively and responsibly towards others. They learn to share and take turns, say please and thank-you without prompt and do not show any unkind or disrespectful behaviour. Children flourish in this very positive environment where they respond exceptionally well to the childminder's calm and consistent approach.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Overall, children's needs are met. There are highly effective and efficient procedures and organisation in place to ensure that all children receive the best possible care. Children benefit from the innovative and interesting range of practical activities planned for them by the childminder. They also have many opportunities for free-play where they can direct and extend their own play and follow their own interests. Space and resources are extremely well organised to allow children to move around independently and select their own toys and activities. Children benefit from the childminder's effective organisation of her time spent with them. Children are never late arriving at school, nor late being collected.

The childminder is committed to providing an outstanding service for children and their families. She ensures she keeps up to date with the latest developments in childcare and education by reading dedicated publications. All necessary documentation is in place and is organised extremely well and shared with parents. Contracts are reviewed annually. Outcomes for children attending this setting are outstanding.

Children are cared for within a warm and very welcoming home where the childminder has systems in place to ensure they are not at risk. For example, she ensures that all persons with access to children are suitably vetted.

Children clearly thrive in this environment where the childminder dedicates her working hours to them, enjoys her work and fully involves the children in the life of her family and home.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to ensure the safety of children in the garden with regard to plants.

The childminder has moved home since the last inspection and has taken care to ensure there are no plants in the garden which could potentially be dangerous to children.

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 outstanding. 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

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

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