



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	162284
Inspection date	17 October 2006
Inspector	Kerry Freshwater
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 1994. She lives in Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding five children under eight years, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder also cares for children over the age of eight. The childminder attends the local toddler group. The family has four pet cats and a rabbit.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. They play in the garden, enjoy local walks and visit the park regularly to benefit from the fresh air. Children experience a variety of physical activities using both large and small equipment. For example, they have fun riding bicycles, playing football and croquet. They dig and pour using sand and water in the garden and climb on various apparatus at the local parks, soft play areas and toddler group. In the house they enthusiastically construct the train track, build with bricks and manipulate play dough.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. They are cared for in a welcoming, clean home where they understand the importance of regular cleaning routines to keep them safe and healthy. Children have a clear understanding of why they must wash their hands after using the toilet and before lunch, they learn about the need to wash away the germs to prevent them getting a tummy ache. Children use individual flannels and towels and brush their teeth to keep them strong and healthy. The contents of the first aid box are limited which means that injuries could potentially be treated ineffectively.

Children are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. They know which type of food is good to eat. Children have access to regular drinks throughout the day and eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. The childminder takes account of the wishes of parents and works with them closely to provide nutritious snacks and meals that appeal to the children as well as meeting their dietary needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is a high priority and they are cared for in a home where risks are identified and minimised. They move around safely, freely and independently and adhere to house rules to keep them safe. Children know not to touch the cooker so that they do not risk burning themselves and not to play with electrical sockets. The childminder helps children understand how to keep themselves free from harm inside and outside of the home through discussion and leading by example. Children learn to be aware of strangers and practise codes for crossing the road safely. They confidently explain how they 'stop, look and listen' when at the road side and to hold the childminder's hand as they cross. Through the experience of losing a much loved teddy children have learnt the importance of staying where they are if they get separated so that the childminder can return to find them in the same way that they did with the teddy bear. Children are protected from fire hazard, they have practised emergency evacuation and smoke alarms, a fire blanket and extinguisher are all in place.

A broad range of exciting, safe and developmentally appropriate resources are stored in a well organised and appealing way around the play room at child height for easy access. This enables the children to independently select their play and activities safely. Play equipment is attractively set out to encourage its use. For example, the childminder has developed a market stall in the

corner of the room using coloured boxes of fruits and vegetables on low level shelving, a kitchen and shopping trolley to complete the area.

The childminder has the required procedures and documents in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. For example, she has a good understanding of child protection issues. She has attended training in this area and has all the relevant documentation in place including the newly produced Safeguarding Children booklet.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a broad variety of exciting play and activities which are child-led or planned and organised by the childminder. They receive adult guidance to give them extra support if needed but their independence is promoted as much as possible. The children are provided with a range of stimulating play to aid their development. For example, they develop their social skills as they play games together and involve younger children in their play. Their creativity and imaginations are extended as they dress up and enjoy pretend play such as shops and fire fighters.

Children benefit from a range of activities which help develop their knowledge and skills. They learn to recognise different colours when they choose coloured bricks and play with cars and trains. They count as they climb up and down the stairs or sing nursery rhymes. Children learn about weight and measure as they weigh ingredients for cooking. Helping the childminder care for the family's pet rabbit, cats and new kitten teaches them about the natural environment along with outings to the zoo, woods and park to collect different autumnal items. Regular use of creative materials such as pencils, crayons, paint and materials for collage activities encourages the children to represent their experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. The children have created a colourful caterpillar and butterflies and learn about life cycles of a caterpillar as they read and enjoy the Hungry Caterpillar story. They explore different textures as they play with sand, water and gloop. They make foot prints and create colourful collage pictures using different materials and dried pasta. Children are encouraged to take part in everyday routines to learn about their local community, for example, helping the childminder with her shopping.

Children's confidence and self-esteem is developed by the childminder who gives them frequent praise and encouragement at appropriate times. Their sense of belonging is promoted by the childminder who knows them well and values their achievements and artwork which she displays in her home and shares with parents. They make positive relationships, finding new friends on outings and at the different parks and toddler groups used.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder provides a good range of activities and meaningful resources to promote a positive view of the wider world. Books, dolls, puzzles, small figures and a variety of fun activities increases children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others. The children

enjoy learning about different countries during the Olympic games, they recognise national flags and can point out some countries on the world map. They make dragons and lanterns for Chinese New Year, learn Spanish words and sign language to help them to communicate with one minded child and a neighbour.

Children's individual needs are well met as they follow their daily routine which is discussed with parents. The childminder knows the children well and values their contributions. Children's behaviour is very good. They understand right and wrong through consistent boundaries, praise and the age appropriate methods used by the childminder to manage behaviour. Children are considerate, they share, take turns and are polite, remembering to say 'please' and 'thank you'. The childminder provides a range of opportunities for the children to socialise which helps them make positive relationships with others. She encourages them to manage their own behaviour dealing with anger and frustration calmly and respectfully. Realistic challenges are set by the childminder to help the children develop. This promotes their confidence and self-esteem. They feel relaxed and secure and able to make independent choices about what they want to do.

Children benefit from a very strong partnership between the childminder and parents who exchange information frequently. They have daily discussions about the children and what they have been doing, their developmental progress and achievements. This helps to keep parents well informed of how their child's needs are being met. The childminder provides a written record of the achievements and routines of younger children. She values feedback from parents to support her provision and has received positive and complimentary comments about children's care and the service provided.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's needs are met through effective organisation and good communication with parents. Space and equipment is thoughtfully prepared so that children can access resources easily and independently which enables them to make choices about their play. A balance of child-led activities and organised play ensure children have a range of different enjoyable experiences whilst they are with the childminder and they are given lots of opportunities to make their own choices about what they want to do. The childminder ensures that the days are well planned to allow time for quiet and active play within everyday routines. This helps to make children feel secure and relaxed. Children play, eat, sleep and rest as they need to.

Documentation is stored securely and information shared appropriately with parents. Written policies and procedures guide the childminder in her daily practice helping to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. Children benefit from the childminder's knowledge and experience which she continues to update with relevant training. She has just completed the Herts Quality Standard accreditation and has carried out other recent training including child protection, behaviour management and a workshop relating to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The childminder has completed a recent first aid training course and holds a current first aid certificate. Overall, the range of children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to ensure that appropriate vetting procedures are carried out on any persons in the household over 16 years, ensure that the garden water feature does not pose a hazard to children, implement and maintain a daily record of children's attendance including their arrival and departure times, obtain written parental consent for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and to maintain records of children's health history.

Appropriate vetting procedures have been carried out on the childminder who is the only person in the household. The water feature has now been replaced and the new feature is secured with strong wire mesh. Children's attendance is accurately recorded and all required documentation is in place.

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):

- increase resources in first aid box.

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