



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY321056
Inspection date	26 October 2006
Inspector	Kim Wailling
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 2006. She lives with her husband and two children aged four years and five months in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. The whole of the 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 four children at any one time and is currently minding two children under five and one child over five, on a part-time basis. The childminder walks to the local school to take and collect children. The childminder attends local parent and toddler groups. The family has no pets.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is very well promoted as the childminder has in place effective systems and ways of working. Children are helped to develop personal independence skills, such as carefully brushing their teeth after breakfast which on some days is taken at the childminder's house. They are sensitively reminded to follow good routines. For example, washing their hands after using the toilet. Individual coloured towels are made available for children to use. Parents and carers are asked to complete profile sheets about their children, recording health concerns and possible food allergies. This means that the childminder is fully informed about individual children's requirements. If children become unwell, the childminder is able to take immediate action as she keeps all emergency contact numbers. Discussions with parents and carers about when it is appropriate to exclude children who are ill or infectious take place, this is underpinned by relevant documentation. Consequently, children's health and well-being are very effectively protected.

Children's health, if they have an accident, is well safeguarded. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate and documentation is in place to record accidents and incidents. There is a well stocked first aid kit to deal with any minor injuries to children. This is checked and the contents replenished on a regular basis.

The childminder has a good knowledge of nutrition. Children are offered drinks frequently and have a choice of snacks, which includes fresh fruit, dried fruit and raw vegetables. Freshly prepared meals are eaten at the kitchen table. These include dishes such as chicken curry and naan bread which the children, present on the day of the inspection visit, all voted as their favourite meal. Children are encouraged to complete a 'five-a-day' chart which records how many portions of fruit or vegetables they have eaten. Infants under two have their dietary needs well met as the childminder works closely with their parents and carers to establish their preferences and feeding routines. As a result, children are well nourished and develop good appetites.

Children are offered good opportunities to develop their physical skills. Children have regular use of the childminder's garden, which has a wide range of equipment, such as a sky rider, trampoline and slide, for them to use. In addition, children are taken on outings to the local adventure playground and surrounding woods as well as the daily walk to and from school. This means that children's physical development is well fostered.

Children can rest and sleep according to their needs. The daily routine is organised to fit in with younger children's individual sleep patterns. There is space in the childminder's home for children under two to be offered undisturbed sleep. Older children who do not require a sleep are offered quiet times, 'to refresh their batteries'. As a result, children are well rested and content.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very clean, tidy and welcoming family home. They can move around freely and have safe access to the enclosed rear garden which facilitates choice. Furniture and storage of toys has been arranged to create uncluttered spaces and room for play. Younger children use equipment, such as a baby gym, that is of suitable design and age-appropriate. Children are encouraged to think about keeping themselves safe, for example, by helping to tidy away toys carefully. Toys which have small pieces are stored away from baby toys but still within reach of older children. Older children are mindful of younger children and play gently with them, delighting in their responses.

Permission is gained from parents and carers so that children can be taken on outings and travel in the childminder's car. Children are kept in sight or hearing, especially when on outings, as the childminder is aware of the need to be vigilant. She is clear about her role as a childminder and works hard to ensure that children feel safe. For example, she has devised an emergency evacuation procedure for children to follow, should it be necessary, which she has talked through with the children.

Children's well-being is satisfactorily protected as the childminder has a sound understanding of child protection issues. All documentation, including the recording of any existing injuries to children, follows recently issued guidelines and is shared with parents and carers. As a result, children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happily settled in the childminder's care. They show eager interest in the very wide range of toys and activities on offer. Toys can be freely accessed so that children can initiate their own play or follow an interest, for example playing a lively game of miniature table football. Imaginative play is particularly well supported by the childminder. She sits with the children and offers ideas. As a result, children become engrossed in games, such as building boats, that are satisfying and rewarding to them.

Children are enthusiastic about taking part in the many planned activities on offer throughout the day. The childminder has a very good understanding of how to stimulate children's interests and keep them busily involved through the use of projects. On the day of inspection, children were enthusiastically creating a Halloween display. Individual paper spiders had been made to hang on 'net webs' draped along the hallway. This was later enhanced by a splendid window painting in the porch. All the children worked together, painting witches and stars, which generated a great deal of fun and laughter. When asked if the childminder should be given a star for her ideas, the children replied 'no, five stars!'.

Children's learning benefits as the childminder is familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. She is incorporating many of their aspects into her practice, for example, encouraging children to explore, investigate and become independent learners. Infants under two are offered a wide programme of experiences

which includes walks and short outings to local groups. The childminder is aware of their changing needs and offers age-appropriate toys and equipment, such as simple musical instruments and colourful tactile toys, to encourage sensory development. Overall, all children are offered an exciting range of activities and experiences which means that they make very good progress in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued. They form positive relationships with the childminder and with each other. Children play happily together as social skills, such as sharing, are encouraged. Children are helped to manage their own behaviour as the childminder has a patient and positive approach. She gently encourages the children to respect the wishes of other children. This means that children behave well, cooperate with each other and are beginning to learn right from wrong. Notice boards are effectively used, to display children's work and information for parents and carers, which increases a child's sense of belonging. Children are helped to gain an understanding of the wider community through the use of craft projects and by being taken on outings to places of interest, such as the local children's farm.

Children are carefully settled into the childminder's care. Arrangements are negotiated taking into account the needs of children and the requirements of parents and carers for flexible childcare. Information about the service the childminder offers is available for parents and carers and discussed before childminding starts. Consequently, children are well supported in the transition between home and the childminder so that they become confident and make good progress. The childminder knows of the National Standard requirement to record complaints made in writing and inform parents and carers of the outcomes. However, currently no procedure is in place. This, potentially, results in parents and carers not being fully informed to enable all to work together to support children's well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced as the childminder's home is well-organised to maximise play opportunities for children. The warm and caring family environment encourages children to feel at home and at ease. Children are given the childminder's undivided attention. She has implemented daily routines, based on her knowledge of child development, which successfully meets children's individual needs.

Parent's views are sought and some systems are in place to share information which contributes to children's happiness. Most of the required documentation that is required to promote children's welfare, care and learning is in place. However, the daily record is not always completed at the end of the day, which limits its effectiveness to protect children's welfare. The childminder holds relevant childcare qualifications. She is keen to update her training to maintain her professional development so that she continues to offer a good standard of care to children. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there has been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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):

- devise a procedure to record complaints made against the National Standards from parents and carers and their outcomes
- ensure that children's times of attendance is recorded daily.

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