



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	259786
Inspection date	24 November 2006
Inspector	Paula Jane Hayhow
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 1998.

She lives with her husband and two children aged six and thirteen years in Dunstable in Bedfordshire. The ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding together with a bedroom upstairs that is used for sleeping young children. There is a fully enclosed garden and three parks available for outdoor play. The local schools and shops are within walking distance.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding seven children, of whom four are under five years. Only one of these attends on a full-time basis. The childminder also cares for three children over five years who attends after school only. The childminder's husband acts as an assistant and when the couple work together they can care for seven children. The childminder does not provide overnight care. She regularly attends the local toddler groups.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, comfortable and clean home. They are nourished and their health is promoted due to the childminder's good understanding of healthy eating. On the occasions the childminder provides meals and snacks she ensures that they are balanced using fresh ingredients and foods low in salt, fat and sugar. She provides a fruit bowl for children to snack on, asking parents for more foods in the snack boxes to ensure they have sufficient food for their needs. All dietary requirements are discussed fully with parents and an accurate record of these is kept. The childminder abides by these, so that the needs of the children can be met. Children's health is promoted by the childminder's detailed paperwork which documents consents and permissions to administer medication, sun block and plasters.

Children participate in a wide range of physical activities, contributing to their good health. The childminder ensures that there are daily opportunities for outdoor activities, such as walks, playing in the garden or park on slides, swings, roundabouts, trampoline, scooters or cooperative games such as tennis, badminton and golf. This helps children develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills. The younger children are beginning to understand their own physical needs, for example, they know when they need a drink or a rest. The children are able to fully participate in the activities because the childminder has a good knowledge of child development. She provides appropriate activities and supports the children well so that they have confidence to try out new skills and experiences.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and generally safe environment and are therefore able to move around independently and safely. Children's creative work is displayed and they have their own play rooms set up with stimulating and interesting activities. The childminder is aware of risks, both in and out of the house, and has taken steps to minimise these, for example, she is teaching the children about road safety on their walks and carries out fire drills monthly so the children know what to do in case of fire. The older children know the number to call in an emergency and they have an understanding of stranger danger. However, the children's safety is affected as they have access to debris in the garden and the looped wires of the vacuum cleaner.

Children are able to independently select activities from a vast range of good quality toys and equipment. The childminder sensitively supervises the children's choice of toys and activities, ensuring that they are safe and appropriate for their age and stage of development. The children's welfare is further promoted as the childminder has all the required procedures and documents in place. She holds a current public liability insurance certificate for herself and for her husband as he acts as her assistant. She has a good understanding of child protection procedures and knows what she would do should she have any concerns about her minded children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are well settled, confidently choosing activities and moving around the home independently. They relate well to the childminder and to each other and have opportunities to socialise with other children through visits to the library story time, local toddler groups and other childminders. The childminder is particularly good at responding to all the children's questions and interests. The children are therefore given clear reasons and explanations, increasing their understanding of their environment and the wider world. The children's independence is well fostered as they freely make choices about toys, books and activities and help out with homely activities such as clearing the tea table, hanging their coats up, choosing and packing away toys and exploring the world about them. They are encouraged to learn about their environment through the use of a wide range of activities that cover all areas of development. These include creative work like colouring in their colouring book, matching shape, creating sounds on the sound mat and making toast and tea in the home corner. The children participate in topics such as garden mini-beasts, going on frog hunts and examining ants and caterpillars through magnifying glasses.

The childminder is able to use her good knowledge of child development to adapt activities so that they are appropriate and promote children's learning, ensuring that all children spend their time purposefully. For example, impromptu spelling games, singing number rhymes such as 'Ten Green Bottles' and naming pictures of insects from flash cards. These activities provide interest, challenge and enjoyment. The children benefit from the childminder's thoughtful planning of activities. These are documented on a timetable to ensure that the daily opportunities are balanced, stimulating and covers all areas of play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. The childminder ensures that she is aware of the children's individual needs as identified at placement time and meets these well. The children's behaviour is good as they show affection for each other and the childminder, coming to her for security and praise when they have completed an activity. The children are actively learning about playing together, sharing and turn taking such as lining up for their turn on the water slide, sharing out the pieces of the shape game and cooking together in the play kitchen. This is reinforced by the childminder's good understanding of the importance of setting consistent and appropriate boundaries for all children. Children feel secure and trustful of the childminder as they readily confide in her and know she will support them.

The childminder appreciates the importance of providing a range of activities and resources to promote positive images of our society and increase children's understanding of this. For example, the children learn about their local community on routine outings to local parks, school, library and toddler groups. Children are encouraged to respect and appreciate other cultures and ways of life through discussion, resources, stories and craft work. New books encourage the children's understanding of different beliefs and festivals and this helps to reinforce their understanding of the wider world.

The childminder has a positive relationship with the parents keeping them well informed of their child's progress through the use of daily dialogue, an informative notice board and a folder containing her policies and practices. The childminder has a settling in policy relating to securing the children at the beginning of their placement but rarely needs to use this as most of her placements having been with her since they were babies.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder organises all aspects of her work well, helping the children to feel comfortable, relaxed and at home. They are confident and can therefore organise their own play and learning. The individual needs of the children are generally met by the childminder through her procedures to ensure that she has all relevant information on the children. She regularly discusses and reviews this with the parents. However, children's health could be affected as permissions for the seeking of emergency treatment or advice is not sought and this could possibly lead to misunderstandings between parents and the childminder thus jeopardising their relationship.

The children's overall development is well promoted through the childminder's planning and organisation of her daily work. This ensures that children are offered a wide range of stimulating activities, encouraging support and that all are able to participate. Children are kept safe and their welfare is safeguarded by the childminder's generally good understanding of required policies, practices and procedures. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

The childminder was asked at the previous inspection to contact the local district Council with regard to the wild bees which have set up home in the rear garden and to ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources to promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. She was also asked to ensure that the register is signed by parents as a correct record of their child's attendance. She was asked to keep a written record, signed by parents, of any accidents which occur or medication administered to the minded child. She was asked to obtain written permission from parents before administering medication and to ensure that children's information sheets include the child's vaccinations and past medical history.

The childminder ensures that her documentation includes parents signatures on her attendance register, accident book and medication record. She has written permissions for administering medication and routinely collected details, at placement time, relating to children medical history such as vaccinations and allergies. She has acquired toys to reflect different cultures and beliefs such as books, dolls, dressing up clothes and food from around the world. The bees have disappeared and a shed has been put on the area to prevent their return. These measures further improve the children's safety, welfare and security.

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):

- ensure that steps are taken to minimise risks to children from items such as the garden debris and the looped wires on the vacuum cleaner
- ensure that written permission for the seeking of emergency medical treatment and advice is sought from each placement.

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