



## Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123909
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 December 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Jill Nugent
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 registered in 1996. She lives with her husband and two children, aged 16 and seven, in a house in Hertford. She uses the whole of the house for childminding and there is a secure garden for outdoor play. The family has a pet cat.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children under eight at any one time. Currently she is minding eight children, of whom, three are over eight, two are under five and three are over five. She walks to local schools to take and collect children.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well. The childminder's medical records are maintained appropriately and she obtains the necessary consents from parents. She excludes children who are infectious from her care if it is likely to affect others. Parents receive clear information about the exclusion periods for infectious illnesses. Children are well taken care of in the event of an accident as the childminder has good access to first aid equipment. Children can sleep or rest as they wish wherever they feel comfortable. This prevents them from becoming over tired during the day. The childminder pays close attention to matters of hygiene. She keeps her house clean and has a good awareness of food hygiene. Children's nappies are changed in a hygienic manner and they have their noses wiped when necessary. Older children like to use tissues independently and know to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before eating. These procedures contribute effectively to keeping children healthy.

Children have their dietary needs met well. They bring their own packed lunches so that they can eat according to parents' wishes. In this way, any special diets are catered for as well. Children enjoy taking part in cooking activities and discuss which foods are good for them. Consequently, they have an increasing awareness of healthy eating. Children have good access to drinking water throughout the day. Therefore, they are well nourished. They enjoy a variety of opportunities for physical activity. There is a wide range of outdoor toys in the garden, including ride-on vehicles, a trampoline and playhouse. Indoors, children enjoy dance sessions to music. They develop new physical skills when playing games with the childminder. They also enjoy visits to the local parks and regularly walk to and from school. Consequently, children have plenty of fresh air and exercise which helps to keep them fit.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. The childminder's house is comfortable and well maintained and children can move around freely and safely. She makes resources easily accessible to children in the lounge. These are rotated with others stored upstairs to provide extra interest for children. Children's safety is prioritised and the childminder makes regular checks to ensure the premises are safe. Children are well supervised while in her care. They are unable to access any hazardous materials around the house. They are secure because the front door is always locked and the outside gates are also kept locked. Young children are restricted to certain parts of the house through the use of safety gates. If children sleep upstairs the childminder uses a monitor to keep a check on them. Older children play safely in the lounge and upstairs bedroom. There are good fire precautions in place. Children practise an evacuation plan every month so that they are aware of what to do in an emergency. Therefore, children are safe and secure at all times.

Children use a range of suitable and safe, resources and equipment. The resources suit children of all ages and are checked regularly for breakages. Children are reminded to keep themselves safe while they play and when out walking. They hold hands with an older person and take care

when crossing roads and driveways. The childminder talks with children so as to increase their awareness of the dangers of wandering away or talking to strangers. She has pushchairs and reins to keep very young children safe when out walking. She has a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, having attended a training course and she knows how to seek advice if she has a concern. She ensures that children are collected only by a known adult. Consequently, children are well protected in this area.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are very settled and happy. They have close relationships with the childminder and enjoy her company. They show interest in the resources on offer, for example, a set of cars and play people. They are gaining confidence as they explore different play situations together. Older children like to draw or colour at the table. They show good concentration when drawing around pictures and colouring them in. Children respond positively to the childminder when she suggests different activities. They like to explore play dough as she helps them to choose tools and cutters to manipulate the dough into shapes. She engages them in conversation to encourage them to communicate and use their imagination. Children who arrive after school like to play independently at times on the play station or explore creative materials. Therefore, children enjoy a variety of play experiences.

Children are involved in a range of activities which support their development and learning. The childminder promotes their learning through play by interacting with them as they take part in different activities. She makes good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to guide her in helping young children to develop appropriate skills. For example, she sounds out letters for children making letter shapes with the play dough. Children enjoy a local 'make-and-do' group where they take part in all sorts of creative activities. They also attend a childminding group and this provides them with an opportunity to socialise with other children. They learn about their local environment on outings into town and sometimes further afield. Overall, children develop new skills through a range of learning experiences.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children feel valued, and included, and very much at home. They often enjoy individual attention and also enjoy playing with other children. This helps them to develop a sense of belonging. They receive good support from the childminder who is always on hand and aware of their individual needs. She is flexible in her approach and allows children to make their own decisions when appropriate. Children are learning about diversity in society through using various resources that reflect differences in people, for instance, cultural dolls and disabled play people. They take part in cultural activities which are based around cultural festivals. Therefore, children are learning to respect others and their needs. Overall, children are very content in her care.

Children play harmoniously and behave well. The childminder has a calm manner and deals gently with children. She encourages positive behaviour through praising children when they are good. Older children are made aware of the house rules, such as, keeping toys with small

parts away from younger children. They are asked to sit out for a short time if behaving inappropriately so that they can reflect on their actions. These strategies help children to learn to behave responsibly. The childminder works closely with parents and carers. An attractive portfolio provides parents with information about herself, her family and her practice. She exchanges information daily with parents, either verbally or through the use of link books. She has also produced an attractive leaflet for parents who show an interest in the care she offers. However, she does not provide information for parents on the 'Birth to three matters' framework so that they can become more involved in what their children are learning. Overall, children benefit from a close working partnership with parents.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The childminder's policies and procedures work well in practice to promote the outcomes for children. Her paperwork provides a good framework for her practice. She has a set of written policies which are specific and relevant to her practice. There are written agreements with parents and all the necessary consents are requested so that children are cared for appropriately. Her attendance register is well maintained and insurance cover up to date. The childminder has arranged emergency cover for the children within the local childminding group. She has a high regard for the well-being of all children.

She is committed to continually improving children's care through attending training courses. Since the previous inspection she has attended all three childminding practice courses and begun her Hertfordshire Quality Standards. She is interested in attending further training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children benefit from her acquired knowledge and skills. She has a very caring attitude towards children and ensures that they are safe and happy in her care. They have plenty of space to play in her house and garden and she spends her time with them, organising the day around school runs. Overall, children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the previous inspection the childminder was asked to obtain permission for seeking emergency treatment, or advice, and maintain her medical records correctly. She was also asked to complete a relevant first aid course. The necessary permission is now in place and all records are maintained correctly. She has completed a first aid course. This response has improved children's care with respect to staying healthy.

## **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):

- provide parents with information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)