



## Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123264
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Hilary Preece
<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 satisfactory. 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 1992. She lives with her husband in a house close to the centre of St Albans. It is within walking distance of shops, schools and parks. The whole of the ground floor of the premises is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed rear garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding two children over five before and after school and three children under five. The childminder does not drive but walks to local schools to take and collect children. The family have two cats and a dog. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn to understand about good health and hygiene practices through their daily routines. They are taught about personal hygiene and toileting through discussion and a poster is displayed in the cloakroom to remind them to wash their hands, which contributes to reducing the spread of infections. Children are further protected from infection as the childminder ensures that the home is kept clean and environmental health guidelines followed when storing and preparing food. Sound sickness and first aid procedures ensure that children receive appropriate care if they are sick or injured, and any individual health or dietary needs are agreed with parents.

Children are well-nourished. They enjoy a variety of hot and cold meals that are generally wholesome and nutritious, with fruit being offered readily. They always have access to drinking water or their preferred drink. Children stay fit and healthy because there are many opportunities to be active. Children enjoy doing daily exercises before going to school and benefit from walking to school in the fresh air. They develop confidence in movement and control of their bodies by using a range of equipment. They enjoy playing ball games in the park, using climbing apparatus appropriate to their size and can practise basket ball in the garden. Children rest or sleep according to their routines. Babies sleep in comfort in a travel cot and older children snuggle up on the sofa with a favourite toy or blanket to help them feel emotionally secure and rested.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and secure environment. Careful consideration is given to ensure that areas of the home and garden used by the children are safe and steps are taken to minimise risks. Children use a broad range of equipment that meets the varying needs of children of all ages, which is stored in cupboards or the shed and brought out when children are present. Resources are clean and kept in good condition. Children learn how to use equipment safely, for example, when playing ball and racquet games, so as not to hurt each other. They are kept safe on outings as young children wear reins to stop them running off. Older children understand the importance of staying close to the childminder at all times as they walk in pairs and cross the road safely using a crossing patrol.

Children are adequately safeguarded because the childminder would seek advice if she had any concerns about their welfare. However, she does not have access to the appropriate contact numbers or Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedure, which means children's safety may potentially be compromised.

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

The provision is good.

Children settle well. The childminder ensures their individual needs are discussed with parents so that she can provide activities that are familiar and help them feel secure. They become confident through being praised and rewarded for effort. Children take part in a range of activities and outings that give them broad experiences and promote their development. Younger children visit toddler groups and all children enjoy group ball games and picnics in the park, which helps develop their social skills and awareness of the local community.

Children respond positively to the childminder when she engages them in activities that interest them, such as sharing books together. They confidently recognise numbers, colours and shape, for example. They listen to questions and respond enthusiastically, which develops their communication, thinking and learning.

Children have access to a wide variety of resources but the range that is put out for them is fairly small. This restricts their ability to explore, make choices and develop independence in their play. Children enjoy a range of art and craft activities, such as collecting acorns and spraying them with paint, which allows them to be creative. However, some activities are too adult-directed, which means children are not able to follow their own ideas and experiment for themselves.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed to the setting. They are encouraged to become aware of each other's differing needs through discussion and showing tolerance. They become aware of cultural diversity through using an appropriate range of resources and activities. Children particularly enjoy dressing up in multicultural clothes to perform dances and plays for each other. Children are praised and rewarded to develop their confidence and self-esteem and some children respond positively to reward stickers for special achievement. Politeness and good manners are encouraged throughout their daily routines.

Children are cared for according to their parents' wishes. Appropriate contracts and records are maintained to ensure children's needs and the business arrangements are agreed. Information about the children's care is shared informally between parents and childminder and issues or concerns readily discussed. However, there is no formal complaints procedure or record system that is shared with parents, which is in breach of regulations. This means parents are not fully informed of factors that potentially impact on the children's well-being.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder has sufficient regard for the National Standards and regulations. She is an experienced childminder who generally keeps adequate records and documents, although some procedures have not been updated to meet changes in guidance or regulations. This makes some aspects of her practice less effective. Her policies are informally shared with parents.

The childminder organises her home and garden to provide a safe environment and comfortable surroundings that meet the needs of babies and older children. She organises her practice so that younger children generally do not attend when she looks after older children after school, which means she is able to give sufficient attention to the younger ones.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to complete an appropriate first aid course and obtain written permission from parents to seek emergency medical treatment and to administer non-prescribed medication. These have been addressed to improve the management of children's health needs. The childminder completed a first aid course for infants and children in June 2004 and ensures that parents sign to give their approval for medical treatment as part of the written agreement.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 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 satisfactory. 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):

- develop knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and how to report concerns to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board
- allow children to explore their environment, make choices in their play and express their imagination when taking part in art and craft activities
- improve knowledge and develop systems for the recording of complaints, in line with regulations.

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)