



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123525
Inspection date	07 March 2007
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 1992. She lives with one foster child aged six months in Sandridge, St Albans, Hertfordshire. The whole of the house, except the three bedrooms, is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding two children under five part-time, and two children over five before and after school. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends local parents and toddler groups. The family has a dog, a tortoise and a goldfish.

The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive as the childminder follows good practices which meet the dietary needs of all children who attend. Children enjoy a range of nutritious foods as well as being offered drinks throughout the day. Games, such as tasting and naming freshly made fruit and vegetable juices, are introduced which children enthusiastically play. Older children are asked to choose their favourite meal, which is served once a week. This provides the childminder an opportunity to talk to children about the benefits of eating healthily, especially when a favourite meal is chocolate followed by chocolate.

Children's good health is well promoted because the childminder has in place good systems and routines. Older children are helped to develop personal independence skills. They are reminded to continue to follow routines, such as washing their hands after using the toilet. The childminder discusses with parents about when it is appropriate to exclude children who are ill or infectious. The childminder has attended first aid training and holds a current first aid certificate. There is a first aid kit to deal with any minor injuries to children and documentation to record accidents and incidents. However, although the first aid kit is well stocked there is no procedure to check that the contents are replaced. This potentially impacts on children's health if they have an accident.

Children are offered many opportunities to exercise, including visits to local parks and a local children's indoor adventure play centre, the 'Castaway club'. Children frequently use the childminder's garden and have use of a range of age-appropriate equipment, such as a covered sand tray and wheeled toys. Children can rest or sleep according to their needs as the day is well-organised to fit in with individual requirements. When caring for infants the childminder works very closely with parents to ensure that their individual routines are accommodated. Consequently, children's health needs on an everyday level are well met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very clean and well-maintained family home. They can safely move around indoors as the childminder has arranged furniture and the storage of toys to create uncluttered spaces. In addition, children can freely use the garden as it is tidy and fully secure. Children use a wide range of age-appropriate equipment, resources and toys which help create a stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, very well-maintained and conform to safety standards. As a result, children flourish in a welcoming environment that fully promotes their development.

Children's safety is exceptionally well fostered as the childminder follows systematic robust risk assessments. On an everyday level, she is vigilant and makes adaptations where necessary taking into account the children's ages, for example, moving toys with small pieces out of reach when infants are present. The childminder has devised an emergency evacuation plan which is frequently practised with the children. Children's safety when travelling in the childminder's

car is considered as the childminder is aware of issues, such as use of appropriate car seats for differing ages of children. The childminder has an excellent knowledge of what to do if she becomes concerned about a child in her care. Comprehensive documentation, including a procedure of monitoring existing injuries to children, is in place. As a result, children's welfare is fully safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and very happy in the childminder's home. They quickly form a positive relationship with the childminder as she is very attentive to their needs. The daily routine offers an interesting and well-balanced mixture of play and planned activities. The childminder is familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework for use with younger children and is incorporating all aspects into her practice. These can be seen in a delightful book the childminder has compiled which illustrates children's achievements.

Children show eager interest in the wide range of toys and activities on offer. They become engrossed in a wide range of purposeful activities. Children can access toys and initiate their own play as well as being given a choice of art and craft sessions. For example, decorating clockwork 'egg men' and making Easter cards. The childminder has a very good understanding of how to stimulate children's interests and keep older children busily involved. She is constantly available to the children. For example, she models and demonstrates skills, such as teaching them how to stick, and keep glitter on the paper and stays nearby to lend a helping hand. The childminder is very aware of children's interests and how these can be used to promote development. This includes fostering social skills and children's general awareness of right and wrong. She is well-organised and plans activities that she feels children will enjoy.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. They are developing excellent relationships with adults and other children. The childminder ensures that all children are fully included in the life of the setting. Children develop a sense of belonging and are actively encouraged to make choices and decisions. These all contribute to the children developing good self-esteem. Children are developing an understanding of the wider society because the childminder has an outstanding range of resources that illustrate cultural diversity, similarities and differences. Children who have specific needs are exceptionally well supported as the childminder, through her skills and contacts gained as a foster parent, is well qualified and experienced. This includes taking positive steps to promote children's overall development in partnership with parents and other relevant parties. The childminder knows the children and their families well. Arrangements to settle children into the childminder's care are negotiated taking into account the needs of the children and the requirements of parents for flexible childcare. The childminder offers both full-time and part-time places so that siblings can be cared for together.

Information about the service that the childminder offers is shared with parents. The childminder knows of the requirement to record any complaints made in writing by parents and has developed

a system in line with the National Standards. Events in the children's day are shared verbally with their parents. If asked the childminder will happily complete a daily diary to record children's care routine, such as sleep times. Consequently, parents are fully informed to enable them and the childminder to work together to fully support children's well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met. They are looked after by an experienced parent and long-term childminder who loves her job. She has established a comprehensive and on-going childminding portfolio which includes all records and policies that are necessary for the efficient and safe management of the setting. Alongside this, the childminder regularly updates her skills by attending relevant training.

Children are given a sense of security as the childminder organises her time very well. She plans a wealth of play and learning opportunities and uses space thoughtfully to provide a welcoming environment for children of all ages. She has a high regard for children's safety and well-being, adjusting ways of working to meet children's changing needs. Children are very happy in the childminder's care and benefit from her commitment to provide a constantly high level of good quality care to all children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was requested to ensure that accurate details of any medication administered to children are recorded. This is now in place, protecting children's health.

In addition, the childminder was asked to make available to parents and carers details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint, including Ofsted's contact details. The childminder has updated her complaints policy, which is shared with parents before minding starts. This enhances working in partnership with parents and carers.

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):

- establish a procedure for checking and replenishing the contents of the 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