



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123715
Inspection date	19 January 2007
Inspector	Sandra Daniels

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 has been registered since 1979. She lives with her husband and two adult sons. They live in a house in Bishop's Stortford close to the town centre, local schools and parks. The whole of the ground floor of the property is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for no more than six children under eight years at any one time and is currently minding a total of ten children under eight years, most on a part-time basis.

The childminder sometimes works with an assistant.

The family has a pet cockatiel and tropical fish.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted effectively as they are cared for in a clean and comfortable home. They see and practise good daily routines which help them to learn the importance of personal hygiene. For example, the childminder gently reminds children to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating, giving simple explanations for this. Children benefit from using a clean flannel to dry their hands after each wash, helping to prevent the spread of infection. They watch as the childminder, and older minded children, clean the kitchen work surfaces before preparing food. Clear, written policies help ensure that children's individual health and care needs are met. Children's welfare is actively promoted as parents are respectfully asked to care for them at home should they develop an infectious illness that could spread to others.

Children are encouraged to eat healthily. The childminder provides meals and snacks for all children, whilst babies come with their own bottles and weaning foods. Fresh drinks are always freely available and children enjoy fresh fruits for snacks. Children often choose what meals they want, sometimes shopping for ingredients and then actually preparing and cooking the meal themselves, for example, fajitas. Fresh produce is used for all meals and children thoroughly enjoy sitting at the table together, discussing what they are eating and what foods are good for them. Mealtimes are also an opportunity for the childminder to help children and babies to enjoy their food and to become independent in feeding themselves.

Babies and younger children receive warmth and affection, such as cuddles, eye contact and positive language interaction. This supports their emotional well-being and resilience. Children's health and fitness is well supported as they have many opportunities for physical play in different environment. The childminder's garden has both grassed and paved areas where children can ride bikes, play with balls and run and jump. At local parks children can access large equipment where they can extend their physical skills and confidence. Indoors, children can move freely around the play areas and develop control and co-ordination as they play. Good regard is given to ensuring that children rest and are active according to their individual needs. The childminder recognises the signs of tiredness in babies and younger children and plans appropriate periods of undisturbed rest for them. Older children benefit from fresh air daily as they walk to and from school or nursery with the childminder.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well supervised at all times. The childminder works alongside an assistant, so children can be doing different activities in different rooms and there is always an adult with them. They are cared for in a welcoming and secure home and are supported by the childminder to begin to take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe. For example, children are encouraged not to run in the home and to tidy away toys when they are finished with. When out walking, the childminder helps children to appreciate the potential dangers of traffic. Younger children use a buggy with appropriate restraints, whilst older ones must either hold

hands with an adult or hold on to the buggy. As their understanding develops, some older children may walk slightly ahead of the childminder. They know they must never cross roads alone and must always keep the childminder in their sight. Children learn how to cross roads safely and be aware of what is going on around them as they walk.

In the home, children are safeguarded by the visual risk assessments carried out by the childminder. This is reviewed in light of children's changing abilities and ensures all areas are kept safe for them. Children enjoy practising an emergency evacuation procedure with the childminder. They begin to understand what to do should the smoke detector alarm sound. The childminder has reinforced her safe practice by seeking and following the advice of the local fire service.

All toys and equipment are of good quality and well maintained. The childminder ensures that resources are appropriate for the age and stage of development of each child and activities for babies and younger children are arranged so that they are not at risk from older children. Clear policies are in place for ensuring children's safety and these are shared with parents. For example, children may only be collected by a known person and a password system is used. Good security measures ensure that children cannot leave the premises unsupervised.

Children are protected from harm as the childminder has a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. She is aware of her role and responsibility to safeguard children and knows the correct procedures to follow should she have any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy and confident within this setting where the childminder has built strong and trusting relationships with them. They become involved in an exceptionally broad range of practical and fun activities which support their enjoyment, learning and development. For example, as children make 'stained glass windows' using tissue paper, they discuss the colours and shapes, recognising that a diamond shape is the same shape as the kites they recently made. Children delight in taking part in the many creative activities provided for them. They use their imaginations as they stick, cut and fold to make collages and pictures which are displayed on the walls of the playroom. Children excitedly pack a rucksack in preparation for an imaginary trip to the seaside, inviting the childminder to join them. They enjoy real outings to a local garden centre where they discover various plants and animals. This is further reinforced by trips to 'Pets Corner' at the park, where children can be close to several animals and watch them being fed and cared for. The childminder actively supports children to learn about their environment as they discuss things they see whilst out walking. Children's social skills develop as they have opportunities to interact with other children and suitable adults.

Children are considerably well supported by the childminder who becomes involved in their play and also allows them to develop and extend their own games and imaginative play. Babies learn about words and meaning through highly effective interactions with the childminder. She talks to them, explaining what they are doing which encourages them to link words with actions. The childminder skilfully interprets meaning to young children's words and gestures, encouraging them to be confident and competent language users. She shares the fun of discovering language

with them, promoting their confidence and independence. The childminder actively listens to children and attention is paid to what they say, both serious and playful, which allows them to explore and discuss things which interest them. The childminder has received training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework and incorporates many aspects of it in her practice when working with children under three years.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are highly valued and respected as individuals, helping them to feel good about themselves. They settle very well into the childminder's home and family. Children's emotional security and resilience is enhanced through positive and supportive relationships the childminder has fostered with parents. Parents receive worthwhile information about the setting, both verbally and through a set of written policies and procedures. At the beginning of each placement, the childminder helps children to settle by asking parents for appropriate information concerning their child's routine and individual needs. This means that children receive continuity of care and, consequently, feel secure. Regular and constructive feedback is given to all parents on a daily basis.

Children develop positive attitudes towards others and gain a good understanding of the wider world and the community. They discuss and learn about similarities and differences as they walk to local shops and parks. Various festivals are celebrated and children have access to a broad range of play resources that show them positive images of culture, ethnicity and disability. The childminder has a thorough understanding of equality issues and is a positive role model for children as she supports them to learn about diversity. Children with additional needs are welcomed into this setting where the childminder has experience of providing a fully inclusive environment where every child can play an active role and participate in everything. However, the childminder has agreed to obtain a copy of the Disability Discrimination Act leaflet. Children approach daily routines with confidence and autonomy and have many opportunities for making decisions and choices about their care and play.

Children behave well in response to the childminder's calm and consistent approach. Effective strategies are used successfully to encourage positive behaviour, kindness and courtesy. Older children play a part in setting the 'house rules' and take pride in helping younger children to understand the benefits of positive behaviour.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met. This skilled and highly experienced childminder provides a good and flexible service where children thrive. They are very well supported by her in their play and are able to develop confidence and independence as the setting is homely and well organised. Children are secure and comfortable in this environment where space and resources are organised and used effectively to enable them to make choices and use their initiative. Children's care, learning and play is well supported by the childminder who devotes her working time exclusively to the children.

Children's all-round development is promoted as the childminder is committed to her role and enjoys her work. Recording procedures are good and effective and the childminder is aware of recent changes to the regulations. Good use is made of clear written information. The childminder has devised a set of unique policies and procedures which underpin her good practice. These are shared with parents, ensuring they are fully informed and have a shared understanding of how care arrangements support and promote children's welfare and well-being.

All required records and documents, such as contact details and information on children's individual needs are methodically maintained and readily accessible to support children's care and safety.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to ensure that children's arrival and departure times are recorded daily. Children's safety and welfare is well promoted as the childminder maintains an accurate record of the arrival and departure times of all children being cared for. This means that, at any given time, it is clear picture of exactly who is on the premises.

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):

- obtain a copy of the Disability Discrimination Act leaflet and have regard for it in practice.

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