

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123688
Inspection date	25 April 2007
Inspector	Kerry Freshwater

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 outstanding. 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 1995. She lives with her husband, one adult child and two children aged 13 and 15 years in Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding nine children, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. She also cares for children over eight years. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local toddler group.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because the childminder has a highly effective approach to health and hygiene. Thorough procedures and documents are in place to ensure that children's individual needs are very well met. Accident and medication records are in place, appropriate treatment given and parent's signatures and consents have been obtained. Children learn about the importance of being healthy through the childminder's skilful support and guidance. For example, they know to wash their hands after using the toilet and playing outside. They learn about good health and hygiene through purposeful activities and discussion. For example, they paint pictures of healthy foods and those that they know they should only eat occasionally. They learn about the importance of five portions of fruit and vegetables per day. They learn the importance of washing hands after touching pets, not touching animal food bowls or litter trays and telling a grown up if they get scratched by an animal. Children write their own accounts of 'being safe in the sun' and washing hands. The childminder reduces the risk of cross-infection by ensuring that her home is always clean and well maintained.

Physical activity is highly regarded and children are able to develop their physical skills in a wide range of activities on a daily basis. They enjoy daily walks and play in the garden using balls, hoops and quoits. Children climb on the climbing frame, ride on the rocker and enjoy the bike and other wheeled toys. They enjoy music and movement, dancing and use various apparatus at the local park. Indoors babies reach out for toys as they crawl. Children complete puzzles, build with different construction toys and use a range of drawing and writing implements. This helps to develop their coordination and physical abilities. Children are able to rest and sleep as they need to.

Children are clearly aware of good nutrition and understand the benefits of a healthy diet. They learn about foods that are good and bad for them and know to avoid too much salt or sugar and to drink plenty throughout the day. They enjoy an excellent range of fresh food prepared by the childminder for all their snacks and meals. They try different foods as they follow the exciting menu displayed for children and parents to view. Meals provided include chicken korma and rice, beef stew with dumplings, chicken casserole and pasta dishes with a range of fresh vegetables. The childminder is happy and confident to meet individual dietary requirements of which she has obtained clear information from parents. She works closely with the parents to ensure that these requirements are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a safe, warm and welcoming environment. They experience a vibrant and welcoming setting with samples of their artwork, home-made mobiles, posters and photographs displayed. The childminder has an excellent understanding of safety issues, children have space to move around safely and freely as she has minimised risks to keep them free from harm. Children learn about danger as the childminder helps them to understand how to keep themselves safe through interesting activities and discussion. They practise fire evacuation, learn about road safety and 'stranger danger'. Children write their own versions of how to cross the road safely and a road safety book has been produced. They learn how to phone the emergency services and the importance of appropriate clothing as they play, such as shin pads for skateboarding and cricket masks.

All children have access to a superb range of quality toys and resources which are suitable for their ages and stages of development. They readily help themselves from the highly organised selection of interesting play equipment so they can follow their own interests. Resources have been carefully chosen to support children's play and are regularly checked for hygiene and safety.

All required documents and procedures are in place and are consistently maintained to safeguard children's welfare. Children are very well protected as the childminder has a substantial knowledge and understanding of child protection. She has attended basic and advanced training to update her knowledge and inform her practice. Children are closely monitored at all times and the childminder gives top priority to their welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder has an exceptional understanding of child development which enables her to offer flexible, high quality care, which is suited to each child. Children enjoy an extensive range of activities, which contributes to their creativity and imagination, such as singing songs and making music, baking and food preparation, story composition and the making of cards and gifts for different occasions. Children learn about the origins of Valentines day, they make baskets of sweets and cards for someone they love. They enjoy painting and printing and write their own stories about going on an adventure.

Children display high levels of confidence in their daily activities and are developing very good independence skills, as they busy themselves and become absorbed in their activities. Their early communication skills are extremely well supported through high quality interaction with the childminder as they enthusiastically discuss their activities and talk about what they are doing. They follow a variety of themes which are incorporated in the different activities provided. They obtain additional information as they select books at the library. Children make positive relationships, they play exceptionally well together and are encouraged to consider younger children as they play.

The childminder is skilful in encouraging children to make very good progress in all areas of development following both the Foundation Stage curriculum and 'Birth to three matters' framework. For example, children participate in a wide range of activities and themes which extend their knowledge. They learn about different animals, find out about what they eat and build fences and pens using construction bricks. They develop their number skills as they count animals, play dominos and matching games. They sing songs such as five little speckled frogs and two white snowmen standing in the sun to help with counting and subtraction. They learn about mathematical language as they look at smaller, smallest, bigger and biggest size feet. Children learn about letters and sounds as they follow the letter of the week through different activities. For example, for 'D' they build with Duplo, play with water containing dye and make dancers. Children are able to demonstrate what they know as the childminder uses skilful questioning to make them think. The childminder finds out about the children's skills, interests and needs and builds on this information effectively to help children to fulfil their potential.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs and characters are clearly understood and respected by the childminder. All children are welcomed and included in the provision. The childminder provides

a meaningful range of activities and resources to promote a positive view of the wider world and to help children understand differences and similarities. For example, they learn how different countries celebrate Christmas, they are fascinated by Santa's 'magical kangaroos' who take the place of the reindeer in Australia. Children predict the year they were born from the Chinese calendar, enjoy a Chinese meal and colour pictures of fans and flowers for Chinese New Year. Children enjoy a Spanish Day, they dress up in flamenco dress, make Spanish biscuits and learn some simple words. They learn to value differences through sensitive discussions, stories and the use of developmentally appropriate resources. They are receptive to the childminder's inspiring role modelling.

Children's behaviour is exceptional. The childminder has a positive, clear and consistent approach to behaviour management, which means children know what is expected of them and they feel secure. Children are considerate, they share, take turns and are polite, remembering to say 'please' and 'thank you'. The childminder uses her effective skills to encourage and help the children develop their relationships with one another. They play very happily together and enjoy each other's company. Children develop self-esteem through the considerable praise, encouragement and motivation that they receive from the childminder. They enjoy looking through the scrap book to see the different things that they and their friends have done and achieved. They add their own writing and pictures to the 'I can tree' wall display to illustrate what they are able to do. Realistic challenges are set by the childminder to help the children develop. This promotes their confidence and self-esteem. They feel relaxed and secure and able to make independent choices about what they want to do.

The excellent partnerships with parents and carers contributes significantly to the children's care and well-being. The childminder provides detailed information about the service that she provides including her clear, well written policies, daily routines, sample menu and her training log. Written progress reports keep parents well informed of their child's achievements. A parent questionnaire based on the care and education of children, has been devised and completed to enable the childminder to review her practise. Positive and complimentary comments have been received and suggestions made by parents have been listened to and addressed. For example, parents were keen to see an activity and curriculum plan which is now produced and displayed on the notice board for parents to peruse. This ensures that parents are kept well informed and children's care, well-being and development is greatly enhanced.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is greatly enriched by the childminder's enthusiasm, her highly effective organisation of time, space and resources and her committed approach. Consistent routines and effective support ensure children feel a sense of belonging and are part of a bigger family. The childminder is highly motivated and actively seeks and attends regular training opportunities. She is currently in the process of completing a foundation degree, holds various childcare qualifications, has been awarded the Herts Quality Standards (HQS) accreditation and holds a current first aid certificate. This ensures she is well informed and able to implement new ideas and childcare practices within the childminding setting.

Children benefit from the childminder's sound and secure knowledge of child development. All of the required documentation is in place, is comprehensive, extremely well organised and regularly reviewed. This contributes to children's health, safety and well-being. The high quality policies and procedures and imaginative activity plans are shared with parents whose views are

actively sought and listened to. This means they clearly know about the dynamic provision and the care their child receives. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to increase her knowledge of diversity to extend children's learning opportunities. Children now benefit from a vast range of activities to develop their understanding of differences and similarities. The childminder has also increased her multicultural resources and uses the library and computer to access further information about festivals and cultures.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 outstanding. 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

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

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