

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123314
Inspection date	20 April 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 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 three adult children in London Colney, St Albans, Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house and one first floor bedroom is used for childminding and there is an enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of three children at any one time and is currently minding three children under five, who attend on a full-time and part-time basis. The childminder drives to the local nursery to take and collect children. The childminder has a fish aquarium.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health and nutritional needs are met as the childminder follows satisfactory practices. For example, the childminder provides snacks, including fresh fruit, which the children enjoy so that they are helped to develop good eating habits. The childminder works closely with parents of children under two to ensure that their individual routines are followed. Children's

health needs, including possible allergies and dietary restrictions, are discussed and noted before childminding commences. Appropriate documentation is kept to record the administration of medicines and accidents. Children's health, if they have an accident, is fully safeguarded as the childminder holds a current first aid qualification, which includes training in first aid for children and infants.

Children are offered many opportunities to exercise, including visits to the local playground and walks to the village pond to feed the ducks. Children can freely access the childminder's garden and make good use of the range of toys and activities, such as playing football, which fosters their coordination. Children are able to rest according to their needs. Babies are offered a quiet room for rest which promotes undisturbed sleep. Consequently, children's health needs on an everyday level are adequately met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming family home. They play safely indoors as the childminder has arranged furniture to create uncluttered spaces. All toys are complete and stored within reach of the children. Children under two use a range of age-appropriate and clean equipment, such as a travel cot and a high chair.

Children's welfare is satisfactorily protected because the childminder keeps sufficient documentation and a list of useful contact numbers. However, the childminder has not updated her knowledge about child protection issues. This, potentially, impacts on children's well-being.

The childminder is aware of the need to be vigilant and makes adaptations where necessary taking into account the children's ages. Stair gates, for example, are used effectively to restrict younger children's access to the kitchen. Children are helped to develop an awareness of fire safety as the childminder has devised an emergency evacuation plan which she talks through with them. Children can safely use the garden throughout the day as it is well-maintained and fully enclosed. When on outings, the childminder reinforces children's understanding of safety issues by explaining, for example, why it is important to hold hands with an adult when crossing a road. Overall, children are kept safe when in the childminder's care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time with the childminder. She is attentive and involves herself in the children's play. In addition, the childminder's daughter, for parts of the day, pops in to see the children who clearly enjoy her company. Toys are rotated on a regular basis, although favourite toys, such as small world 'superhero' figures, are always made available so that children can follow interests, which are satisfying and rewarding to them. The childminder is aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and has a selection of toys suitable for infants. As a result, children's learning is appropriately supported.

Children begin to distinguish right from wrong and form positive relationships. They play well together and share toys. The childminder sets consistent boundaries and supports children appropriately to develop social skills, such as using 'please' and 'thank you' when appropriate. Independence skills, such as making choices, are encouraged. She ensures that children's achievements and events of the day are shared with their parents. Consequently, children are settled, confident and content in the childminder's care.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are supported in the transition between home and the childminder. This means that children settle happily and develop a good relationship with the childminder, members of her family and other minded children. Information about the services that the childminder offers is discussed with parents before childminding commences. The childminder informs parents about what steps they can take if they are unhappy with the care that she offers their children but not how complaints made against the National Standards are recorded. This limits the effectiveness of working in partnership with parents however, the childminder has built up a warm and friendly relationship with families as she has cared for many of the children since babyhood. She knows the children well and helps them feel valued by the use of praise and constant encouragement.

Children are given good support to help them manage their own behaviour and develop social skills. The childminder is patient, kind and calm in her approach and the children respond to her requests, for example helping to tidy away toys. Children are helped to gain an understanding of the wider community as the childminder is aware of the importance of doing this. There are some toys and books, such as 'play people' with differing skin tones for children to use, which promotes an understanding of cultural diversity.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are looked after by an experienced and long-term childminder. Their care is enhanced as the childminder ensures that all relevant documentation is kept and can be accessed easily. The childminder is aware of most changes to National Standard requirements and makes use of the internet to keep informed of new childcare initiatives. Children's enjoyment is fostered as the childminder organises her daily routine well. This means that children are given time for unhurried play, rest, relaxed meals and are taken and collected from nursery on time. Consequently, children are happy in the childminder's care. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to inform Ofsted of any changes to the household and ensure that that a vetting procedure was carried out on household members over the age of 16. Following the last inspection, the childminder immediately instigated relevant procedures to ensure that National Standard requirements were met.

In addition, the childminder was asked to complete an appropriate first aid course to meet National Standard requirements. Since the last inspection, the childminder has attended relevant training and currently holds a valid first aid certificate.

As a result of these actions, children's welfare and well-being has been enhanced.

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 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):

- ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- develop systems to record complaints made in writing by parents and carers against National Standards and their outcome.

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