

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 129215  
**Inspection date** 07 November 2007  
**Inspector** Paula Durrant

**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](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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder registered in 2000. She lives with her husband and four children aged 15, 12, 11 and four years, in a residential property on the outskirts of the town of Welwyn Garden City. The whole of the ground floor of the premises is used for childminding purposes. There is a garden available for outside play. The childminder is registered to care for five children under the age of eight years and is currently minding three children, two under five years and one over five years. All of the children in attendance are part-time. The family has a cat and three rabbits. Where appropriate, the childminder walks children to and from school. If the weather is poor then she also uses her vehicle for this provision. The childminder makes full use of community based amenities such as local parks, shops and the library. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

### THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

#### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they become ill or have an accident as the childminder rigorously adheres to environmental health and hygiene guidelines.

For example, children who are unwell are discouraged from attending in line with stipulated exclusion periods for childhood diseases. Appropriate measures such as the childminder's maintenance of a valid first aid qualification and sufficient medical supplies to administer emergency aid all contribute to maintaining children's health care needs. Good practice, such as suitable storage and preparation of food and the use of antibacterial solutions to cleanse work surfaces and equipment used means that children's welfare is not compromised as cross-contamination is effectively minimised.

Children learn to understand simple good health and hygiene practices as they follow the daily routine. For example, they know when and why they wash their hands such as after using the toilet, prior to eating and following any contact with the family pets. They fully understand the reasons behind this process, as the childminder frequently introduces discussions about germs and the effects they can have on their bodies, making them poorly and unwell.

Children receive a healthy balanced diet. The childminder provides children with home cooked meals consisting of a light lunch and a more substantial cooked meal in the evening. The childminder discusses provision with parents to ensure that individual dietary needs are known and complied with. Children benefit from healthy options such as a balance of pasta, fish and chicken dishes. The childminder has knowledge of providing five portions of fruit and vegetables a day which she implements into her menus. Children remain well hydrated as they freely access fresh drinking water from a cool-water tower fountain in the kitchen.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. Each day they walk to and from school and trips to the local playground and activity centres are frequent. They also have access to a secure and safe garden area which is suitably equipped with a range of challenging resources to develop increased control and coordination. Children rest and are active in accordance to their needs. Younger children sleep in line with home-care routines, whilst older children sit quietly looking at books or watching favourite child-centred television programmes to recuperate their energy levels.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure family home where significant emphasis is given to eradicating potential hazards that may cause harm to the children. For example, she ensures through her formal risk assessment checks that all necessary safety precautions remain in place, such as a sustained secure boundary around her swimming pool. The childminder is highly vigilant undertaking daily checks of the home prior to children's attendance. Children remain in sight and hearing at all times and know to ask permission for example to access the outside play area.

Children access an extensive range of good quality resources that are suitably maintained. The childminder abides to manufacturers' recommendations providing age-appropriate equipment that holds a recognised safety kite mark. Children learn to keep themselves safe as the childminder explains house rules and road safety when out. For example, children know to sit down when eating as there is a potential to choke. They know to adhere to the instructions of the childminder, wearing emergency contact details when out and about, and holding hands when walking besides busy main roads.

Children's welfare is priority in this household. Children are cared for by a suitable adult who has a clear understanding of child development. The childminder has completed vetting checks

and demonstrates a strong knowledge of child protection drawn from training. Whilst the childminder knows how to manage a child protection concern, she does not have current guidance literature for the Local Safeguarding Children Board. This is an organisational oversight.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in this child-centred environment, where a skilled early years practitioner encompasses every incidental opportunity possible to teach children purposeful lessons. For example, mathematics is inspirationally introduced into a drawing activity as the childminder invites discussion about positions of facial features, such as the nose being above the mouth and in counting extremities such as the number of fingers and toes. Children rise to the challenges set because it is fun. They know that it is okay to make mistakes because they have extremely secure bonds with the childminder and know that they will gain another opportunity to practise their skills.

Children excel in their development. They are exceptionally articulate, given their chronological age. This is partially due to the childminder's constant involvement and interest and in the rich language offered throughout the day. Every potential opportunity to name familiar objects and to explore new words is sought. For example, children learn about momentum as they talk about the movement of trains going "clickity clack" and "jostling" from side to side as the train travels along the track when role playing with the wooden train set. They remain intent and focused in their play, surpassing the expected norm for their age. Again this is due to the childminder's extensive attention to detail, her planning and preparation of activities and her delivery and execution. She is highly confident and does not require to remain rigidly to her planning structures as she is knowledgeable in child development and in how children learn.

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

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs take high priority in this home-from-home provision. A superb partnership with parents enables children to receive extended family care. The childminder knows the children well and uses information gained from parents to implement highly effective care plans for each child. Mutual respect, love and understanding all play an integral part of the childminders practice. Children are exceptionally polite, courteous and respectful of the childminder and her home. They know the house rules and use social graces such as please and thank you without prompt. Children play an active part in their own learning. They make independent decisions in their play. They have positive levels of self-esteem and respect the opinions and actions of others because the childminder consistently praises their efforts and reaffirms their achievements, guiding their social and moral development. Behaviour is exemplary. The childminder has a written complaints procedure, which she openly shares with parents.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a conscientious practitioner who has a secure understanding of child development and the way that children learn through play. She makes full use of her educational training, her working roles in other childcare settings, her life skills as a mother and childcare literature such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework, to implement practical age-appropriate activities that appeal and stimulate interest and a desire to learn. For example, she provides a

balance of focused adult-led activities in addition to promoting free choice in order for children to reaffirm and practise their skills.

Children feel part of an extended family and are very comfortable in this well-organised and inviting environment. They confidently make independent choices in their activities and extend their own play and learning in an imaginative way. The childminder effectively uses her written procedures and routines to promote the welfare, care and learning of all the children. Whilst a vast majority of written records are compliant with National Standards requirements, the childminder herself recognises paperwork as a weaker aspect of her practice. Currently she does not have access to the updated child protection guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Board and has yet to devise a summary annex for managing parental complaints. These are minor areas for improvement. Although the childminder has in place some reviewing systems to aid her in her monitoring of her provision, these require greater development to truly aid and support improvement in areas identified. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

At the last inspection the childminder was required to keep a written record, signed by parents, of medicines given to children and make sure the parents sign all accidents records. Children's health care needs are maintained as the childminder now has in place rigorous recording structures for medication and accidents which comply with the National Standards.

### **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):

- continue to develop self-assessment structures further, in order to support the effectiveness of monitoring performance systems such as knowledge of current guidance, this refers to procedural guidance for the Local Safeguarding Children Board and a summary annex for complaints.

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)