

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123328
Inspection date	31 August 2007
Inspector	Tina Kelly
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

the time of the inspection there were no children in receipt of nursery education. Ofsted judges that the provider remains suitable to provide nursery education.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since 1996. She lives with her partner and her two sons aged nine and 14. They live in a town house in St Albans, close to the city centre. The whole of the ground and first floor are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed rear garden available for outside play. There are no pets.

The childminder is a member of the 'Children come first', St Albans childminder network, and is accredited to provide nursery education within the childminding setting. She holds a Foundation Degree in early childhood studies.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under the age of eight years.

At the time of inspection one child aged fifteen months was being cared for, the childminder's own children were also at home.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is monitored and maintained due to the excellent practice followed by the childminder. She works to detailed policies which she has devised in relation to health, hygiene, medication and illness. Extremely sound procedures are in place for children who become unwell to safeguard the good health of the other children who attend the provision. She teaches children the importance of hand washing routines and provides all the equipment they need to promote their independence. When having nappies changed the children are very co-operative, they are becoming aware of the routines that keep them comfortable and clean as the childminder gently talks them through what is expected of them. Children are able to play and to rest when they need to in accordance with their individual and home care routines. Children are introduced to opportunities that enhance their well-being, growth and development and their understanding of a healthy lifestyle in an exceptionally well-managed environment.

Children are well-nourished because the childminder has gained extensive knowledge from training courses in healthy eating and food hygiene. A healthy lifestyle is encouraged as they are provided with a wide range of nutritious and healthy meals and snacks that are outlined on the menu that is on display in the hall way. Children are positively encouraged to drink water which is constantly available, they have access to drinks at all times. Young children clearly enjoy a nutritious snack of fruit and oat cakes mid morning which means they are beginning to understand the benefits of a wholesome diet.

The childminder has an in-depth and thorough understanding of appropriate types of activities and levels of support children need to extend and develop their physical skills. Children are encouraged to try new experiences, set their own limits and ask for help when they need to. There is daily opportunities for them to play in the child centred garden that is equipped with an exciting array of toys and play equipment. Children are encouraged to develop their confidence and physical competencies in a stimulating and exciting environment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an exceptionally welcoming, clean, safe and secure environment. Their safety is promoted because the childminder has developed and fully implements policies and procedures that identify potential issues that are specific to the home. Children are protected as the childminder has taken advice from the County Fire Service and keeps relevant information and fire drill records in a 'fire safety' portfolio. The childminder ensures appropriate measures such as evacuation procedures are practised regularly to maintain the safety of the children at all times. An evacuation plan is on display for parents which shows how the building could be evacuated in the event of an incident.

Children learn to keep themselves safe through their daily routines. They have easy access to a wide range of exciting and stimulating resources that are age appropriate and promote their independence. Toys are stored in a safe manner, they are at low-level so children can make independent choices about their play. Young children are reminded not to run, to put down toys to enable them to get through doors safely. Their childminder is an excellent role model, she explains what is expected of them in a calm and sensitive manner. Children's knowledge of personal and road safety is strongly promoted when they are taken out in the community. They benefit from sound advice and instruction from their carer who has attended a course provided by the Hertfordshire Road Safety Unit.

The childminder keeps comprehensive documentation with regards to accidents and incidents which promotes children's health and safety both in the home and out in the community. Parents are fully informed of outings and events they are required to give signed permission to show they understand the different activities and trips that their children may take part in. Children are further protected by the childminder who has a developed clear procedures and shows a very good knowledge on child protection issues. Leaflets provided by the Local Safeguarding Children Board are readily accessible. The information is available in the parents prospectus ensuring they are aware of the childminder's commitment to safeguarding the children in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children settle quickly as they come into the play area after waking from a sleep. They are familiar with the routines and make themselves at home. They show a strong sense of belonging as they help themselves to a very good selection of toys and equipment that is appropriate to their age and stage of development. The childminder sits with the children as they play. She encourages and extends their language and comprehension with great skill.

The childminder is highly attentive to the children's needs and ensures they have a balanced programme of activities that can be changed and adapted as needed. Children can make independent choices about their play. They receive exceptional interaction and support from their carer who uses open ended questions that provides the children with opportunities for them to think about what they would like to do next.

She effectively uses her expert knowledge to enhance and guide her practice. This ensures a high quality care environment where all children can take an active part in their own play and learning experiences. The childminder has an excellent understanding of how children learn, she is experienced in providing play and learning opportunities in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The childminder has a secure knowledge of delivering a diverse curriculum, she plans interesting and challenging activities that are consistently reviewed to meet the children's individual needs and interests. The childminder is

supported by a mentor, the development team and staff at the Children's Centre which ensures she is proactive in reviewing and monitoring the education provision that she provides.

Children have free access to mark making implements, art projects are developed around personal events and plans that include cultural festivals enhance the children's knowledge of the wider world. Outings and visits to shops, markets and museums extend the children's curiosity and understanding of their local community. Photographs show the children learning about how pulleys are used to move weights. Children's mathematical language is extended as they measure their heights and length as they lay out on the ground.

Children's achievements are recorded through rigorous observations and the use to the Hertfordshire Nursery Learning Record. Comprehensive recording systems are supported by photographs. These show the children taking part in spontaneous learning opportunities such as watching workmen pruning trees and securing the safety lines and ropes to the trees at the end of the garden.

The records of the children's progress is well presented and shared with parents on a regular basis. The lack of some detail in the assessment records means the childminder is not aware of the children's starting points, therefore potentially not providing the right level of challenge for all children. In addition the assessment records lacks clear detail of how the children are progressing through the stepping stones.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are highly valued and respected. The childminder works closely with parents to ensure they are fully involved in the life of the setting and to meet the children's individual needs. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them to develop a strong sense of self. The childminder has routines and procedures in place to help all children reach their full potential. These strategies cater for learning difficulties and physical disabilities. Training opportunities and a wide selection of resources enables her to extend the children's understanding of festivals, cultural celebrations and the wider world.

Children are actively encouraged to keep the play areas tidy and to help tidy up. Young children are well supported in all aspects of their daily routines. They are learning the importance of how simple rules such as sitting down when they are having their snack makes it easy for them to reach their food and not to spill their drinks. Children's good behaviour and achievements are reinforced with consistent praise and encouragement. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

An excellent partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being. Parents are given a wealth of information in the form of a parent pack. This details the service that is provided and includes policies, procedures and information on the training that the childminder has attended. This ensures parents are fully informed and made to feel welcome from the beginning of the arrangements. Individual diaries share comprehensive detail about the children's routines and day to day activities. Photographs and the children's art work is displayed around the home. This gives the children a strong sense of belonging.

Parent's views and comments are welcomed as the childminder obtains feedback from regular questionnaires. She uses the responses to review and improve her practice. Parents also share information on a daily basis as they are encouraged to use the daily diary to share their experiences from home.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Information with regards to the plans and activities are shared on a regular basis and outlined in the children's folders and records of achievement.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The children's care is greatly enhanced by the excellent organisational skills of their childminder. She has an extensive and sound knowledge of child development and has attended many training courses covering a wide variety of topics. The childminder is pro-active in extending and developing her childcare practice. She has recently completed a degree in early year education, she is an accredited childminder and part of the 'Children come first network' that is co-ordinated by the St Albans Children's Centre. She uses the internet, childcare publications and local authority training opportunities to maintain and improve her skills. Children are happy and settled, they play in a calm and well organised environment. They move around safely, with growing independence and effective supervision. The childminder provides a outstanding care provision. Her practice ensures all children achieve where every child matters.

The childminder keeps all the required documentation which is reviewed on a regular basis. Detailed records are maintained in line with the accreditation for the provision of nursery education and for the continued accreditation for the Hertfordshire Quality Standard(HQS). The process for the accreditation for the nursery education funding is consistently assessed with regular monitoring sessions and annual reviews. This ensures the quality of her practice and shows how children make progress towards the early learning goals. Overall children's needs are met

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection the childminder was given two recommendations; to ensure the accuracy of the daily attendance record and the records of medication administered to children are always fully completed.

The childminder has reviewed the process for recording the children's attendance and the medication records. These are now recorded appropriately and in full which ensures the well being of the children in her care.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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.

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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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- review records of achievements to ensure they show children's starting points and progression and they are linked to the early learning goals outlined in the planning.

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