

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	129702
Inspection date	17 January 2008
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 good. 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 1996. She lives with her husband and two children aged 10 and five years in Tring, Hertfordshire. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house and a first floor bedroom is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding four children under five and three children over five years before and after school. The childminder walks to the local school to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local parent and toddler group. The family has a dog and two guinea pigs.

The childminder holds the Hertfordshire Quality Standard.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and nutritional needs are comprehensively met. The childminder takes very good steps to promote children's health. For example, children are provided with a choice of nourishing, freshly prepared, balanced meals and snacks. Menus are carefully planned to accommodate children's food allergies and include fruits and vegetables. The childminder works closely with parents of children under two to ensure that home routines are followed and notes are made of weaning foods that children have enjoyed. Children are introduced and reminded of the benefits of following a healthy lifestyle. For example, children complete a five pieces of fruit and vegetables a day chart which increases their awareness of nutrition.

Children are helped to develop personal independence skills as the childminder provides good guidance and support. For example, children are sensitively reminded to follow routines, such as washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Each child has an individual personalised hand towel to use. The childminder talks with parents about when it is appropriate to exclude children who are ill or infectious. She has a range of informative leaflets about children's infectious illnesses so that informed decision can be reached. Children's health, if they have an accident, is fully safeguarded. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate and there is a fully stocked easily accessible first aid kit to deal with any minor injuries to children. Consequently, children's health and well-being are very effectively protected.

Children enjoy an extensive range of activities that develop their physical skills. The childminder's garden has been designed to facilitate children's play and can be used throughout the year. Children can access a wide range of outdoor equipment, such as a trampoline, as well as indoor equipment, such as musical instruments, art and craft tools that develop coordination skills. Walks are taken, supplemented by visits to local pre-school groups and outings to local parks and nearby open spaces. Children can rest and sleep according to their needs. The childminder is highly responsive to children's need for rest. The daily routine is structured to accommodate individual children's sleep patterns. Infants are offered a quiet room equipped with a comfortable travel cot for undisturbed sleep. As a result, children are well rested and content throughout the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and bright family home which has been adapted so that they are given good access to a wide range of facilities that successfully promotes their development. For example, low storage units have been installed in one of the ground floor rooms so that children can access toys easily. In addition, the family garden has been landscaped so that children can use it safely throughout the year.

Children use a good range of equipment which is of good quality, safe and very clean. They have access to a wide range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate resources and toys that stimulate their interests and learning. For younger children there is a good balance of wooden and colourful plastic toys. In addition, there is a varied collection of resources for older children, such as board games, art and craft materials, which are stored safely.

When on outings children's safety is promoted through close supervision. The childminder often 'teams up' with other local registered childminders so that a good adult/child ratio is offered when on outings. Children are helped to gain an understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, road safety is discussed and reinforced by the use of activity sheets, safety rules are applied when children use the trampoline which the childminder fully explains to the children and emergency evacuation procedures are practised.

Children's welfare is protected because the childminder has a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and is able to put appropriate child protection reporting procedures into practice. Comprehensive and up-to-date documentation, including a procedure to monitor existing injuries to children, is in place which further safeguards children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy in the childminder's care. They quickly form a positive relationship with her as she is very attentive and receptive to their needs. Currently, the childminder is settling a baby under one into her care. During the inspection visit, the baby was very content and delighted in being held, gently bounced and helped to roll over to reach toys. For older pre-school children the structure of daily routine, which has an excellent balance of adult and child-led activities, allows children to learn at their own pace. The childminder observes and records children's achievement and progress to help her plan and offer a range of activities and experiences that fully promote children's development in an enjoyable way.

The childminder's flexible approach combined with her excellent understanding of child development ensures that children are given opportunities to consolidate skills and build on their knowledge alongside being introduced to new worthwhile experiences. She is very knowledgeable about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. Consequently, children's learning benefits as the childminder is incorporating many of their aspects into her practice, particularly providing sensory play for infants under two and exploration and discovery play for pre-school children. Children's early communication skills are extremely well supported as the childminder is skilled at extending children's language. The childminder engages them in conversation, attentively listens, asks questions, seeks children's opinions and introduces new words. Overall, all children are developing a very good range of knowledge and skills as the childminder plans and provides an exciting programme of planned activities, outings and play opportunities which help children achieve.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and their opinions sought. They enjoy being with the childminder, particularly enjoying 'her pasta and playing on the trampoline' and thrive from the huge amount of attention and positive reinforcement they receive from the childminder throughout the day. When helping the children to distinguish between right and wrong the childminder is sensitive to children's levels of maturity and feelings and consistently turns potential negative situations into positive experiences. Children are acknowledged as individuals and the childminder is open to new ideas and ways of working to enable her to successfully support children's development. Children use books and play materials that reflect diversity. These show positive images of boys and girls, women and men from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The childminder carefully

incorporates these resources so that children are offered a balanced and inclusive range of materials which are available at all times.

Children gain much benefit from the extremely good partnership that the childminder has established with their parents. Parents have easy access to policies and procedures written and followed by the childminder, but there are some missed opportunities to involve parents in their children's learning. However, overall a good amount of written information is shared, which ensures that children's care needs are fully met. Parents have a great deal of confidence in the care that their children receive and have written warm and complimentary letters of recommendation.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall children's needs are met. Children's care is enhanced by the very good organisation of the childminder. Their enjoyment is promoted as the daily routine is very well structured. This means that children are given time for unhurried play, rest, walks, relaxed meals, visits to groups and outings. The childminder keeps an extensive childminding portfolio, which contains relevant certificates, references, policy statements and information leaflets that she uses to support her childcare practice. She has attended and successfully completed relevant training and is continuing her professional development by attending college in the evenings to gain a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 childcare qualification to supplement her nursery nursing qualification. In addition, the childminder makes good use of the local childminding network to keep herself updated. As a result of this the childminder has built on the good practice noted at her last inspection and now offers a very good standard of care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was requested raise her awareness of child protection issues. This has been fully addressed and very good systems are in place to protect children's welfare.

In addition, the childminder was asked to obtain permission from parents prior to taking children's photographs. This was immediately addressed and written permission sought. This strengthens working in partnership with parents which enables all to work together to protect children's welfare.

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.

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):

- develop systems to involve parents in their children's learning.

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