

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123318
Inspection date	16 January 2008
Inspector	Tina Kelly
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 registered in 1998. She lives with her husband and two children aged 16 and 12 years. They live on the eastern side of St Albans off Camp Road. The house is close to local shops, supermarkets, schools and parks.

Children have access to the ground floor of the property with limited access upstairs to use the family bathroom and for young children to sleep. There is a secure garden for outside play. The family have six cats and two tropical birds.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children. She currently has part-time arrangements in place to care for six children. At the time of inspection two children aged 17-months and two years were being cared for. 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's health is comprehensively monitored and maintained due to the excellent practice followed by the childminder. She works with effective policies which she has devised in relation to health and hygiene issues. Extremely sound procedures are in place for children who become unwell to safeguard the good health of other children who attend the provision.

The childminder is very aware of each of the children's individual needs. Well-planned daily routines are adapted to take into account of the children's different ages and stages of development. Children are able to play and to rest when they need to. Young children are familiar with the morning sleep routines. The childminder uses familiar words and phrases to prepare children as they are taken to be put down for a rest. Children settle immediately as they feel safe and secure with their comfort toys and favourite blankets.

Children are very well nourished. The childminder has recently attended a food hygiene course. Healthy meals and snacks are provided in line with parents' wishes and the children's likes and dislikes. A weekly menu is displayed in the kitchen. The childminder ensures individual dietary requirements are met. The detail of children's allergies is on display in the kitchen so all members of the household are aware of the foods that the children can eat. All children learn about the importance of healthy eating and food preparation as they take part in preparing fruit and vegetables as every day activities. They enjoy taking part in fun cooking activities such as cake making. They are also involved in making homemade pizza and watching as their childminder prepares, cooks and serves nutritious and well-planned meals. Children have many opportunities to try different foods. New fruits and vegetables are put on a plate in the middle of the dinner table alongside the children's usual meals. Children can make choices about new taste experiences. Lychees are currently a favourite fruit. The childminder talks to the children about foods that are good for them; she prompts discussion about the various colours and flavours to tempt the young children to try new flavours. Children are encouraged to try different foods in an extremely well-supported environment.

The childminder has a thorough and in-depth understanding of appropriate types of activities that extend and develop children's physical skills. In the home young children enjoy dancing and moving to the music of popular and age-appropriate television programmes. They move with great confidence jumping and swinging around as they copy the actions of favourite characters. Children are encouraged to develop their confidence and physical skills when they go to the local park. They have many opportunities throughout the week to run and explore wide open play spaces.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an exceptionally welcoming, clean and safe family home. Their safety is fully promoted because the childminder has developed and implements policies and procedures that identify potential issues that are specific to her home. A comprehensive risk assessment check list is in place to monitor all areas where the children have regular access.

Children learn about the care of animals in the general daily routines. They are beginning to understand how to handle the animals in a safe manner. They are fed appropriately, out of reach of the children.

Children learn to keep themselves safe through the daily routines. Young children are reminded not to run in the home and to put toys down so they can get through doorways safely. The childminder is an excellent role model, she explains what is expected of them in a calm and kind manner. Children learn to take care when playing close to others, when they dance to music they are consistently reminded to make sure they have enough space to move around safely. They are becoming aware of the impact their actions have on other children playing nearby. They have easy access to a wide range of exciting and stimulating resources. These are age-appropriate and promote children's independent play ideas.

Children's knowledge of personal and road safety is promoted. They learn simple rules that instils a sensible approach when they are taken out in the community. Older children are included in the decision-making as they learn when it is safe to cross roads, to walk ahead and why they need to hold on to the buggy.

The childminder keeps detailed and comprehensive documentation with regards to accidents and incidents which monitors and promotes children's safety both in the home and out in the community. Children are further protected as the childminder has a very good understanding of and clear procedures on child protection issues. Leaflets provided by the Local Safeguarding Children Board are readily accessible. The information is made available to parents, ensuring they are aware of the childminders commitment to safeguarding the children in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder is highly attentive to the children's needs. She ensures they have a balanced choice of activities that can be changed and adapted as required. Children have opportunities to extend and develop their play as they chose from a wide and interesting selection of toys and resources that are readily available. Young children benefit from consistent and positive interaction. Their carer sits and plays with them; she encourages them to explore the dressing-up clothes and fabrics. She introduces new words to describe the different outfits. Children look at their reflections; their self-esteem is promoted as the childminder tells them how terrific they look in their hats, cloaks and the fabrics that are wrapped around them. Children respond by strutting around showing how important they are.

Children's language and understanding is exceptionally well supported with ongoing conversation and support by their childminder. Open-ended questions are used to prompt children to think about what they can achieve. Children have time to think about their options and to make choices about their play. Resources and activities are well presented, older children have many opportunities to take part and develop their own ideas. On a recent outing to the nearby park the children collected a range of natural materials, these have been put together to create interesting and textured art work.

Outings and trips in the local community are a vital part of all children's experiences with their childminder; they regularly visit parks where children are able to practise their physical skills and run and explore in the child-centred play area.

The childminder effectively uses her expert knowledge to enhance and guide her practice. She has an excellent understanding of how children progress and learn. She bases many of the experiences for the younger children on the 'Birth to three matters' framework to ensure all aspects of their developing skills are identified and met.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly valued and respected. The childminder works closely with parents to ensure all children are fully involved in all aspects of the week's routines and activities. Close and caring relationships increase the children's sense of trust and help them to develop a strong sense of self-worth. 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. She would seek advice and discuss issues with parents to ensure children's individual needs are met. Recent training and a wide selection of resources ensures children's understanding of the wider world is fully developed. There is a strong emphasis on children learning about their local community. When the refuse collection lorry is parked outside the childminder explains to the young children what they are doing, the impact on their work of keeping the streets clean and how important this is to everyone. Older children enjoy visits to St. Albans Museum to extend their knowledge of local history.

Children are actively encouraged to help to keep the play areas tidy and to help put toys away before going for a sleep. They are learning how simple rules such as sitting up to the table in a high chair when they have their meals and snacks makes it easy for them to reach their food and drinks. The childminder explains what is expected of them. Children's good behaviour is reinforced with consistent praise and encouragement.

An excellent partnership with parents contributes significantly to the children's well-being. A home visit by the childminder prior to the arrangement starting is an invaluable part of the settling-in process. Children are familiar with their carer and she is aware of their home setting which enables her to refer to important aspects of the children's life. Parents have a wealth of information that keeps them fully informed about all aspects of the childminding service and procedures that are in place to protect their children. In addition to the comprehensive documents in the childminder's portfolio, parents are made aware of various aspects of the registration as important information is also displayed around the home.

When children are having difficulties settling-in the childminder asks for a photograph from home. These are used when children are getting ready for a rest. They are reassured with a look at the picture and told that 'mummy is thinking of them and they will have a nice sleep'. The childminder has developed sensitive and caring routines that reinforce the children's self-confidence. Having recently attended a course on making evaluative observations the detail that is kept in the children's daily diaries records all aspects of the children's learning and achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care and well-being is supported by the excellent organisation of both the childminding business and the activities and routines that are in place. The childminder's portfolio and supporting documentation contain strong evidence to show her ongoing commitment to provide very good quality care for all children. All necessary documentation is

completed correctly, it is up to date, reviewed on a regular basis and well presented. The childminder is a part of the St. Alban's Childminding Network where she is involved in supporting other local childminders and identifying training needs.

The childminder has a strong commitment to training. Having recently attended a wide range of courses that promote children's care and learning she is currently working towards the Early Years Care and Education qualification which is a level three NVQ. She effectively implements many aspects of the courses she has attended to promote her practice and childminding business.

The childminder has an extremely positive approach to learning and to providing new opportunities that will enhance her practice and provide exciting and interesting activities and experiences for all the children in her care. Children benefit from a carer who is dedicated to their well-being and development. The childminder provides an outstanding care provision, her practice ensures all children achieve and every child matters. 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 devise a confidential written record, signed by parents, of any accidents and medication given to children and to request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

Children's health and well-being are maintained as the childminder uses the documents provided by the National Childminding Association to ensure appropriate records are kept.

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

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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.

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