

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	133304
Inspection date	05 February 2008
Inspector	Chris Banks
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 1999. She lives with her husband and two school aged children in a three bedroom flat in the N19 area of Islington. A lounge and kitchen diner are the main areas used for childminding purposes. There is also a patio garden for children's outdoor play and a small park is nearby. The family own a pet dog.

The childminder may care for a maximum of four children at any one time. She is not registered to care for children overnight. The childminder currently cares for three children on a part-time basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright and homely setting. Standards of cleanliness are good throughout and children benefit from the well organised health and hygiene routines of the childminder. Older children are positively encouraged to learn about the importance of hand

washing and other personal hygiene habits and are gently encouraged with toilet training. Care arrangements for the family dog are clean, safe and hygienic.

Children's general health is well protected because the childminder takes effective practical steps if a child becomes ill in her care. She also shares a written sickness policy with parents which makes clear the circumstances under which children cannot be cared for. The childminder is qualified in First Aid and is well prepared in the event of an accident or emergency. There is a written procedure for administering medication. The system, however, requires strengthening to ensure all details are fully recorded.

Children benefit from the childminder's commitment to provide them with a healthy, well balanced diet. Their individual preferences are taken into good account and any special dietary requirements are well documented and acted upon. Children enjoy mealtimes because they are unrushed, social occasions.

The childminder understands well the importance of ensuring children have fresh air and exercise. Children enjoy playing in the patio garden on a daily basis and also regularly visit local parks and playgrounds where they enjoy more vigorous exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in safety and comfort because the childminder takes good practical safety precautions and ensures they are well supervised at all times. Effective action is taken to minimise any risks inside the home and all required safety equipment is in place. Outdoors, the garden gate is well secured. It does, however, lead to a public walkway and its low level nature could possibly pose a security risk.

Safe arrangements for the arrival and collection of children are in place as the childminder insists on meeting other adults authorised to collect children once arrangements are agreed. Through discussion, the childminder effectively describes how children are protected on trips out. She practices good road safety and explains well how older children learn about using pelican and pedestrian crossings.

The overall welfare of children is positively safeguarded because the childminder demonstrates a strong commitment to act in their best interests at all times. She has a good understanding of child protection issues and is knowledgeable about possible signs and symptoms of abuse. She knows the action to take if she has concerns about a child and is aware of the role of Ofsted. There is also up-to-date written guidance for her to follow with contact details.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and well settled because the childminder creates a warm and welcoming atmosphere in the family home. She develops routines to meet children's specific needs and knows their personalities well. Relationships with the childminder are very warm and close. The childminder uses good communication and listening skills with children and takes a positive interest in what they are doing. Consequently, children feel valued and are confident to approach the childminder for any support they may need.

The childminder's experience and recognised qualification in childcare translates into good practice as children enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors. Some activities are specially geared towards encouraging children's communication skills and reading as an activity is also positively promoted. The childminder uses good questioning techniques with children to extend their learning and everyday activities are made interesting and fun. Watering outdoor plants and playing in the well cared for sandpit are outdoor activities children also enjoy. Children show pride in their creative efforts and their art work is attractively displayed.

Children are developing good independence skills because they are able to choose what they play with and can comfortably help themselves from a good range of well cared for toys and resources. They are positively encouraged to take care of equipment and readily help tidy up.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder's warm, patient approach helps children feel completely at ease. As a consequence, they are happy and secure with her. The settling in process is sensitive and family friendly. Comprehensive information about children is gathered and recorded at the beginning of each placement and arrangements for the care of each child are discussed in detail. If parents are unhappy about the service there is a clear complaints procedure which fully meets Ofsted's requirements.

Children's overall progress is closely monitored by the childminder who ensures parents are kept well informed. The childminder demonstrates a good understanding of child development and is aware of the support systems available to promote their overall welfare.

Children learn about the wider world and its diverse communities in a range of ways. They benefit from the childminder's experience of caring for children from a wide variety of backgrounds and her knowledge of different cultures and religions. Children's own cultural traditions are valued and festivals such as Hanukkah and Christmas are equally observed. The good range of anti-discriminatory toys and equipment provided by the childminder are also used in meaningful ways to help children learn about difference.

Children express themselves freely, secure in the knowledge they will receive a consistent warm response. Their behaviour is well supported and there is close interaction between the childminder and those she cares for. This is because she understands children's behaviour well and uses good techniques to help build their confidence and self-esteem.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a motivated, caring childminder who demonstrates a strong commitment to providing a good service to children and families. The childminder holds a recognised qualification in early years childcare and keeps herself professionally well informed in a range of ways. Children benefit from her good understanding of how children learn and develop and are nurtured and well cared for.

Policies and procedures relating to children's overall health and safety are effectively put into practice and shared with parents. In order to fully protect children, the medication procedure, must however, be strengthened and outdoor security improved.

Space in the home is sufficient for the number of children the childminder is registered to care. It is organised in a very child friendly way providing children with a stimulating play and learning environment.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, the childminder was required to improve record keeping arrangements for children's attendance. Children's safety is now better protected because the childminder records the time of their arrival and departure.

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 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):

- ensure the medication procedure includes a record of the dosage and time of administration
- improve overall security of the patio area

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