

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123688
Inspection date	12 October 2005
Inspector	Elizabeth Shellard

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 1995. She lives with her husband and 3 children aged 11, 13 and 17 in the Thorley Park area of Bishop's Stortford. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time and is currently minding 6 children under 5 on both full and part time contracts and 2 children over 5 before and after school. The childminder also cares for 2 children over 8 years of age. The childminder walks to the local school to take and collect children. She attends the local toddler group and takes children to a cookery class for children, local parks and Tumble Tots. The childminder has a cat and a hamster.

The child minder has an NVQ level 3 in Early Years Care and Education.

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's good health is promoted by the childminder maintaining good standards of cleanliness. Parents are provided with a written policy for excluding children who are not well to prevent the spread of infection. The childminder uses the same guidelines as the local primary school for periods of exclusion. Accident and medication records are efficiently maintained and the childminder ensures that her first aid training is updated every three years. Children learn to take responsibility for daily personal care routines such as washing their hands and brushing their teeth.

Children enjoy nutritious, healthy meals with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Account is taken of children's individual preferences. They take it in turns to choose the main meal of the day from a selection of menu cards. Children are encouraged to take an interest in food by going to weekly children's cookery classes.

Children have daily opportunities to enjoy the benefits of physical exercise and fresh air by walking to and from school and playing in the garden with the good selection of outside toys. In addition, they go to Tumble Tots each week and regularly visit nearby parks. Children who need to rest during the day use a travel cot, in a quiet area of the house such as the lounge, within hearing distance of the childminder and where they can be checked frequently.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is a high priority. The childminder works to a comprehensive health and safety policy. She has a proactive approach towards identifying and protecting children against any potential hazards. Children develop an awareness of keeping themselves safe, for example, when using scissors and by learning road safety rules. Under the childminder's supervision, older children are encouraged to make the decision about when it is safe to cross the road.

Children have free access to a wide range of well maintained, good quality play resources which are stimulating and engage the interest of the wide age range of children in the childminder's care.

All necessary fire safety precautions are in place. Having recently attended a child protection course, the childminder has a good understanding of child protection procedures. The childminder is conscientious in ensuring that all required criminal records checks are in place. All of these measures contribute to the safety and welfare of the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy and settled in the childminder's home. The majority of the children have been looked after by the childminder for a relatively long time and all have warm relationships with childminder and her family. These relationships, combined with the stability and continuity of care, have contributed to the children's sense of belonging.

The children are able to develop their confidence and self-esteem by being given opportunities to make decisions and take responsibility for tasks such as laying the table. Children flourish in a climate in which they receive praise and encouragement. Colourful displays of their craft activities are a further demonstration that their achievements are valued.

Children gain significant benefits from the childminder's Child Care and Education qualification and ongoing studies. She applies her knowledge and understanding to plan a purposeful range of activities for the children. The childminder uses her observations of children's development to inform her planning to help the children progress to next stage of learning.

Children play co-operatively and harmoniously with each other. Their well-developed language skills enable them to communicate their thoughts, ideas and experiences to both adults and other children. They are confident when using mathematical language to describe and compare shapes and sizes and their emerging literacy skills, for example, when talking about 'ham rhyming with jam.'

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop positive attitudes by example; the childminder treats the children with respect and places a strong emphasis on children learning respect. The childminder has a written equal opportunities policy which details her commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and all children being treated with equal concern.

Toys and books help children to learn about diversity and disability. To enable her to further extend children's knowledge and understanding of diversity, the childminder acknowledges that her knowledge of differences in ethnicity, culture and religion is an area of her practice for development.

Children's behaviour is excellent, they are relaxed and very secure in the childminder's care. The childminder has effective strategies for managing any behaviour problems that may arise. Children are taught take responsibility for their behaviour by being expected to consider how they would feel and to say sorry. A written behaviour management policy is in place and shared with parents. As appropriate, parents are involved in the management of specific behaviour issues but for most minor incidents the childminder deals with them at the time and says that 'when they are over, they are over.'

Letters from parents verify a positive partnership with parents. Children and parents benefit from the childminder's well-established settling-in process. By making written procedures and documents available and talking to parents every day, the childminder ensures that they are well informed about the time their child spends with her.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's experiences are enriched by the organisation of the physical environment. The kitchen is used for craft and messy play activities, there is a well-equipped playroom, the conservatory provides a space for older children to play and the lounge is a comfortable, homely place for quiet activities. The patio adjacent to the house is fenced to provide a safe and easily observed place for younger children to play. An area of lawn provides additional space for physical play. The playhouse in garden provides an exceptional resource for creative and imaginative play.

Children enjoy activities outside the home such as trips on the bus and for older children visits to the cinema in the school holidays. Walking to and from school is used as an opportunity to increase children's knowledge of the world around them for example, talking about autumn and gathering leaves to make a collage.

The childminder is extremely committed to extending and developing her practice by studying for an Early Years Foundation degree and being awarded the Hertfordshire Kite Mark award in 2002 and 2005. The childminder has sought feedback from parents through questionnaires; this demonstrates a professional approach to ensuring quality of care for the children.

The provision for children under three is enhanced by the childminder's knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

The childminder has drawn up a comprehensive range of records, policies and procedures to ensure the efficient and safe management of her childminding provision and to promote the children's welfare.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of all children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder agreed to update her child protection statement in line with current practice and registration requirements. The childminder has completed this recommendation which promotes the welfare and safety of the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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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):

- increase knowledge of diversity to provide further opportunities for children to learn about differences in ethnicity, culture and religion.

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