



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	129181
Inspection date	18 October 2005
Inspector	Gail Groves

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.
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WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder registered in 1998. She lives with her husband and 3 children aged 11, 9 and 7 in Hatfield, Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house plus one bedroom and the toilet and bathroom upstairs is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 5 children at any one time and is currently minding 2 children under 5 all day and 3 children under 8 who attend on a part-time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. She attends the local parent and toddler group, takes children to the local

library and takes children to the local park. The family has a pet hamster.

The childminder supports children with English as an additional language. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have regular opportunities to enjoy physical activity and fresh air, which encourages them to understand and develop a healthy lifestyle. They play in the garden with bikes, scooters, a slide and a trampoline and go on trips to the park to play on large scale apparatus, such as the roundabout, swings and balancing log. This helps to develop their physical skills and coordination. Walking to school or going out to collect conkers with the childminder enables children to discuss why exercise is important and to learn about healthy living. To balance energetic play, children also have opportunities to rest or sleep according to their needs. Young children have a nap after lunch whilst the childminder plays quietly with older children who do not need to sleep. This ensures that children do not become overtired, fractious and unable to enjoy the play opportunities provided by the childminder.

Children enjoy a clean and healthy environment in which the childminder's health and hygiene policies and procedures generally protect them from infection. They carry out simple, good health and hygiene practices such as throwing used tissues in the bin, washing their hands after using the toilet and often before eating. However, they do not always wash their hands before snack times. As a result, children are not fully developing appropriate hygiene habits for later life. Children are appropriately nourished to support their physical growth and development and the childminder works with parents to meet their health and dietary needs. For example, she supports parents in encouraging children to try eating fruit by involving them in washing and preparing it and cuts it into smaller, more manageable pieces so that they are not deterred.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment in which risks have been minimised so that they can move around safely and independently. They use suitable and safe equipment that is appropriate for their differing ages and needs and which the childminder maintains in good condition. They choose and independently access toys and resources from boxes on the floor and the childminder monitors these regularly to ensure that broken items are thrown away so that children are not injured. Children learn to keep themselves safe because the childminder has rules, such as no running or climbing in the house in case they fall and making sure that they are careful how they pass items such as scissors to each other. These help to identify possible dangers.

Appropriate procedures keep children safe on outings. The childminder ensures that children use suitable seats and restraints when in the car and that young children wear reins whilst older children hold on to the pushchair when they are out walking. No children are allowed to run on ahead whilst walking in the street and the childminder uses safety controlled road crossings whenever possible. Children are well protected because the childminder has attended recent training and has a very clear understanding of her role in child protection. She is able to put appropriate procedures into practice if necessary. She also gives parents a copy of her child protection policy and asks them to sign an acknowledgement that they understand it. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate and so has the relevant knowledge and skills to keep children safe if they are injured or ill.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are involved and interested in the activities provided for them and concentrate on these for appropriate lengths of time. Consequently, they are developing the skills needed to become successful learners. During their everyday routine, opportunities such as being able to select their own activities and resources and using their initiative to access drinks or use the toilet mean that children are able to develop independence. As a result, they develop confidence and self-esteem and are not afraid to seek help if needed. Children respond positively to challenge because they are supported by the interaction and praise given to them by the childminder who knows and understands their individual needs and personalities well. For example, a young child making cakes spoons the mixture into the paper cases with little help and later, when they are ready to eat, carries a plate of cakes carefully around the room, offering them to each person present. He is rewarded with thanks and positive comments from the childminder and the other children.

Children acquire new knowledge and skills through planned activities and visits. For example, children develop their coordination and physical skills with activities such as threading, drawing and using the balancing log at the park and regularly visit toddler groups to develop their social skills. Throughout her interactions with the children, the childminder extends their thinking and learning through careful questioning and discussion. With her intervention and support they begin to distinguish between right and wrong as they think and talk about why some behaviour is not acceptable. Children confidently ask questions to seek information and make positive relationships both with each other and with familiar and unfamiliar adults.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel a sense of belonging and are comfortable, happy and settled in the setting. This means that they can confidently access the play and learning experiences which are on offer. The childminder works with parents to meet individual children's needs and ensures they are included fully in the life of the setting. For example, she gives a child with English as an additional language extra

support with her reading practice, and uses singing, action rhymes and counting games to extend her language skills.

Children learn to become aware both of their own needs and of the needs of others because the childminder provides a good role model and supports their understanding. For example, a child is reminded that he must go upstairs quietly because another child is asleep in one of the bedrooms. Children understand taking turns and sharing and negotiate with each other in order to do so successfully. This means that they work harmoniously with each other and need little support in following rules when playing group games. Politeness and respect for others is valued by the childminder and children readily use "please" and "thank you" appropriately. Consequently, they are beginning to understand responsible behaviour.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder's policies and procedures generally work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. She gives copies of all her policies to new parents so that they have clear and consistent information about the care she provides and she also asks them to sign an acknowledgement that they have received and read them. In this way she forms a partnership with parents to promote children's welfare. She organises her time so that she is able to give young children individual attention within the normal daily routine. For example, while some children are sleeping or at nursery, she gives the other children as much individual or small group attention as possible and provides effective support for their care learning and play.

The childminder keeps both accident records and records of medication administered to children and gives parents a carbon copy of any records relating to their child. She does not, however, ask parents to sign her copy of these records to acknowledge that they have been given the relevant details. This means that there is no system to monitor or prove that parents are aware that they might need to seek further medical aid if their child develops additional symptoms as a result of the accident or to ensure that they are aware that they should not give their child a second dose of medication. Also, the record of attendance is not fully complete and there is no system for recording any complaints which might be made by parents. This means that there is no accurate proof that the childminder has been complying with the terms of her registration regarding numbers and there is no system to check that any concerns have been fully investigated. As a result, children's welfare could be compromised.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to improve children's safety. She has now ensured that children cannot leave the garden unsupervised by fitting a padlock and chain to the rear gate and has built a patio outside the doors leading

from the conservatory to the garden so that there is no longer a large drop in levels.

She also agreed to improve children's enjoyment and achievement. She has attended a local authority approved childminder's course which has increased her knowledge and understanding of childminding practice and has purchased more outdoor and imaginative play resources. These include trikes, scooters, sit and ride toys, dressing up clothes and home corner equipment. As a result, children have greater opportunities to develop their physical skills and to extend their imagination.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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 satisfactory. 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 record of attendance is accurately maintained at all times
- keep a written record of complaints, any action taken and the outcome of any investigation, as detailed in Day care and childminding: guidance to the National Standards revisions to certain criteria October 2005
- ensure the accident records and the records of medication administered to children are always signed by parents.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk