

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY359632
Inspection date	09 April 2008
Inspector	Susan Ennis
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 2007. She lives with her husband and three children aged eight, seven, and three in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently minding three children under five on a part-time basis. The childminder walks or drives to local schools to take and collect children. She attends the local parent and toddler group. The family has no pets.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and comfortable home environment. Their health is efficiently promoted as the childminder follows consistent procedures such as, cleaning surfaces before preparing food, spraying the changing mat with antibacterial cleaner after use and using gloves when changing nappies. Children are protected from illness due to the childminder's effective

policies and procedures. She has a sick child policy which she shares with parents and has the necessary parental consent for emergency medical treatment or advice to be obtained if required. Children learn the importance of personal hygiene as the childminder encourages and supports their learning of good hygiene practices. They are made aware of germs and the impact on their health through, for example, reminders about washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet and drinking from their own cups.

Children participate in a broad range of physical activities, contributing to their good health. The childminder ensures that there are daily opportunities for indoor and outdoor activities such as the walk to and from school, visits to the local park and playing in the well-equipped garden with, for example, sit and ride toys, a trampoline and a slide. Younger children develop physically as they are encouraged to stretch for toys to play with and pull themselves into the standing position with support from the childminder. They also enjoy action rhymes such as 'Five speckled frogs' when they pretend to be the frog jumping into the pond. All these encourage the children's coordination and awareness of body movements. Their rest and sleep patterns are accommodated because the childminder is very aware of each child's individual needs adapting the daily routine to cater for them.

Children are well nourished and their health is promoted due to the childminder's good understanding of healthy eating. They are offered nutritious, home-made meals and snacks including fresh and dried fruit, salmon with rice and vegetables and apple crumble. Each child has their own labelled drinking bottle which is available throughout the day. This encourages them to become aware of their own drinking needs and prevents dehydration. Each child's dietary requirements are fully discussed with the parents and adhered to.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure, organised and clean environment. Children are effectively supervised at all times, which means that they develop their independence skills in a secure environment. Daily written risk assessments of the premises and garden are carried out ensuring children's safety. Areas checked ensure that, for example, the toilet brush is out of reach, chairs are pushed under the table and that plug sockets are covered. However, the fire blanket is not located as per the manufacturer's instructions affecting its use in an emergency situation and potentially the children's safety. Written procedures such as a home safety policy and procedures concerning uncollected and lost children further ensure children's welfare. The emergency evacuation procedure is also regularly practised with drills taking place on different days ensuring that the childminder knows how to evacuate all children safely. She also keeps an emergency bag by the front door for fire drills and outings. This contains items such as the children's photographs and their contact details should the childminder become incapacitated therefore ensuring the children's safety even further.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe through regular discussions about road safety such as reminders to hold hands when crossing the road. They are also learning safety around the home and garden by adhering to the childminder's instruction. For example, they are taught to climb up the slide correctly and know not to jump on the furniture in case they fall and hurt themselves.

Children independently select activities from a good range of quality toys and equipment. The childminder sensitively supervises the children's choices ensuring that they are both safe and appropriate for their age and stage of development. Resources for younger children are

encouragingly stored at ground level developing their independence skills and self-selection. Children's welfare is promoted and safeguarded through the childminder's understanding and implementation of her written policies and procedures. She is aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and is able to follow the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures in the event of any concern or child protection issue should it arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident, settled and interested in their play. They relate well to the childminder who extends their play and learning experiences through asking open-ended questions such as 'What noise does the cow make?' when playing with the toy animals and to which younger children respond by making vocal sounds and smiling. Children participate in all the activities because the childminder uses her broad knowledge of child development to adapt activities without compromising any of their play. Younger children are given more hands on support whilst the older children are encouraged more verbally. Activities are also adapted to meet individual children's stage of development. When making dragons for Chinese New Year older children fold the card to simulate the dragon's movements whilst younger children enjoy using the red paint to colour their picture of a dragon.

Children are encouraged to make choices about their play as well as the childminder suggesting activities for them. When children appear distracted in a singing session preferring to look at a book, the childminder sings a song relating to the pictures in the book therefore stimulating the child's interest further whilst still using their choice of activity.

Children's development in all areas is actively promoted because the childminder uses her knowledge of the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters' framework together with individual plans, observations and her daily routine to plan activities in advance linking the ideas to the areas of learning. For example independent play with another child relates to A Strong Child and developing self assurance whilst encouraging children to reach for toys links to the aspect a competent Learner and making connections. Children's sensory skills are developing as they compare the rough and smooth sides of a conker shell and their understanding of colour and shape is encouraged as they stick different coloured triangles onto an Easter egg. They enjoy using their imagination as they dress up as a workman pretending to drill and saw and their construction skills as they build the train set and push the trains around the track. Younger children are starting to enjoy cause and affect toys as they press the buttons to make the sheep pop out of its box wriggling their legs with delight as they do so. Children make positive relationships with each other and the childminder reaching for reassurance from the childminder when the inspector enters the room. Once received they play happily, enjoying the attention from both the adults present.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals and have a sense of belonging. The childminder ensures that she is aware of each child's individual needs and meets them effectively. On arrival at the setting the parent and childminder exchange relevant information about the children's care and any changes that may have taken place since the last session, such as the children starting to crawl, ensuring that the appropriate level of care is given. Children are given a sense of belonging as their favourite toys are readily accessible on arrival making them feel secure and settled. Their

art work is displayed in individual scrap books and they all have their own towels making them feel included and very much at home. Their daily routine allows time for snack, rest, play and interaction with other children meeting all their individual needs.

Children's understanding of the wider world and the community they live in is actively promoted by the childminder who provides a varied range of resources and activities to promote our society. For example, resources such as, puzzles and board games positively promote those from other cultures. Children are also learning French as they look at books with French print and sing songs in this language. However resources reflecting those with disabilities are limited. Children celebrate festivals including Ramadan and Diwali when they enjoy making Diwali clay lamps. Visits within the local community to, for example, the library and toddler groups increases children's understanding further and their interaction with others. Although the childminder has no experience in caring for children with behaviour difficulties and/or disabilities she is able to effectively care for all children working with parents to meet all children's individual needs.

Children enjoy a child-centred environment ensuring that unwanted behaviour is minimal. They learn to behave well and understand what is expected of them through regular routine, consistent boundaries, praise and encouragement. They know the ground rules, for example, automatically taking off their shoes on entering the house and respecting everyone present. Their self esteem and confidence is developed as they receive praise for achievements and positive actions. When children press the correct picture on a sight and sound book they are praised with 'Well done. Aren't you clever' encouraging them to have another turn.

Children are confident and secure because the childminder has developed a positive relationship with parents. She welcomes parents into her home and has time to discuss their child's day, ensuring that they are directly involved in the children's care and development. Effective systems for sharing information, such as the use of a daily diary and a comprehensive and informative policy brochure ensures that parents remain well informed of their child's daily activities and the childminder's working ethos.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall children's needs are met. The children are relaxed and happy in a home-from-home environment which helps them feel safe and secure. This means that children are confident to initiate and extend their own play and learning. Play opportunities are extended outside of the home to enable children to have a positive understanding of the wider community and benefit from a healthy lifestyle.

The childminder uses her varied childcare knowledge to assist her in planning a safe, stimulating and caring environment for the children. She ensures that the children are offered a broad and varied range of interesting activities that all are encouraged to participate in. The childminder actively strives to increase her knowledge by attending training enabling her to update her practice and offer better care for the children.

Children's welfare is promoted through the upkeep of clear records of accidents, medication and specific details such as written agreements with parents. The childminder has a comprehensive range of documents that are shared with parents keeping them fully informed about the provision. These are implemented successfully in the daily routine, reviewed and up-dated regularly to directly impact on the continuity of children's care.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- improve fire safety by ensuring that the fire blanket is correctly fitted in the kitchen
- improve the range of resources to reflect equality of opportunity and increase children's understanding of the wider world.

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