

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY347568
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 April 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Sandra Daniels
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 registered in 2007. She lives with her husband, one adult child and two children aged four years and one year in the Katherine's area of the town of Harlow, near to local amenities. The whole premises is used for childminding and there is an enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder has no pets. The childminder is registered to care for two children under eight years at any one time and is currently minding three children, two of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder walks to the local school to take and collect children. She attends the local toddler group, library and park with children.

### THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

#### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a home with a high standard of comfort and cleanliness. They learn the importance of washing their hands because the childminder reminds them at mealtimes and after using the toilet. She supports them very well at their level and they look at the visual prompts in the bathroom and sing a 'washing our hands' song together. There is a step for children who are not yet tall enough to reach the hand wash basin. The childminder's

comprehensive policies and procedures regarding hygiene and sickness. For example, not allowing a child who may be infectious to have contact with other children, helps to prevent the spread of infections.

Children are encouraged to understand the importance of healthy eating through innovative topics and discussion. They are well nourished as the childminder provides healthy food for snacks and meals; drinking water is freely available at all times. Children enjoy fresh and dried fruits for snacks and meals cooked by the childminder using fresh ingredients.

Children have regular and exciting opportunities to refine and develop their physical skills. They regularly visit the park where they run, climb and balance on large equipment. This helps them to keep fit and active. However, the childminder's garden is presently a little overgrown and she has agreed to develop this outside play area to further increase opportunities for children to exercise and play in the fresh air.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Children look forward to attending and enjoy their time in this extremely stimulating and safe setting which puts children first. For example, the childminder displays children's artwork and this makes them feel valued. Children benefit from having ample space to move and play freely without restriction. They enjoy the childminder's friendly and relaxed approach, which makes them feel totally at ease in her care.

Children play with a wide range of accessible toys, which meets their developmental needs. The childminder constantly reviews and replenishes the books and toys; she has recently purchased some high-quality art and craft resources. She understands that children learn in a variety of ways and school-age children benefit from both the internet and reference books when completing homework tasks. Children are inquisitive and interested in what they are playing with and are confident in selecting resources from the large storage unit.

Children are extremely effectively protected because the childminder knows each child very well and is able to promote their safety. For example, she provides clear boundaries and careful supervision, although she is not over-protective. This means children have the sense of freedom and independence, but within safe limits. She has highly efficient systems in place to protect children on outings. For example, risk assessments are carried out on her car in addition to the home and garden. This means that children always travel safely, using the appropriate seats and restraints. In the home, children remain safe as the childminder conducts daily health and safety checks. For example, she ensures that all plug sockets are covered, the safety gates are in proper working order and that the premises remains clean, tidy and free of potential hazards. The childminder has efficient systems in place to ensure that only authorised people can collect the children. Children are protected in the event of fire because the childminder has written an emergency evacuation plan which she has made into an interesting book for children to look at. Evacuations of the premises are practised regularly with the children and these are recorded in the fire log.

Children are very effectively safeguarded because the childminder has attended child protection training and has written a comprehensive child protection policy which is shared with parents. The childminder keeps useful information on this subject on file which parents also have access to.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy and very well occupied when they are with the childminder. The childminder makes brief weekly plans to ensure activities and toys are rotated so that children remain interested. She offers children a suitable choice of toys and books every day, changing equipment regularly. Children thoroughly enjoy attending childminding groups with the childminder and going to the library for story time. They also visit local play centres for soft play sessions, which enhances both their physical and social development.

Children choose books to share with the childminder. They sit on the sofa together cosily and the childminder shows the children the pictures. Each child has their own 'scrap book' where they proudly display pieces of artwork and look at photographs of themselves participating in various activities. These books show the progress children make, for example, with drawing skills and pencil control as they learn to mark their work with their names. The childminder uses 'tracker' books to show how children are progressing in each area of learning. These are shared with parents. The childminder makes observations of children at play and uses these to complete the 'tracker' books. The childminder cuddles children warmly and tells them 'You are gorgeous!' as they look at past photographs together. She is very aware of the development of the children and understands that younger children follow and copy older children, trying to join in their activities. The childminder talks expressively to the children and encourages them to smile and copy her facial expressions. Children giggle and laugh when the childminder tries to be stern, although they understand the meaning of the word 'no'.

Children appreciate the frequent opportunities for dressing up in the range of clothes available. They also make craft items from scrap materials and sparkly bits, as well as painting. Children have regular opportunities to use play dough and play with water as they bath their dolls. After reading the story 'Beauty and the Beast' with the childminder, children enjoyed acting it out for themselves, using their creative and imaginative skills. Children also enjoy helping with simple household tasks such as sorting clean laundry with the childminder and tidying away toys at the end of the day.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and their individual needs are respected. The childminder treats each child with equal concern and identifies any specific care needs that children may have. The childminder promotes the importance of communicating with parents and obtains information to ensure children's individual care requirements are fully supported in all areas. For example, children's likes, dislikes, sleep times, feed times and overall care routines are discussed and the childminder adopts similar patterns of care for children as enjoyed at home, helping them to feel happy and secure in their environment. The childminder has a very positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. She is aware of the need to provide a truly inclusive environment where each child's individual needs are met.

Children enjoy and benefit from participating in various activities which help them to develop an early understanding of differences in society and learn about the wider world around them. Exciting play activities, with authentic looking soft animals and colourful books, introduce children to different creatures and encourage their recognition and interest in animals and people living in different parts of the world. Children also benefit from role play and using Small World activities, helping them to learn about their natural environment and gain an

understanding of different lifestyles and events that are celebrated in their community and reflected in society as a whole.

Children are clearly loved and cared for and as a result, are thriving within a positive and happy care environment. Children's overall wellbeing is promoted because the childminder consistently praises children and rewards them with positive feedback. Their achievements are recognised and stickers are given to children, helping them to feel valued, develop confidence and good self-esteem. Children receive certificates for special achievements, for example, taking off and putting on their shoes and socks.

Effective methods are used to promote a positive partnership with parents. For example, as part of settling in procedures, parents are actively involved in helping their child to settle in to the childminder's home. An initial meeting is undertaken with the childminder, enabling both parents and children to attend the childminder's home together. The childminder uses this time to talk to parents about her practice including information about safety, hygiene, education and care. Policies and procedures are shared, agreed and future arrangements are made for children's attendance, enabling children and parents to prepare for visits again as part of settling in period. Staggered times are planned to help children gain confidence and get to know the childminder's family and familiarise themselves with their care environment.

Parents are actively encouraged to communicate with the childminder and agreed times are arranged to discuss the care needs of their child. Parents also receive written daily feedback from the childminder. Detailed accounts and comprehensive information is recorded on children's daily diary sheets. This includes explanatory information relating to how children are progressing, activities they have been engaged in, progress and achievements they are making and routine care information. As a result, parents are continually kept up-to-date and clearly informed about the care of their child.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Overall children's needs are met. They are very secure, happy and settled in the bright, welcoming environment. The home is very well organised to include space for quiet times as well as areas for creative play. Children are confident because they are familiar with the clear daily routine. This is carefully planned, but flexible, in order to meet their needs. They benefit from a good balance of active and quiet times and the frequent opportunities for outdoor play. They have excellent support because the childminder meets the required ratios. She organises her time effectively to ensure she meets the needs of all the children so they have positive play and learning experiences. For example, she does more challenging creative activities with the older children while the younger ones are asleep.

The childminder is totally committed to ongoing training in order to develop her skills. Children's health and well-being is fully promoted because she has all the required documentation in place. She understands the importance of maintaining confidentiality and ensures all information relating to the children is locked away. This means that the childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

## **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):

- further develop opportunities for children to exercise and play in the fresh air by making the garden more accessible and inviting to children.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)