



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 123917
Inspection date 07 September 2005
Inspector Paula Durrant

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 registered in January 1995. She lives with her husband and their three children aged sixteen, twelve and seven years, in a quiet cal-de-sac in a rural village on the outskirts of Stevenage town. She is registered to provide care for a total of four children independently and when working with another registered childminder at the same premises a maximum of six children under the age of eight years. She is currently minding eleven children all of whom attend on a part time basis. At the time of inspection four children under the age of five years were present. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding and one bedroom is used upstairs for children requiring undisturbed sleep. There is a fully enclosed

garden for outside play. The family has a cockatiel, rabbit and a dog. The childminder takes and collects children from local pre-schools, nurseries and state schools. She regularly visits local amenities such as local parks and other places of interest.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop some understanding of personal hygiene needs. They know when to wash their hands, such as after using the toilet, when returning from outside play and prior to eating meals. They realise soap is used in the cleaning process and that to make the soap work they must get it wet and rub their hands vigorously in order to create bubbles. However, children do not fully comprehend the essence of why soap is used, as limited emphasis is given to teaching children about germs. Children stay healthy as they are cared for in a friendly family home that is maintained to a good standard of cleanliness. Exceptional adherence to Environmental Health guidelines in relation to the management of bodily fluids and communal diseases assists in minimising the potential of cross contamination. For example, the childminder consistently wears disposable gloves when changing children's nappies and abides to regulated exclusion periods when children are unwell. Children eat healthily. They gain a balanced nutritious diet of home cooked foods incorporating five daily portions of fruit and vegetables. Children's individual dietary needs are complied with and flexibility is offered to parents that prefer to make their own provision. Children are keen to try new foods. They express their likes and dislikes confidently, such as a child who stated ' I don't like cucumber' referring to the side dish on their dinner plate. Children remain well hydrated as drinks flow freely throughout the day. All children have their own cups and these are replenished when empty. Children enjoy a wide range of activities that contribute to their good health. The garden is used regularly and trips to the local park and other places of interest within the community are frequent. Children rest and are active in accordance to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety is a key focus within this secure and vigilantly monitored home from home environment. Regular daily checks of the premises and the implementation of precautionary measures, such as stair gates to restrict access, ensures children's well-being. Children remain in sight and hearing at all times. Supervision is exceptional, due to the effective partnership of joint practitioners who work well as an established team. Children receive high levels of support with minimum required ratios consistently exceeded. Children enjoy their freedom and move confidently between the indoor and outdoor areas. They begin to develop some knowledge of how to keep themselves safe in the garden as they line up to have sun screen applied and to put on their sun hats. Children stay safe in the sun as the childminder provides shaded areas and monitors the length of time children are exposed to the harmful sun rays. However, children have restricted responsibility in developing their

understanding of how to keep themselves safe as limited emphasis is given towards teaching children about safety measures. Children access a diverse range of age appropriate resources that are suitably maintained and in good repair. Consideration is given to the organisation of activities when older and younger children are present. For example, smaller pieces of construction materials such as 'Lego' are played with at the high dining room table. This means small parts that may present a choking hazard to young children remain out of reach. The childminder is conscientious in her provision of activities and equipment. She has additional consent from parents in relation to use of the large trampoline in the garden and religiously abides to the manufacturer's age restrictions. Children travel safely when away from the home. They sit in age appropriate restraints in the car, are strapped into pushchairs, walk with reins or alternatively hold hands when walking within the local vicinity. Children's care is effectively nurtured by experienced individuals who extend their skills through access to ongoing training courses. All persons having unsupervised access hold appropriate vetting checks and those that reside in the home also undertake clearances. Children's welfare is effectively promoted as the childminder holds a strong knowledge of child protection and the procedures to be followed in the event of a concern arising.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are highly confident individuals. They settle promptly and quickly involve themselves in the activities offered. Children enjoy the activity of making pretend foods with the play dough such as pizza and chips. They draw meaningful designs, creating their favourite animals which is extended in conversation to pets that they have at home. Children negotiate freely in their play, showing respect and courtesy for the feelings of others. For example, children waited patiently for their turn at the trampoline and asked graciously if they could join in when putting the cones out for the roadway on the grass. Children demonstrate high levels of self esteem. They are keen to share their knowledge such as what colours they recognise and how far they can count by rote. For example, children were asked to count to ten on the trampoline as a means of turn taking. Most children managed this and older more able children counted up to and beyond ten. Children are extremely articulate for their age and stage of development. This is mainly due to the high levels of interaction and the effective open ended questioning that the childminder constantly applies. Children enjoy the free-flow of conversation and build their vocabulary as new words are frequently introduced in their play, such as the discussion about being a 'chef' when pretending to cook play food in the summer house. Children effectively use their imagination in their play. For example, a child quoted when sitting down to the picnic bench 'lets have a picnic'. This was overheard by the childminder who immediately provided play food and a tea-set. The children sat happily at the table pretending to munch their plastic chicken and chips whilst waiting for the tea to brew.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder provides an effective range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others. For example, dolls which represent different cultures and books about other countries. Children learn about their local community as they visit local places of interest such as parks and other amenities. Children are valued and respected as individuals. They develop a strong sense of belonging as the childminder abides to the children's home routines providing excellent home from home care. Behaviour is exceptional. Children respond well to the clear and consistent boundaries. They show concern and care for others, such as in the use of equipment. Children receive regular praise and encouragement. For example, when a child counts in sequence correctly she is rewarded with acknowledgement that this is correct. The child smiles and continues to count higher. The childminder ensures that daily discussion and written documentation about the service provided keeps parents informed about their child's activities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's needs take high priority in this home from home setting. An exceptionally close working partnership of two practitioners ensures children remain the primary focus of care. For example, the effective deployment of adults when preparing new activities or meeting children's individual needs, such as checking the garden before children go outside to play and the flexibility of meal times when children arrive after lunch. Children receive appropriate care as the childminder has extensive knowledge and experience of childcare. She works closely with parents listening and respecting their views and parenting styles. She welcomes parental input and provides extensive settling in procedures, which includes a home visit. This allows the childminder to observe and discuss children's individual needs in an environment where they feel comfortable and at ease. The childminder has effective communication systems. She has devised her own personal daily information sheet in which to report children's daily activities, sleep patterns, foods eaten and any other information that parents may find helpful. This supports parents in playing an active part in their child's day. The childminder effectively implements a written behaviour management policy. This is issued to parents as part of her contractual procedures. All required records are suitably maintained. Overall, the childminder meets the needs of all that attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was requested to make the bedroom used for sleeping safe and other rooms on the first floor inaccessible. The childminder has revised her practice to ensure children's safety whilst they are resting. The stair gate has now been relocated to the bedroom door to ensure they remain within a secure area. She was also required to ensure her range of resources and activities promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, including ways in which independence can be encouraged. Children access a diverse range of resources that reflect positive images and have sufficient opportunities to make independent

choices in their play.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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):

- give greater emphasis towards teaching children about healthy and safe living, for example through the use of the Birth to three matters framework.

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