



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123488
Inspection date	15 November 2005
Inspector	Julie Whitelaw

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since 1992. She lives with her husband, adult son and her daughter aged 17 years, in St Albans, Hertfordshire. Their home is within walking distance of the local shops, schools and parks. The ground floor of the house is used for childminding.

The childminder is registered to care for five children under eight years and is currently minding

four children part time, aged from two to eight years. The family have two rabbits and

a budgie. The childminder supports children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a range of activities that contribute to their good health. They regularly visit the park and local woodland area and so enjoy the benefits of fresh air. They develop control of their bodies as they climb the slide and ride bikes at the toddler groups. Their physical development is promoted as they dance to television programmes with the childminder.

Children benefit from a clean and warm home. Their health is promoted through the childminder's cleaning routine, storage and preparation of food. Appropriate procedures are followed when nappy changing that ensure children stay healthy. Children's understanding of hygiene and independence in their personal care is developed as they are encouraged to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before eating. Their health is promoted as the childminder follows the policy and procedure that is in place to exclude sick children.

Children enjoy nutritious snacks such as melon, pepper, cucumber and popcorn. They are encouraged to be involved in the preparation of fruit and vegetables and through discussion learn about healthy eating. Drinks are always available which ensures children stay hydrated. Information regarding dietary requirements is recorded on the contracts, therefore children's individual needs are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a safe and secure environment. This is because the childminder has identified and minimised risks within her home. Children are able to move freely indoors because it has been made safe through the use of fireguards, socket covers and a stair gate. The childminder places high importance on security of the indoor environment which ensures children are unable to leave unsupervised.

Children can freely access a satisfactory range of resources. These are well organised and regularly checked to ensure they are clean, safe and appropriate for the children who attend. Children are kept safe because the childminder has a sound understanding of the importance of supervision. They develop their knowledge of how to keep themselves safe as they learn about road safety when out walking.

Children are kept safe through the childminder's satisfactory knowledge of first aid. They are protected to an adequate standard because of her understanding of the procedure she would follow if she suspected a child was being abused. The childminder was unclear on what action she should take if an allegation of abuse was made against her regarding a child in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children participate in a variety of activities and learning experiences that promote their development. Their interest is maintained as the childminder plans activities and outings in advance to ensure they are busy and have fun. Children's social development is promoted well as they mix with other adults and children at toddlers groups and when they visit friends. Children show an interest in what they do as they pretend to change a nappy on a doll. Their imagination is extended through discussion with the childminder. Children confidently make choices and say what they want to do next. The childminder listens well and is attentive to their requests which ensure their needs are met. As she draws leaves the childminder teaches children about the different types of trees. She asks open ended questions to reinforce their understanding of colour.

Children play happily together and are beginning to understand there are rules for acceptable behaviour, such as sharing toys and taking turns. They benefit from the cuddles and affection the childminder shows them. Children's self-esteem is developed as they are praised for their efforts and good behaviour. Children are encouraged to make progress because the childminder has a sound understanding of what stage they are at and is able to move them onto the next steps in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and treated as individuals. They benefit from the attention the childminder gives them. Their understanding of the wider world is developed through a satisfactory range of resources and discussion with the childminder. Children learn about the wider world when they buy fruit and vegetables from the local market and talk about the countries they come from. Children are encouraged to share their knowledge or their own religion and the festivals they celebrate. The use of books and small world toys develops the children's understanding of differences in society.

Children with special needs are supported well because the childminder has a clear understanding of how to meet their individual needs. She appreciates that some children may require additional support and resources to enable them to reach their potential.

Children benefit from the trusting partnership that has developed between the childminder and parents, where information is verbally exchanged daily. Thank you cards received from parents praise the childminder for the care she provides. Children are developing self-control and manners through the clear, consistent boundaries the childminder sets. Their self-esteem is promoted through the use of positive methods such as praise and encouragement to reinforce good behaviour.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the training the childminder has completed. However, her knowledge of first aid could be further improved by attending the training recommended by the Local Authority. Children make progress because of the individual attention the childminder gives them.

Children are protected because the childminder ensures that they are closely supervised at all times and that ratios are always maintained. However, appropriate checks have not been completed on persons over 16 years old living in the house. Most documentation is in place and well organised. The attendance record is accurately maintained and prior written permission from parents to administer medication is obtained on each occasion it is required. This promotes the children's health and safety. The daily exchange of information keeps parents informed and involved in their child's learning.

Up to date policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of the children. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was recommended that the childminder should make safe the cupboard under the stairs. The door is now locked. This has made the environment safer for the children who attend.

She was also asked to extend the range of toys and activities to meet the developmental needs of children from 0-5 years and which promote equality of opportunity and reflect diversity. She now has a satisfactory range of toys for children from birth to eight years and has books and dolls that promote diversity. She also regularly borrows toys from the toddler group she runs that develop children's understanding of the wider world.

The childminder was asked to obtain written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment and record the attendance of children appropriately. Times of arrival and departure are now recorded for each child and parents sign a consent form which gives the childminder permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. This has improved the health and safety of the children who attend.

It was also recommended that the childminder should set up a separate and confidential written record of significant incidents. This is now in place and ensures that any incidents of concern can be monitored.

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 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):

- update knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures
- ensure persons living on the premises are suitable and that appropriate checks have been carried out
- update knowledge of first aid by attending training approved by the local authority.

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