



## Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	158967
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 November 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Jill Nugent

<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 2001. She lives with her husband and one child, aged six years, in a house in Stevenage. She uses the whole of the ground floor of the house for childminding and the main bedroom, toilet and bathroom on the first floor. There is a secure garden for outdoor play. The family has three cats, three rabbits, two guinea pigs, a hamster and six mice.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time. Currently she is minding five children, two of whom are under five and three over five. She walks to the local school to take and collect children.

The childminder has achieved the Hertfordshire Quality Standards Award. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The childminder has very good procedures in place for promoting children's health. She takes care to specify which types of medication she has permission to administer and keeps all medical records up to date. She informs parents about her procedures in the case of an emergency and takes their wishes into account. Parents provide details of how to treat children with ongoing medical problems. The childminder is qualified in first aid and has equipment readily available at all times. Therefore children are always treated quickly, and appropriately, and parents are aware of any treatment given. The childminder does not look after children who may be infectious so that others are protected. Consequently children stay healthy while in her care.

The childminder has good hygiene practices in place. Children are cared for in a clean environment. All the pet animals are well looked after and children wash their hands after touching any of the animals. Older children know to wash their hands after going to the toilet. The childminder wears gloves when changing nappies to prevent the spread of any infection. She has attended training in food hygiene. She offers children generally healthy foods. They enjoy fruit at snack time and a variety of foods, including vegetables, at mealtimes. Sometimes they eat food they have grown themselves, such as, tomatoes and cress. They taste foods from other countries, for instance, Spanish oranges. Children who have special diets eat food that is suitable for them. They are encouraged not to feel different, for example, one day of the week is kept as a vegetarian day for everyone. There are drinks available at all times. Children are becoming aware of healthy eating. They talk about which foods are good for them to eat. They are encouraged to choose healthy options at meal times. Overall children have a healthy diet and are well nourished.

Children have a variety of opportunities for physical activity. They go for walks in the local area and enjoy visits to nearby parks. They like to play in the garden in the summer and have various resources from which to choose, for example, bikes, balls and a slide. They sometimes miss the opportunity to enjoy fresh air in the garden at other times of the year. They like to visit the local play barn and on occasions join in keep fit exercises and dancing indoors. These activities all contribute to children keeping healthy.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder ensures that children are always safe in her care. Her house is very safe for children, having cupboard locks and a fireguard in place to prevent accidents. Children are unable to lock themselves in the toilet or bathroom as

strategically placed pieces of foam prevent the doors from shutting. They sleep safely upstairs because she makes use of a monitor to support her visual checks. The childminder has followed the advice of a fire officer in ensuring that there are adequate fire precautions in place. Children practise the evacuation plan regularly so that they know what to do in an emergency. The childminder has risk assessed the premises and uses a check list as a reminder to make sure the house and garden are safe for children every day.

Children are kept secure at all times. They are prevented from unsupervised access to the kitchen and upstairs rooms through the use of safety gates. The childminder keeps the front door and garden gate locked for extra security. When out walking children hold her hand, although she has safety equipment available if she needs it. They enjoy a little independence when allowed to walk on their own on the paths around her house. The childminder has a good knowledge and awareness of child protection issues. She has attended training courses and has all the necessary information to allow her to act on any concerns. She liaises closely with the children's school to help protect children in the case of bullying incidents. Overall children's safety is promoted extremely well and they are safe and secure while in her care.

Children play with a wide range of toys and games that are safe and suitable for all ages. All resources are well organised and so the childminder can easily respond to children's choices. She rotates those available in the lounge each day so that the environment is welcoming for children. Children enjoy the use of a table and chair set which have been chosen especially with safety in mind. Although the chairs fold up, children are unable to work the mechanism themselves. The childminder checks all toys and equipment at regular intervals so that children can play safely. Children are becoming aware of how they can keep themselves safe. They learn about using scissors safely and why it is dangerous to throw toys. They talk about keeping safe near bonfires and fireworks. The childminder collects activity ideas and worksheets to help increase their awareness of keeping safe, for example, on the topic of road safety. She arranges for people in the community to visit her childminding group, for instance, a lollipop lady and a police officer. She places an appropriate emphasis on children's understanding of personal safety and this is a high contributory factor in keeping them safe.

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

The provision is good.

There are a range of experiences available to children. They enjoy visits to the library for story time and attend local toddler and childminding groups. These allow them good opportunities for social interaction and participating in different activities. At the childminder's home they take part in cooking and gardening activities, such as, growing sunflowers. Older children like using the collection of collage materials to make pictures. Generally children show interest in the activities and resources on offer, although they are not always allowed to enjoy them to the fullest extent. They become enthusiastic about special activities but do not always get the opportunity to explore for themselves and consequently lose interest. They enjoy imaginative play with a doll's house and figures. They talk confidently to the childminder about what

they are doing. However they do not benefit from the childminder responding to their interests and interacting in such a way to help them to learn through their play.

Children have good opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in directed activities. They particularly enjoy story sacks and join in enthusiastically. They are developing good communication skills through the childminder encouraging conversation. When listening to the story of the 'Hungry Caterpillar', they answer questions about the pictures and find the corresponding fruits from a selection of supporting props. They talk about real butterflies and moths that are illustrated in a book. They count confidently and are becoming aware of different shapes. When watching a favourite television programme, the childminder intervenes to increase their understanding and extend their learning. She helps older children with their homework. They enjoy the opportunity to use a range of information books and the computer. They often use their own initiative in creating things, for example, a number chart and a plan of the garden are on display. The childminder makes good use of both the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage guidance to monitor children's development. She generally organises activities spontaneously but plans holiday activities in detail as these involve working with other childminders. Therefore children are making good progress in their learning through adult-led activities but over-direction sometimes limits their ability to learn through their own play.

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

The provision is outstanding.

All children feel included because their individual needs are taken into account. When sharing a book, the childminder ensures that they can all see and take part in the discussion. She is happy for them to watch a television programme while eating their snack and turns it into a learning opportunity for them. Children have choices, for example, a child requests a jigsaw puzzle and is happy to tidy up a little so that he can do the puzzle. They choose whether to colour pictures of the Hungry Caterpillar at the childminder's or take them home. She always responds to their questions and comments, for instance, a child is curious about how a harness works on a changing mat. Therefore children have a sense of belonging and this boosts their self esteem. Children with special needs benefit from the childminder's close attention to their particular needs, for example, a child with a visual impairment is given opportunities to develop listening skills. Children who are about to start school are helped to adjust to the change through talking about it beforehand. Therefore all children feel included and well supported by the childminder.

There are excellent opportunities for children to become aware of diversity in society. They play with a selection of stimulating resources that reflect different cultures and disabilities. They join in a variety of activities based on religious and cultural festivals. For example, they make Chinese dragons and pictures for Australia day and St Patrick's day. They recently went to a new Chinese supermarket to take a look at the different foods. They enjoy Indian cakes, baked by a parent, at Diwali. In this way, children learn to respect differences in a wider society.

Children behave very well. The childminder is quite firm and reminds them of the rules so that they learn to distinguish between right and wrong. She keeps an eye on them at all times and cautions them if necessary. Children respond well to requests to take turns with toys. They are carefully distracted if necessary by the introduction of a new activity. They are learning to share and enjoy much praise when behaving appropriately. Older children have the opportunity to talk through any behavioural problems and sometimes use star charts to help improve their behaviour. Consequently children understand responsible behaviour.

There is a very good partnership with parents which supports children's care. New children are given plenty of time to settle in. The childminder exchanges information with parents daily and keeps a daily diary for younger children so that parents are fully aware of each day's events. Parents receive good information about her provision in the form of a welcome pack. This includes details of her policies and procedures, all set out in an easy-to-read format. If children transfer to another childminder she works closely with the parents so that children have no upsets. Older children benefit from the childminder's close links with their school, for example, they joined in when she attended meetings on healthy eating. Parents are highly satisfied with the care given to their children. There is a detailed complaints procedure in place and the childminder has set up a log in case a parent has any concerns. Children benefit greatly from this close working partnership with their parents.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder is highly organised and has put together a collection of documents that provide a very good framework for children's care. All contracts with parents are completed appropriately and reviewed regularly. Any information on children is kept in separately marked files to ensure confidentiality. The childminder records any conversations with parents to enable her to fit in with their wishes. Her attendance register is well maintained. She collects information on childminding practice and files it according to the appropriate outcome. She has also set up a resources library at her childminding group to help other childminders develop their practice. She helps in the running of this group and has set up an arrangement with other childminders whereby they cover for each other, sometimes sharing the care of children with parents' permission. Her paperwork and work arrangements all contribute to children's health, safety and happiness.

The childminder is committed to providing good care for children and is keen to attend training to help her improve. She has completed her level three NVQ training and attended courses on a variety of topics, for example, healthy living, creativity, self-esteem and working with children outdoors. She has written an interesting booklet on child development as a part of her training and makes this available to parents. She does a lot of reading around childcare herself. She has put in a tremendous amount of work for both the Hertfordshire Quality Standards award and the level three qualification and this has enabled her to make notable improvements in her provision.

The childminder makes good use of the available space for children. Her house is welcoming with certificates, posters and art work on display. Children have plenty of space to play in the lounge and easy access to the garden. They take part in creative activities at the dining table. The childminder often searches out different materials for children to use creatively. She spends her time with the children and makes sure they all have a share of her attention. The childminder meets the needs of all children in her care.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the previous inspection the childminder was asked to obtain parental consents for outings, to provide a safe and secure environment for children and review her procedures for recording existing injuries.

The childminder ensures that she has permission from parents for all outings, including journeys in her husband's car and other childminders' cars. She obtains extra permissions for special outings. She has fixed the garden fence which had blown down at the time of the previous inspection and prioritises children's safety at all times. She has a diary in which to record any confidential concerns, including those linked to existing injuries. These improvements have all contributed to keeping children safe and healthy.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- ensure children have sufficient opportunities to explore and follow up their own interests in order to encourage their learning through play.

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