



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123455
Inspection date	30 August 2005
Inspector	Jill Nugent

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 1993. She lives with her two daughters, aged 12 and 15 in a house in St Albans. She uses the whole of the house and annexe for childminding, with the exception of the toilet and bathroom upstairs. There is a secure garden available for outdoor play. The family have a pet cat, four fish and a hamster.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight at any one time. Currently she is minding eight children under five, all part-time.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminder has procedures in place to promote children's health. She has all the necessary permissions and keeps records of medication and accidents. She has recently introduced medication forms which show more detail. Children bring their own plasters and creams, although parents know which nappy cream will be used otherwise. Children are protected from infection because any who are ill are excluded. They sleep when they need to and in a place where they are comfortable. The childminder ensures hygienic practices. She washes her hands after changing nappies and encourages children to wash their hands before eating. Children are learning to use tissues to wipe their own noses. They are supervised when going to see the pets. Consequently, children stay healthy in her care.

Children are becoming aware of how to keep themselves healthy. They know that carrots are good for them and that too much squash is bad for their teeth. They are aware of the need to wash their hands after going to the toilet. Therefore, they have a growing understanding of a healthy lifestyle. They have a generally healthy diet. They eat plenty of fruit and vegetables and usually have a cooked dinner in the middle of the day. They enjoy sandwiches for tea and occasionally cakes and biscuits. Children have drinking water available at all times. The childminder meets the needs of children who have allergies. Overall, children are well nourished.

Children enjoy physical activity in the large garden. They have a wide variety of resources from which to choose, including a trampoline, swing and climbing frame. They enjoy playing with a selection of ride-on toys on the patio. They often go to the local parks and activity centres. They also enjoy walks on the spacious green area in front of the house. Consequently, they have good opportunities to develop physical skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe environment. All hazardous substances are kept in one locked cupboard. Any accessible sockets are covered and there are smoke alarms in the annexe and house. The childminder keeps all the exit doors locked so that children are secure but the keys are handy in case of an emergency. She ensures that her insurance is up to date. She makes use of a stair gate at times to restrict children's access to parts of the house. Children sleep in a cot or their own buggy where the childminder can keep a close eye on them. They are able to play safely in the garden as the side gate and tool shed are both locked. The childminder supervises children closely when on the climbing frame and trampoline. Children have the opportunity to use a large paddling pool. Although the parents are aware of this, they have not given written permission. On outings, children keep safe in the buggy or on reins. Overall, children stay safe and secure at all times.

Children play with a wide selection of resources that are safe and suitable for them. The toys are easily accessible and in good condition. The childminder makes sure that any newly purchased toys are safe and that outdoor equipment is clean and safe. Children are therefore able to play without risk. They are learning to keep themselves safe. Older children are aware that they must not let the younger ones play with small toys. They keep their drinks away from the babies so that they do not have an accident. They know to hold onto the buggy when out walking and learn to cross the road safely. Therefore they have a growing awareness of personal safety.

The childminder has a working knowledge of child protection. She is confident about noticing signs of abuse and knows where to seek advice. She keeps a note of any concerns. Consequently children are adequately protected in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children have excellent opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities. They go to various toddler and childminder groups throughout the week, each one offering something different. They play with other minded children at childminders' houses, thereby developing their social skills further. They go to various events at the local farm and enjoy picnics in the garden. Sometimes they visit the shops to choose food for a picnic. They enjoy making cakes and biscuits in cookery activities. Children are developing their creative skills. They explore paint and collage materials or follow instructions to make a picture, such as, a caterpillar. Overall they have many useful learning experiences which are helping them to make progress in all areas.

Children enjoy their play and show much interest in the activities on offer. They choose enthusiastically from the available resources. They join in conversation with the childminder, asking and answering many questions. The childminder continually extends their imaginary play, encouraging them to think and talk about what they are doing. Older children are developing good communication skills and extending their vocabulary, for example, they learn what a tutu is when dressing a doll. Younger children like to share books with the childminder while she reads the words to them and talks about the pictures. Children confidently sing songs they have learned and take part in action rhymes together. They are forming positive relationships with others and play very happily.

Children are acquiring new knowledge and skills. They become very engrossed in books, puzzles and games. Older children have extra attention when younger ones sleep. They enjoy completing an alphabet puzzle and matching picture game with the help of the childminder. She asks children why the pictures match and gives them new information about the objects in the pictures. Children count how many they have. They are keen to have a go at different tasks, such as, sewing cards. Older children are beginning to read and sound out words in books. The childminder points out features of the story, such as rhyming words, to extend their skills. She helps children with a special need to make progress, for example, verbalising actions and naming objects for a child with a speech delay. She has begun to use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to help children develop skills. Children show initiative in

tidying up so that they can then choose another game. They are becoming confident and learning through the effective interaction of the childminder.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel included because the childminder shares her time between them, making sure that they are all happy. She suggests activities and resources to maintain their interest. They choose what they would like to play with or eat at snack time. Older children plan what they would like to do while younger ones have a sleep. They help the childminder with routine tasks and this boosts their self-esteem. She takes the children out every day so that they have a range of different experiences. They are becoming aware of different cultures through books and activities on cultural themes. They get on well with each other and show a sense of belonging.

Children generally behave well. If siblings argue, they are encouraged to give each other a hug afterwards. Children who are upset have a cuddle. They are learning to take turns with the resources. The childminder carefully distracts them if fighting over the same toy. She continually reminds them to show respect for each other, for example, not to push a child off a chair but to find another. Consequently, children are becoming aware of appropriate behaviour.

The childminder has good relationships with parents. She gets to know each family well. Parents complete detailed contracts which include several written permissions. They receive information about her practice and what she expects of them. They in turn provide details of their children's daily routines. Children's care is enhanced through the childminder's conversations with parents at the end of each day. She completes a daily diary for children under one year of age so that parents of very young children are fully aware of their child's day. Children benefit from this close working partnership with their parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder's paperwork is well organised in files. She maintains clear records of attendance and ensures that her first aid certificate is up to date. Her priority is the well-being of the children. They are encouraged to take an active part in their care. She has attended courses in childminding and has recently been working on improving the accommodation for children in her house. Children benefit from her many years of experience and interest in continual improvement.

The childminder makes good use of the annexe so that children can have more space. They enjoy the bright and attractive playroom with its wall paintings and comfortable sofa. They can see their own artwork on display. They have easy access to two toilets and the garden. They can choose easily from toys in boxes, and books and games on shelves. The childminder has recently bought more toys so that there is a good selection which suits both boys and girls. Older children can also use the

computer in the house. Children like to play in the large garden, either on the patio or up on the attractive lawn area. Overall, the childminder meets the needs of all children effectively.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the childminder was asked to ensure that a key is accessible for the patio doors and that dangerous substances are inaccessible. She now keeps the key in the patio doors and has fitted a high bolt to the cleaning cupboard so that children cannot access any dangerous substances. She was also asked to provide a first aid box and now has a box marked with a cross so that it is easily recognisable. She also agreed to make a complaints procedure available to parents and this is on display.

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):

- obtain written permission from parents for children to use the large paddling pool in the garden

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