



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	404213
Inspection date	09 May 2006
Inspector	Jane Mount
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 has been registered since 2001.

She lives with her husband and 11 year old child in a three bedroom detached house with a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. All areas of the property and garden are included in the registration.

The property is situated in St Albans and is within easy walking distance of shops, parks and schools. Overnight care is not included in the registration and the family have two cats and goldfish.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under 8 years, of which three children may be aged under 5 years, at any one time. She is currently minding eight children aged under 8 years, all of whom attend on a part time basis.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA) and St Albans Childminding Network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning the importance of good hygiene and personal care. Through the effective guidance of the childminder, they are beginning to understand simple good health and hygiene practices. Children know they must wash their hands after playing in the garden and after going to the toilet. When asked an older child is able to say it is so they don't catch any germs which would make them unwell. Children stay healthy because the childminder has a clear health and safety policy which she implements effectively. For example, she follows good hygiene guidelines, such as wearing disposable gloves for nappy changing and highchairs are cleaned thoroughly after each use.

Children are well nourished and have their dietary needs met. Parents currently provide their children's main meals but it is their choice and the childminder is able to provide healthy, balanced meals for children. The childminder provides children's snacks and children have a choice of organic fruits such as pears and apples and other healthy options, such as cheese. Children are learning about healthy eating and enjoy being involved in the preparation. They particularly enjoy making and eating fruit salad.

Children take part in a range of physical activities which contributes to their good health and physical fitness on a daily basis. For example, they walk to school and children delight in jumping over the paving stones. They visit a local park regularly where they have opportunities to climb, swing and balance and at home enjoy dancing to music. Children are supported well by the childminder and this allows them to feel confident, keen to participate and they are learning that exercise is fun. Younger children are encouraged to explore the environment and practise their new found skills as they become more mobile, such as when they begin to crawl or walk. Children can rest or sleep according to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's development is promoted in a child friendly environment where they are welcomed and feel secure. Children can select independently from a wide range of resources and activities which are developmentally appropriate for the ages of the children who attend. The childminder closely monitors and supervises the children's choice of toys to make sure they are safe. Children are interested and absorbed by the resources available.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure home. Risks are visually identified and minimised although no written risk assessment records are maintained. Children are able to move around safely and have an understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Sensitive reminders, such as a request from the childminder to pick up a dropped toy to prevent someone tripping increase children's awareness of safety in their play. They know to hold onto the

banister when going up and downstairs. When out walking, children are learning about road safety. They talk about how to cross the road safely and younger children know to hold onto the buggy.

Children are well protected by the childminder who has a sound knowledge of child protection procedures and gives priority to children's safety and welfare. She has attended child protection training and is fully aware of the correct recording and reporting procedures to follow if she had a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in their environment. They are very familiar with the layout of the house, know the routine well and make themselves at home. Children enjoy a warm and secure relationship with the childminder and have a strong sense of belonging. Children develop confidence and self-esteem as they receive consistent levels of support and can be regularly seen sitting with the childminder playing a game or looking at a book. Children's communication skills are supported effectively by the childminder as she extends children's language through asking open ended questions. Children enjoy books and listen and respond to stories read by the childminder with great delight.

Children's learning is promoted through the childminder's sound knowledge of child development, the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. Children respond positively to the varied play opportunities the childminder provides. Children learn through their play and what interests them. Developmental records are maintained which show how individual children are progressing and these are used by the childminder when planning future activities and topics.

Children are motivated in their play and enjoy exploring a range of activities which contributes to their creative development, such as sticking and drawing and are proud of their finished pictures. They enjoy music and confidently make up their own songs. Children are encouraged to express themselves imaginatively and are provided with a varied range of resources to support imaginative learning. Children are learning about the natural environment. They enjoy planting and growing and have recently planted some broad beans, sunflowers and pumpkins. Children feed the birds and like to look through the binoculars to identify the different birds that visit the bird feeders.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have regular opportunities to learn about themselves and the world around them. The childminder promotes equal opportunities through the provision of resources, ensuring children have equal access to all that is on offer. A range of resources are available to increase children's awareness of diversity including books, dressing up clothes, play food, and multi cultural dolls. Children develop a positive attitude to others and learn about diversity through their play and through general discussions. For example, they talk about different fruit and vegetables from

other countries and where they grow. Children learn about the local community through routine outings, for example, to the local shops or nature walks.

Children are valued as individuals and are effectively supported in their play which results in them playing well together. Behaviour is dealt with in a sensitive manner with clear boundaries set by the childminder so children know what is expected of them. Children are encouraged to take turns and to share. For example, during a game of animal sounds children understand that they have to wait for their turn. Children are learning to share and are beginning to show concern for others. They are regularly able to make choices and decisions in their play, for example, they are given free choice regarding access to resources.

Children's individual needs are met effectively as the childminder works in close partnership with parents. The childminder values and respects each child as an individual and ensures information is regularly exchanged with parents to meet any specific needs and to ensure all children are included and receive appropriate support. A two way diary is used as a way of sharing information with parents and the childminder ensures parents are fully informed of their child's progress and development. A comprehensive portfolio is available and all parents receive an informative welcome pack which includes the childminder's policies and procedures.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care, learning and play are positively supported by a childminder who has good organisational skills. She has high regard for the well-being of all the children she cares for and adjusts the routine according to their needs. She implements fully her sound knowledge of child development. Children benefit from a childminder who is prepared to develop her skills and who is continually updating and increasing her knowledge of child care and child development through training.

Children's welfare, care and learning are promoted as parents are regularly informed of their child's progress and development. Contracts are regularly reviewed and updated and the childminder has a portfolio with written policies and procedures. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being are in place. The childminder understands the importance of confidentiality and takes appropriate steps to protect children. Overall, the range of children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to develop a system of recording any concerns about children, to provide a first aid box with appropriate contents and to ensure good hygiene practices are in place when changing nappies. Children's health and welfare are safeguarded as all recommendations have been successfully completed. A comprehensive diary is maintained in which any concerns can be recorded and a fully stocked first aid kit is available. The childminder has effective hygiene procedures in place when changing nappies which includes wearing disposable gloves and this ensures the risk of cross infection is minimised.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints.

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):

- enhance safety procedures already in place through maintaining a written daily risk assessment.

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