



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	155806
Inspection date	04 January 2006
Inspector	Susan Marriott

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 was registered in 1998 and has been childminding for over 13 years. She lives with her husband and their daughter aged 15 years and young adult son, aged 19 years, in their house in Luton. She is registered to care for 6 children under 8 years and is currently caring for a school age child before school and in holidays and a 3-year-old for 3 days per week. The childminder will now be registered to care for 2 babies under 1 year. The living room, hallway, upstairs bathroom and one bedroom are used for childminding and there is a safely enclosed rear garden for outside play. Children do not have access to the kitchen at any time. The childminder has a pet dog. She is a member of the local childminding network support team and

the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities in the fresh air that contribute to their good health. Each day they walk to and from school whatever the weather. They enjoy garden games and regular visits to local parks and playgrounds. This supports the development and improvement of children's physical skills. Outings to places such as adventure playgrounds, children's animal farms and Hitchin duck pond, further extend children's physical competence and co-ordination.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean home where they learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. Their clear understanding of why they must wash their hands after using the toilet and before handling food, reduces the risk of cross contamination. Sound written procedures are in place for children who are unwell and the childminder maintains an accident book in accordance with requirements. Children receive appropriate first aid because the childminder holds a suitable first aid qualification. Clear procedures for hygienic nappy changing include the use of disposable gloves and the childminder uses them when dealing with bodily fluids. The childminder always washes hands before and after nappy changing to prevent the spread of infection. The family dog is managed well in the presence of minded children and the house is maintained as a strictly non-smoking environment. Young children are able to sleep according to their needs in a suitable quiet area of the house.

Parents provide their choice of food for children but the childminder actively works with parents to encourage healthy eating habits. Children acquire positive attitudes to food assisted by the childminder's innovative strategies. For example, a child who refused meals has been gradually encouraged to adopt unfamiliar solid foods. The childminder placed bowls containing diced cheese and cucumber around the living room for the child to nibble. With lots of support, praise and encouragement from the childminder, another child has recently regained a healthy appetite and revels in gaining a reward sticker on a star chart at home. Through discussion whilst shopping with the childminder, children learn about their need for five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Fresh fruit and vegetable snacks are always available for children and they have access to regular drinks throughout the day. Water, milk or juice is available in a suitable cup according to the age of the child.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well-cared for within a very clean, safe and secure home environment. The childminder makes very good use of the generous space in her home, controlling children's access to various areas of the house and the friendly,

family dog by means of safety gates. Babies can crawl around freely on the washable flooring and comfy furnishings complement areas used for different activities. Children independently select activities from a wide range of quality resources, labelled and stored in plastic boxes. The toy boxes are rotated to meet the needs and interests of different ages of children. Items reflect equal opportunities and are maintained in a good state of repair. The childminder carefully monitors and supervises children's choice of toys, to ensure they are appropriate for their age and stage of development. She organises activities for older children in different areas so that she can monitor the whereabouts of small pieces and parts which may fall on the floor.

Children are able to move around and play safely, freely and independently because the childminder has identified and minimised all risks. She is particularly vigilant and ensures that all safety measures are in place and monitored for their effectiveness. For example, there are door guards to prevent trapped fingers and the fire is never used when minded children are on the premises. Children learn to keep themselves safe because the childminder has clear rules and routines in order to maintain their safety inside and outside the home. For example, the childminder uses wrist straps for younger children when out walking and ensures that older children hold onto the buggy. The childminder carries children's contact details with her at all times to ensure children's safety. The childminder carries out regular fire evacuation drills and explains this to all children who are old enough to understand it. The childminder safeguards children's welfare and has clear verbal policies in place. Children are safe with the childminder, who is now able to demonstrate a secure understanding of her responsibilities in line with the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy themselves in the welcoming and child-friendly atmosphere. Children develop positive relationships with this childminder who actively promotes the development of their confidence and self-worth. For example, the childminder gives a photograph album to a three-year-old and challenges the child to find a picture to show to the inspector. The childminder asks gentle questions and encourages the child to talk about familiar events using the photographs as a prompt, throughout the delightful exchange between them. In particular, the child is very proud of the photograph of pre-school 'Sports Day' and the childminder encourages the child to name all the teachers. The child locates a photograph of a special baby and points out 'my baby brother'. The child returns the album to the childminder with the comment 'it's a very nice book' and the childminder acknowledges the compliment with a respectful and appreciative 'thank you, darling'. The childminder provides new words when appropriate to extend children's vocabulary and provides a running commentary whilst carrying out the daily routines such as shopping in the local supermarket and walking to and from school. This encourages verbal response from young children and is vital in developing their language skills.

The childminder is highly attentive to the needs of the children and ensures they have a balanced and purposeful programme of activities throughout the day.

Although the childminder is aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, she has yet to incorporate the use of these materials into her weekly programme. Each child is able to have individual attention whilst one is resting or at pre-school. The childminder plays with a three-year-old, using cars and toy people on a town road mat. Interaction is highly caring and appropriate, with lots of questions and praise for the child's achievements. For example, the childminder asks how many men the child has put into the car. The child responds with interest and explores the toys with very good concentration. The child eagerly climbs onto the childminder's lap to share cuddles, books and pictures. Children spend some time outside each day, either in the garden, the park, or whilst walking to school. The daily routine is complemented by the organisation of weekly outings to childminder coffee mornings, where the minded children can socialise with new faces. Trips further afield include regular journeys to Hitchin to feed the ducks at the pond, wander round the market or to local farm parks.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others is increased because the childminder provides a thoughtful range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world. For example, children play with a veterinary set for sick animals, ethnic dolls which represent different cultures and play-people which reflect disabilities, such as those with glasses or a wheelchair. Children learn about their local community as they travel to and from pre-school, visit the childminder's coffee morning and local parks. The childminder has previous experience of caring for children with individual needs. She plans ahead and skilfully anticipates the potential needs of children in her care. The childminder employs a sensitive strategy for managing young children's behaviour by temporarily withdrawing her attention and sitting the child at her feet. She is caring and consistent and this ensures that children behave well because they know what is expected of them.

Children are highly valued and respected as individuals. The childminder initially seeks as much information about the child as possible to help the settling in process and then takes the time and trouble to get to know them really well. The childminder meets their needs through the daily routine as discussed with their parents. Contracts are reviewed regularly and this enables parents to discuss any changes that need to be made and prompts a discussion of any difficulties with the arrangements. The childminder encourages all parents to discuss any problems they may have with the care given to their child and has a suitable complaints procedure in line with new requirements. The childminder ensures that daily discussion about the service provided keeps parents informed about their child's activities and sometimes implements a written diary system for babies who cannot speak for themselves.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's needs take priority in this setting. The childminder plans well ahead and ensures that no unexpected difficulties affect the continuity and quality of care she provides for children. The childminder respects the wishes of parents and works in partnership with them. The childminder adopts a common sense approach to her childminding and is confident in her childcare practice. She uses her considerable experience in combination with her effective organisation to promote very positive outcomes for children. Children feel very much at home and are comfortable in the well-organised, suitably prepared and inviting environment where the childminder is able to enrich their care, learning and play through her constant interaction and inventiveness. Children confidently choose activities and the childminder encourages them to extend their own play and learning in an imaginative way. Children's welfare, care and learning is effectively supported through the childminder's clear use of verbal procedures and routines which cover all aspects of the National Standards. All written parental permissions are in place and the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, one action was set and two recommendations were made. The childminder completes the attendance register on a daily basis and this ensures children's safety at all times. She ensures that written permission is sought from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment in order that children may receive appropriate attention in such cases. The childminder has obtained relevant and current information to support her knowledge of child protection issues and this ensures that children's welfare is suitably protected. These actions have improved the outcomes for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

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

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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):

- improve outcomes for children from birth to three by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters'.

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