



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 129162
Inspection date 27 March 2006
Inspector Gail Groves

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 childminding since 1988. She lives with her partner in Hatfield, Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house and the bathroom and toilet upstairs are used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time and is currently minding 3 children all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. She attends the local parent and toddler group and takes children to the local park. The family has a pet

cat.

The childminder supports children with English as an additional language. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are generally protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because the childminder follows some current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, her nappy changing procedure protects children from the risk of cross infection and she is careful to ensure that the environment and her resources are clean and well maintained. Children learn to understand some simple, good health and hygiene practices, such as blowing their nose and disposing of the tissue carefully in the bin and putting their hand to their mouth when they cough. This helps them to develop good hygiene routines for later life. Some mealtimes procedures, such as ensuring children clean their hands before eating and wiping the play table before serving a meal on it are not always consistently carried out. As a result, children are not fully protected from infection and are not learning consistent hygiene practices from an early age.

Children are well nourished and the childminder provides freshly cooked nutritious meals. She is careful to encourage children to extend their tastes and to learn about healthy eating. For example, she offers them a variety of vegetables and talks about the importance of eating certain kinds of food to strengthen their bodies. Their health and dietary needs are discussed with their parents and the childminder ensures that these are always met. Children take part in regular physical activity both indoors and outdoors to develop their motor skills and encourage their enjoyment of exercise. They visit the park to use the swings and climbing frame and to play football. They play in the garden with bikes, cars and push along toys and throw bean bags and soft balls in the house. During the school holidays they enjoy play sessions on a bouncy castle and have opportunities to attend a children's disco. Children rest and sleep according to their needs so that they do not become overtired and are therefore unable to enjoy the play and learning opportunities which are available. The childminder seeks information from parents about children's sleep routines and as a result, children settle quickly and easily when they are put down for a rest.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a range of safe and suitable resources and equipment which meet their differing needs. The childminder regularly checks and replaces these as necessary to ensure that children are not hurt by broken items and can play and take part in activities safely. When children go on outings, appropriate procedures such as

wearing a wrist strap or holding onto the buggy help keep them safe. The childminder discusses road safety when crossing roads and talks about some of the dangers within the environment so that children begin to learn to keep themselves safe. For example, she tells a young child that her drink is hot and he must not touch it and she does not let children touch electrical items or jump off the stairs. Children are also protected because the childminder understands her role in child protection and is able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. She has also ensured that appropriate vetting procedures have been completed on adults in regular contact with the children.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment where they can generally move round safely and independently. For example, the garden is safe and secure, storage sheds are locked and sharp items in the kitchen are stored out of reach. One item has been identified as requiring further attention. The heater in the conservatory gets very hot if the thermostat is not turned down and children are at risk of injury.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are involved in a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which support all areas of their development and learning. For example, they visit a childminder's drop in session to enjoy social play with other children and go for trips to the seaside, the farm and to adventure theme parks. They play creatively with dough, glue and paint and develop their imagination by dressing up and playing with dolls and small world toys such as cars and animals. They settle well, are involved and interested in their play and show good levels of concentration. They move around confidently, selecting resources independently from low level boxes and help the childminder with routine activities. For example, a child helps to bring a small table into the kitchen at lunch time and finds the changing mat for the childminder when it is time to change his nappy. Consequently, they develop self-esteem and are becoming confident to make decisions, explore and investigate.

Children respond well to adults who are interested in what they do and say. The childminder is always careful to listen to children and expands and develops their language and vocabulary throughout her interactions with them. As a result, they are becoming confident communicators and are beginning to relate to others. For example, young children occasionally look at books together or offer each other toys and older children try to help younger children put on dressing up clothes. The childminder clearly understands children's individual needs and provides appropriate support to help them to move on to the next stage in their development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and included and the childminder ensures that she gives them equal attention and respect. They feel a sense of belonging and are comfortable in

the setting and as a result they develop confidence and readily join in with all the play and learning activities. The childminder uses consistent, positive, age appropriate methods for managing children's behaviour. Consequently, they learn to respond to her expectations and behave well. She recognises and praises children's achievements and so they develop self-esteem. With her support they are learning to be aware of their own needs, to respect the needs of others and to work harmoniously together. For example, she encourages children to share activities such as threading and to be aware of the need for other children to have space to move freely past them when they are lying on the floor. As a result, they are learning good social skills. They make choices and take decisions as part of their daily routine, such as deciding what they wish to play with or choosing when they would like to have a drink. They are therefore helped to feel that they have a part to play in their own care. Children benefit from some resources which help them value diversity and through discussions with the childminder are helped to learn to recognise and value the differences between people.

The childminder works in close partnership with parents and carers to understand and meet children's individual needs. For example, she discusses children's sleep patterns and whether they need to sleep in a buggy or a travel cot and talks to parents about what they have been doing on a daily basis. The childminder does not have a system in place to record or share appropriate action regarding a complaint. Therefore parents' concerns may not be respected or acknowledged and children's welfare cannot be fully monitored.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder has a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to continual improvement. She attends training to update and enhance her skills and holds the Certificate in Childminding Practice. Consequently she has a sound knowledge and understanding of child development and a high regard for the well-being of all children. The adult to child ratio positively supports children's care, learning and play because the childminder cares for a maximum of three children at any one time at present. She is therefore able to give them a lot of individual care and attention and can more easily monitor and support their progress. She uses both the available space and her time well to promote children's safety and care and her policies and procedures generally work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Most of the necessary record keeping systems and documentation for the safe and efficient running of the setting are in place.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to improve children's health and safety. She now wears gloves when changing children's nappies or dealing with bodily fluids to prevent cross infection. She obtains written parental permission to use

non-prescription medication, such as antiseptic creams and wipes, insect repellents, Calpol, plasters and sun tan lotion on children. This ensures that parents can raise issues regarding any possible risk of children suffering an allergic reaction. She also agreed to ensure the safety of the heater in the conservatory. She has not done so and therefore children remain at risk of injury when it is left on a high setting.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004.

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):

- review hygiene procedures at mealtimes
- ensure the free standing heater in the conservatory is made safe or inaccessible to children
- keep a record of complaints relating to the national standards and any action taken.

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