



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	149112
Inspection date	24 February 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.
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WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since 1997.

She lives with her husband and three children who are aged 7 years, 9 years and 11 years. The premises is a five bedroom semi detached house with a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. All areas of the property are included in the registration.

The property is situated in Woodhall Farm, on the outskirts of Hemel Hempstead and is within easy walking distance of shops, schools and a park. Overnight care is not provided and the family have a cat and a rabbit.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children under 8 years at any one time. She is currently minding four children aged under 8 years, all who attend on a part time basis. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA) and a member of a local childminding group.

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, children are beginning to understand simple good health and hygiene practices. For example, they know they must wash their hands before eating and after going to the toilet. Children stay healthy because the childminder has clear and effective hygiene procedures that she follows. Work surfaces and tables are cleaned before and after eating or food preparation which reduces the risk of cross contamination. She has an informative written sickness policy available informing parents of exclusion times for sick or infectious children and parents receive a copy of this.

Children take part in a range of physical activities which contributes to their good health and physical fitness on a daily basis. They walk to and from school and visit a local children's park as well as play in the garden. The younger children regularly attend toddler groups where they are able to climb, run and jump. At the childminder's home children join in enthusiastically with age appropriate activities such as music and movement. They are able to join in confidently with action songs such as 'If you're happy and you know it' and enjoy stamping their feet, jumping up and down and clapping hands. Children are supported by the childminder and this allows them to feel confident, keen to participate and they are learning that exercise is fun.

Children are well nourished and have their dietary needs met effectively. The childminder works closely with parents regarding their children's diet and food intake. Their dietary requirements are discussed regularly with parents which ensures children receive a healthy balanced diet. Children are learning about healthy eating as they eat nutritious meals and fruit is always offered for snacks. Children enjoy being involved in the preparation of some foods and particularly enjoy making and eating fruit salads and fruit kebabs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's development is promoted in a safe and 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 where risks are identified and minimised. Children are able to move around safely and independently 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. When out walking, children are learning about road safety. They talk about the traffic lights as they change colour and learn to cross the road safely.

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 all the required procedures in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a secure relationship with the childminder and have a strong sense of belonging. Children's confidence and self-esteem are developed by the childminder who is sensitive to their needs and she offers consistent levels of support and regular praise. The childminder knows the children well because information is effectively exchanged with parents ensuring continuity in their children's care. Children are happy and confident in their environment, they make themselves at home and are able to talk confidently about what they are doing.

Children's learning is promoted through the childminder's clear knowledge of child development and she is beginning to develop an understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The childminder provides activities and resources which are developmentally appropriate and challenging and parents are kept informed of their children's developmental progress. Children are learning about the natural environment through planting and growing. They enjoyed planting sunflowers in the summer and watching them grow and are currently growing mung beans in a glass jar.

Children's communication skills are supported effectively as the childminder extends the children's language and children listen and respond to stories with great enjoyment. Children regularly pick up books to look at quietly on their own or to share with others. Children actively engage in imaginative play and delight in dressing up in sari's and having a tea party. They enjoy an impromptu music session when they use boxes for drums and sing 'twinkle, twinkle, little star' together.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have opportunities to learn about themselves and the world around them. The childminder promotes equal opportunities through her provision of resources, ensuring children have equal access to all that is on offer. Children develop a positive

attitude to others and learn about diversity through their play and general discussions. For example, recently children learnt about Chinese New Year and made dragons and lanterns. They have been learning about foods from other countries and enjoyed eating noodles with chopsticks.

Children are valued and treated as individuals. Their individual needs are met effectively as the childminder works in close partnership with parents. She ensures all parents are verbally informed of their child's progress and development. The childminder has developed an informative portfolio to share with parents. They also receive a copy of the childminder's comprehensive written policies and procedures, although the complaints policy needs reviewing to include information for parents about how complaints are recorded.

Children are encouraged to take turns and to share and are beginning to show concern for others and to understand how their behaviour can affect others. They are supported effectively by the childminder which results in children playing well together. Behaviour is dealt with in a sensitive manner with clear boundaries so children know what is expected of them. Children are secure in their surroundings and feel confident in deciding what to do.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care, learning and play are positively supported by a childminder who has good organisational skills. The individual needs of the children are met through the childminder organising her time and resources effectively. Children benefit from a child friendly environment where they are welcomed, feel at ease and are safe.

Children's development is supported by a childminder who has a sound knowledge of child development and parents are regularly informed of their child's progress. Contracts are regularly reviewed and updated. 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

The childminder was asked to improve procedures for recording medication, to devise a written evacuation policy, to complete a risk assessment and to ensure information is clearly shared with parents. Children's safety and welfare are safeguarded as the childminder has addressed all the mentioned actions and recommendations and this has greatly improved the outcomes for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

A concern was raised in June 2004 in relation to Standard 3: Care, Learning and Play, Standard 5: Equipment and Standard 12: Partnership with Parents. The

complaint related to a concern raised regarding the use of suitable equipment and appropriate outings for young babies and how this is shared with parents. Ofsted investigated and a recommendation was agreed under Standard 12: ensure that written agreements with parents clearly set out the expectations of both parties with regard to the equipment that would be used and the types of activity/routine that minded children will engage in. The recommendation has been met and the provider continues to remain qualified for 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

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 the outcomes for children from birth to three by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters' framework.
- review written complaints procedure to include information for parents regarding maintaining a complaints record.

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