



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	149278
Inspection date	09 August 2006
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 1992. She lives with her husband and two of their four adult children in a house in Stevenage. The childminder works with an assistant. She uses the whole of the house for childminding, although children only use the downstairs rooms for play. They do not have access to the back garden but do have supervised access to an area at the front of the house for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight at any one time, when working on her own. When working with her assistant, she may care for a maximum of ten children under eight at any one time. She is currently minding thirteen children, six of whom are under five, five are over five and two are over eight. She goes to local schools to take and collect children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminder has good procedures in place to promote children's health. Her medical records are maintained correctly and she obtains permission from parents for the administration of medication, plasters and creams. A first aid kit is easily accessible. Children are excluded if they have an infectious illness so as to protect others. Young children sleep according to their needs. A cot is available upstairs but children usually sleep in the quiet of the conservatory or garden. The childminder is attentive to hygiene. Children play in a clean environment. The childminder has a good awareness of food hygiene and children know why they need to wash their hands before eating. She has an efficient system in place for changing children's nappies. This is carried out in a hygienic manner and away from other children. Overall, her procedures contribute effectively to keeping children healthy.

Children have a balanced and varied diet. There is a variety of foods on offer, including a selection of fruits and vegetables. The childminder ensures that she has information from parents about children's dietary needs so that all children eat appropriately. Children eat well, for example, they enjoy a lunch of chicken, potatoes and peas. They have a good opportunity to develop their social skills when sitting around the table together for lunch. At snack time they enjoy a biscuit and drink together on the carpet. Drinks are available throughout the day. Therefore, children are well nourished. They are able to join in outdoor play with bikes and balls in the field adjacent to the house. They also enjoy walks and visits to the local parks. Indoors, children have fun with a ball pool. These activities help children to keep fit and healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder's home is safe and secure for children. They are unable to access any hazardous cleaning materials or electrical wires and sockets. They are well supervised during play and also at mealtimes. There are adequate fire precautions in place and children practise an evacuation plan regularly. The childminder ensures that these practices are carried out on different days so as to include all children in her care. Children are secure on the premises because a stair gate is in use and doors are kept shut while they play. The downstairs toilet is safe for their use. On outings, they travel safely in the car and learn how to keep safe when crossing roads. If necessary, children wear a wrist strap while walking. Consequently, children are safe at all times.

There is a good range of suitable resources for children. These are stored neatly in an outside shed and brought in for children to access independently. Toys are rotated to provide variety and are all kept in good condition. The collection is updated now and again so that there are plenty of resources for children of all ages. Older children particularly enjoy board games and a playstation. Therefore, children have plenty of choice and play safely. The childminder has a good knowledge of child protection issues. She has attended training in this area and provides information for parents explaining her responsibilities. She has a password system in place to ensure that children are only collected by a known adult. Consequently, children are well protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy the company of others and show interest in the resources on offer. They learn to interact socially as they play with small toys on the carpet or put together a train track with the help of the childminder. She responds to their interests by cutting out shapes for them to extend their play. Children particularly enjoy access to various creative materials on the table and use their imagination as they make pictures and models. They like to choose books from the book rack and look at them individually. Older children become very involved in imaginative play and enjoy making dens for their play. Younger children enjoy the one-to-one attention of the childminder and her assistant. She has a copy of the 'Birth to three matters' framework for guidance, although she does not make full use of it in providing a wide range of stimulating activities to interest very young children.

Children are encouraged to learn during conversation and play. They have an increasing awareness of letters of the alphabet and numbers. They enjoy listening to stories and taking part in organised activities, such as, icing cakes. They learn about different cultures and religions, for instance, how one child celebrates 'Brother's Day' by wearing a friendship band. Children are keen to make friendship bands themselves and like to help the childminder as she winds coloured wools for them. Young children benefit from being able to attend various toddler groups during the week and older ones especially enjoy outings in the holidays, for instance, to the seaside and zoo. Overall, children take part in a variety of activities and begin to develop new skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel included and are developing a sense of belonging. They all have the opportunity to take part in organised activities, whatever their age or ability. The childminder keeps an eye on all children, particularly if she is seeing to one child's particular needs. Children who are upset are attended to immediately and every effort made to work out why they are unhappy. Older children show a caring attitude towards younger ones. Children get on well as a group and are well supported by the childminder and her assistant. They suggest activities to suit individual children, for example, colouring for those who are quiet. Children are confident in asking for help and feel valued when their creations are put on the door for taking home. They are encouraged to be independent as members of a large group and they play harmoniously.

Children behave well. They are reminded of the house rules from time to time and respond quickly to requests to comply with these. They are aware of their boundaries. The childminder's close supervision encourages them to behave responsibly. She has effective strategies in place for the management of behaviour, including the presentation of stickers for being helpful or time out if children need to calm down. Consequently, children have a growing awareness of right and wrong. The childminder liaises closely with parents and carers. She ensures that she is confidential in her dealings with parents. She provides them with information about herself, and her provision, and talks with them daily at pick-up times. When children first start, she offers a daily diary while they settle in. Although she has received information about recent changes to the complaints procedures, she has not yet implemented these. If parents are

unaware how to raise a concern, children's continuity of care may be affected. Overall, parents are highly satisfied with the provision, in particular the flexibility of the childminder to meet children's individual needs. Children benefit from this working partnership.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder's documentation is well organised, with children's information kept securely in individual files. Her attendance register is well maintained and her public liability insurance kept up to date. She has a collection of policy statements which explain her practice. She ensures that written agreements are made with parents. Her First Aid qualification is renewed when necessary. Children have space to play, relax and do table-top activities in the living rooms and eat their meals in the large kitchen. The childminder organises a weekly childminding group at a local school. She and her assistant work to a daily routine so that children feel secure and happy. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the childminder was asked to ensure that her play provision reflects diversity in society. She has now increased her range of resources so that children have more choice and consequently become aware of a wider society.

Complaints since the last inspection

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

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):

- further improve the outcomes for children from birth to three in line with the 'Birth to three matters' guidance
- ensure that parents are aware of the complaints procedure.

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