



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	149347
Inspection date	14 August 2006
Inspector	Paula Durrant
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 1999. She lives with her husband and her three children aged seven, ten and twelve years and her husband's children aged fourteen and fifteen years, in a residential property on the outskirts of the town of Stevenage. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding with the exception of the conservatory. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. Children requiring undisturbed sleep have access to a bedroom on the first floor.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding two children under the age of five years and two school aged children before and after school and during school holidays. All children in attendance are part-time. The family has no pets.

The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. She attends the local parent and toddler group and makes full use of other community based amenities, such as parks, shops and the library.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they become ill or have an accident as the childminder adheres to environmental health and hygiene guidelines. For example, children who are unwell are discouraged from attending in line with stipulated exclusion periods for childhood diseases. Appropriate measures, such as the childminder's maintenance of a valid first aid qualification, sufficient medical supplies and written consents from parents for the administration of medication or emergency medical intervention all contribute to maintaining children's health care needs. Good practice, such as suitable storage and preparation of foods, use of antibacterial solutions to cleanse work surfaces and equipment used means that children's welfare is not compromised as cross contamination is minimised.

Children learn to understand simple good health and hygiene as they follow the daily routine, such as when washing their hands. They know the reasons behind the hand-washing process as the childminder frequently introduces discussions about germs and the effects they can have on their bodies, making them poorly and unwell.

The childminder is flexible in the provision of meals working in partnership with parents and carers. Current practice is that all parents provide a packed lunch which is stored by the childminder in her fridge until required. Children learn about healthy eating as the childminder encourages children to eat savoury foods prior to sweet items. She talks to the children about the foods they have and their likes and dislikes. Should a child not eat what has been provided then the childminder will supplement parent's provision. She has a clear understanding of individual dietary needs. Children receive regular drinks throughout the day. Water is preferential as the childminder is aware that it is a healthier option that does not damage their teeth or affect their diet.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. Trips to the local playground and activity centres are frequent. Children also have access to a secure and safe garden area which is suitably equipped with a range of challenging resources to develop increased control and coordination. Children rest and are active in accordance to their needs. Younger children sleep in line with home-care routines whilst older children sit quietly looking at books or watching favourite child-centred television programmes to recuperate their energy levels.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe family home where all necessary safety precautions remain in place. The childminder is highly vigilant undertaking daily checks of the home prior to children's attendance. Children remain in sight and hearing at all times.

Children access a wide range of good quality resources that are well maintained. The childminder abides to manufacturers' recommendations providing age appropriate equipment that holds a recognised safety kite mark. Children learn to keep themselves safe as the childminder explains house rules and road safety when out. For example, children know to sit down when eating as there is a potential to choke on undigested foods, to hold hands alongside busy main roads and not talk to strangers when out in the local community as this may compromise their well-being. Children stay safe in the event of a fire as the childminder regularly talks through and practises her evacuation procedure.

Children's welfare is high priority in this household. They are cared for by a suitable adult who has a clear understanding of child development. The childminder has completed vetting checks and demonstrates a strong knowledge of child protection. She knows where and how to record and report concerns in line with the local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are extremely settled and confident in their surroundings due to the exceptionally close relationship with the childminder who is highly attentive to the children in her care. She provides them with an extensive range of practical age-appropriate activities that inspire interest and promote challenge. She recognises individual preferences, such as the desire to play alone and to make independent choices in the selection of favourite play materials. For example, older children remain in the kitchen to complete their bedroom door plaques whilst younger children sit in the lounge playing alongside the childminder with shape sorters and other cause and affect toys, such as a bouncy push-down 'Tigger'.

Children develop positive levels of self-esteem as they experiment and reaffirm their skills, such as when practising the formation of letters when writing names for a pretend school register. Children persevere in their set task as they complete their list in readiness for the imaginary registration. They are not perturbed by the time of day as they call out in turn the names of the people present in the room receiving a response of 'good morning' in return, although the time is actually mid afternoon. Children really own their ideas and creativity. They are confident in completing individual designs when drawing and in voicing their opinions and views in how games should be structured and rules set.

The childminder is very competent in providing a range of stimulating activities which she prepares in readiness. Although informal planning mechanisms are in place to guide the childminder in promoting equal coverage of all areas of development this is not set in stone. The childminder is intuitive to the children's needs and recognises that on occasion other interests may take precedence. She is very skilled at taking her lead from the children and in

implementing incidental learning. For example, children benefit in developing an awareness of number as they count the variance of letters in each name in turn on the register. The childminder has knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and uses this to guide her practice with younger children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs take high priority in this home-from-home provision. A strong working partnership with parents supports the individual care needs and delivery of service. Mutual respect, love and understanding all play an integral part of the childminder's practice. Children are exceptionally polite, courteous and respectful of the childminder and her home. They know the house rules and use social graces, such as please and thank you, without prompt. Children play an active part in their own learning. They make independent decisions in their play and the activities that they wish to participate in. They have positive levels of self-esteem and respect the opinions and actions of others because the childminder consistently praises their efforts and re-affirms their achievements, guiding their social and moral development. Although the childminder openly displays Ofsted's complaints poster she has yet to update her procedure to implement her own system for managing parental concerns in line with current legislative changes.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's needs take high priority in this well maintained and organised setting. The childminder prepares her home in readiness and dedicates her time purely to the children in attendance. A conscientious decision to work under her registration numbers means that children receive exceptional levels of support, both in play and in having their individual needs met. Although the childminder has herself undertaken clearances of suitability a recent change in marital status means that additional persons now residing in the home have yet to complete the necessary vetting checks. Children's welfare is not completely compromised as although checks are required for everyone residing in the house over the age of sixteen years the childminder does not leave children unsupervised at any time. She is aware and is actively completing the appropriate forms although these checks have yet to be processed by the appropriate agencies. A good working partnership with parents means that children become part of an extended family unit. Children confidently choose activities and extend their own play and learning in an imaginative way. The childminder effectively uses her unwritten procedures and routines to effectively promote the welfare, care and learning of all the children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was required to review vetting procedures for regular visitors and to increase her knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. Children's welfare remains the primary focus of care as the childminder has an understanding of ensuring children are not left alone or unsupervised with unvetted persons and has developed

her knowledge and understanding of child protection through accessing appropriate literature, such as the local safeguarding children's board procedures. Lastly she was required to review the procedures for recording children's attendance. The childminder now maintains a clear and accurate attendance record documenting times of arrival and departure for each child in turn to ensure that ratios are adhered to and children's welfare promoted in the event of an emergency evacuation.

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):

- ensure there is a system in place to record parental complaints in line with current legislative changes
- ensure that all persons over the age of sixteen years complete appropriate vetting checks.

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