



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	149436
Inspection date	05 January 2006
Inspector	Sarah Catherine Jex

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 1987. She lives with her husband and adult child in the town of Baldock, Hertfordshire.

The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time

and is currently minding seven children on various days and hours of the week.

The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends local parent/toddler group and takes the children to the local library and park.

The childminder supports children with special needs. She is currently a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a friendly, warm and clean home environment where they are able to learn the importance of good personal hygiene from an early age, through well organised routines and practice. They know to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating meals or snacks. Children contribute to their own good hygiene practice by using tissues to wipe their noses. The children are protected from infection because the childminder is well informed about their health and employs suitable methods to prevent infections spreading, such as implementing her sick child policy. Information is shared with parents relating to any aspect of their child's health and she values and respects parents' wishes. Sound procedures are in place for recording children's accidents or administering medication and parents countersign the entry, this impacts positively on the children's health and well-being. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate and is confident she can deal with any minor accidents.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy home cooked meals, which have been planned in advance to meet their preferences and dietary needs. Meals include all the food groups and are healthy and nutritious for children. Children enjoy trying new and different tastes and experiences as they take part in food preparation activities. For example, help making sandwiches and preparing fruit. These activities stimulates lots of discussion and encourages children to make healthy choices which is conducive to their growing self-confidence. Children can access drinks at all times as they have an allocated cup which is regularly refilled throughout the day.

Children enjoy an appropriate range of physical activities which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Younger children are able to rest as required and are stimulated according to their needs. Children's health and development are very well promoted through their participation in a variety of stimulating physical activities. They are developing control of their bodies and acquire a wide range of skills through regular opportunities for outdoor activities. These include visits to the local park and library, also walking to collect and pick up other children from the local school. All children are able to fully participate in the activities because the childminder uses her experience and knowledge of child development to adapt these to a suitable level. Children are well supported by the childminder, promoting their confidence to try out new skills and experiences.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, clean and well-maintained environment. The childminder safeguards children's welfare and has an excellent awareness of safety. An effective risk assessment is carried out daily on the premises, toys and activities to ensure potential risks are identified and minimised. At time of inspection a new conservatory is being built she is aware of any dangers and a continuous risk assessment will be completed to ensure the children's safety. Children are able to move around the home and explore and take risks in a safe, controlled environment. Space and resources are organised to allow maximum free space for the children to enjoy and access safely. Children benefit from an effective range of safety measures. For example, cupboard locks, stairgates, socket covers and a range of fire safety equipment. Children's knowledge of emergency evacuation is extended through discussions and regular evacuation practise.

Children learn about keeping themselves safe both in and out of the home. They learn about acceptable behaviour and the impact this has on their safety. For example, children know to hold hands or the buggy when out of the home and to stay together always in sight of the childminder. They learn about the reasons to pick up after themselves to keep things safe for all children playing. Supervision is of a high standard. Children have access to well-maintained, developmentally appropriate toys and equipment. These are selected according to their age and ability to ensure they gain maximum benefit from them and can play safely with them. Well thought out activities ensure the children's safety at all times. Children's interests and needs are supported as the childminder constantly adds to her collection of resources, keeps them in good working order. Children are able to play and take risks in a safe and controlled environment with suitable adjustments made to meet all their needs.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. The childminder is attentive to her responsibility to protect the children in her care and has a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms to look for along with the procedures to follow if she had any concerns. However, the child protection statement needs to be amended to be in line with the updated National Standards with regard to allegations. All other supporting documents are in place to reinforce her practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and contented as they take part in a wide range of activities both in and outside the home. Children have excellent opportunities to socialise with others as they visit friends and enjoy trips in the local community. For example, the local shops and library. Children are well supported and are provided with a range of stimulating and challenging opportunities and activities. These include imaginative play, being creative and experimenting with cooking. Books play a large part in each child's day as they enjoy shared reading and trips to the library. Free play is incorporated into each day where child-initiated play is encouraged and supported by the childminder. For example, whilst playing with the stickle bricks the

children made birthday cakes with candles on the childminder reinforced their counting skills and talked to them about birthdays, along with singing 'happy birthday' and pretending to blow the candles out. Activities are appropriate for the children's individual development, enabling them to move forward at their own pace. The childminder identified and agreed to extend her current practice by demonstrating that play opportunities are planned and evaluated. This would enhance her practice and the children would benefit from having access to a wider and more challenging variety of activities.

Children have warm relationships with the childminder. She interacts at the children's level, encouraging communication and independence skills. Children approach her for physical comfort and reassurances which contributes to their sense of belonging. They have opportunities to think for themselves, express their ideas and thoughts and interact with others by sharing and taking turns. Children's learning and development is extended by the childminder's constant awareness. They are involved in suitable, fun and challenging activities and has an excellent knowledge of them as individuals. For example, she is able to decipher gestures and language, thus avoiding any child becoming frustrated or despondent. Children's self-esteem is developed carefully with praise for their achievements and children display their creative work on the kitchen wall, so parents and other children can praise them. Younger children benefit from the childminder having knowledge and referring to 'Birth to three matters' framework. Individual children's routines are respected which promotes children's well-being and contributes to them making progress at their own pace.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a sensitive awareness of diversity and an understanding of the needs of others. This is achieved through a range of activities and resources which promotes a positive outlook of the wider world. Books are readily available and children enjoy discovering the world around them through sharing stories with the childminder. Children accept each other as individuals with the childminder setting an excellent example by valuing and respecting each child. Children's needs are met in a sympathetic manner through her open, honest and effective communication with parents and children. Activities are adapted to meet the needs of all children and a sensitive approach ensures children can play without fear of discrimination. The childminder's happy and respectful attitude encourages children to feel good about themselves and show respect for others. The childminder knows the children very well and is responsive to their needs. For example, if a child needs extra reassurance or cuddles this is happily provided and children respond positively knowing they can climb up for a cuddle at any time.

Children know and accept the realistic boundaries in place and this impacts positively on their behaviour. For example, children know not to jump on the furniture or run inside. They respond well to the childminder and the high level of support and consistent strategies help them understand what is acceptable. Children are happy and confident. They ask for help when needed and praise and encouragement for

their positive behaviour is widely given. Their confidence and self-esteem is enriched by the support and praise provided. When asking a child to respond the childminder always gives a reason and explanation for her request. This again helps children feel valued and respected. Children are absorbed and enthusiastic when playing happily and there are smiles, cuddles and other unspoken communication which confirms the happy and relaxed environment they have created between them.

The childminder has developed information for parents' detailing all aspects of her practice. A portfolio is in place which provides parents with excellent and clear information about partnership with parents, consent forms, contracts and many other useful information. However there is no record of complaints in place. Each parent has time to discuss their child's day and are able to share and play an active and important role in their child's care. Children's care and development is fostered due to the childminder's commitment to working closely with parents. Children benefit from having details of their day recorded into a daily diary which is shared with parents and opens an effective line of communication between them. Children's well-being is fully promoted because the childminder is committed to working in partnership with the parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are relaxed and feel secure and comfortable in the well-organised environment. The space, resources and daily routine are organised appropriately and helps encourage the children's confidence and independence. This ensures their individual needs are being met. Children are happy and confident initiating their own activities and sharing and extending this to others, they seek adult support when needed.

The childminder's organisational skills are good and benefit both children and parents. Records are shared with parents and communication is excellent. This contributes to the trusting relationships developed between them and impacts on the children's feelings of security. The childminder has developed purposeful policies and procedures which are clearly reflected in her practise. Ratios are met at all times and the childminder has an good awareness of the impact these have on the children's health, safety, socialisation and learning.

The childminder has a professional yet caring and sensitive approach to her practice. These ensure each child's potential is recognised and activities support and challenge each child. Overall the childminder meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to ensure the fireplace hearth was safe from children. This has been completed by always ensuring through her daily risk assessment that large thick pieces of foam are around the hearth so children will not be hurt if they fall against it.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report since the last inspection.

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 the child protection statement includes a procedure if any allegations are made against you or your family
- ensure a system is in place to record any complaints
- ensure a thorough risk assessment is continuous whilst building work is being carried out.

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