



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	149593
Inspection date	22 November 2006
Inspector	Lynne Kathleen Talbot
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 May 2000. She lives with her partner and three children aged 15, eight and four years of age. Their house is in the town of Hitchin, Hertfordshire.

The whole ground floor of the house is used for childminding, the first floor is used under supervision. There is a fully enclosed rear garden for outside play. There are shops, schools and pre-schools within an accessible distance. The childminder walks to local schools to collect and take minded children.

The childminder is registered to care for five children at any one time. There are currently three children on roll.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean home where they are learning the importance of hygiene and personal care. Children are beginning to take responsibility for their own needs, because the childminder acts as a positive role model and offers clear explanations and reminders. This is demonstrated as young children seek tissues and discard them into bins when soiled, use the toilet and wash their hands independently, and talk about needing to remove outer clothing when they are hot. They recognise the need to wear outer shoes and coats in cold or wet weather, removing shoes carefully when entering the home.

Children's well-being is promoted as the daily routine supports children's individual needs, and helps them maintain health, through meeting their physical care needs and resting periods. They walk to and from school and have access to local parks and playgrounds. Children have ample opportunities to explore large physical movement as this is planned into daily care and supports physical well-being. Children are appropriately nourished and enjoy meals provided either by their parents or cooked each day by the childminder. They begin to understand the need for fluids and are encouraged to help themselves to drinks in their own cups throughout the day.

Children's health and medical needs are met due to the childminder's attention to maintaining accurate information and reviewing the care of children with parents. They are supported through planned emergency support networks. However, further information and understanding is required to ensure that appropriate action may be taken in the event of significant injury or notifiable disease to ensure regulations are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is consistently promoted and appropriate action taken in the event of illness or accident because the childminder has an organised approach to this area of care and takes steps to prevent accidents and to plan for emergencies. This includes updating her knowledge, for example, regarding car safety seat regulations and sharing clear policies with parents and carers. Fire evacuation is carried out regularly each month and children discuss reasons for safety routines demonstrating clear understanding of keeping themselves, and others, safe.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment, accessing equipment that meets safety standards with sufficient space to explore and develop their full potential. There is a regular review of safety within the home to ensure that all risks are minimised during ongoing premises works. Children are learning to keep themselves safe due to clear explanations and routines. This includes understanding safety in the sun and using sun protection. Children learn to apply sun protection cream to ensure their overall well-being. Children carry out road safety routines each day and are developing a good understanding of why and how to keep themselves safe in the community.

Children are well protected because the childminder clearly understands child protection issues and the appropriate steps to follow that will support children's wellbeing. Planned procedures include the latest information according to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are able to develop confidence and self-esteem because the childminder gives them opportunity to talk and values their efforts at all ages. They are encouraged to make links between family life and the care at the childminders, for instance telling her about visits to new schools, and recalling what they did the previous evening at home or recent events such as Halloween. They discuss things that happen such as having loose teeth and what happens when they fall out, making links between both natural growth and development in their life and nutrition. Each child is listened to carefully and their developing language reinforced through repetition by the childminder.

Children explore language and new concepts in everyday activities and with play materials. For example, they count spontaneously and explore shape as they talk during lunch. Children notice things around them and point them out to the childminder, such as a hair on a sandwich, which leads to extended discussion on hygiene and links to health. Children anticipate events such as an expected new baby for a family member and show early prediction skill as they discuss whether it will be a boy or girl. This leads them to consider time as a concept as they consider the growth needed before the new baby will be old enough to play games with them. From everyday events they extend their knowledge of the world around them and have regular opportunities to discuss their developing knowledge with the childminder.

Children develop and sustain interest in activities, including the childminder in their play where she uses open-ended questions to develop and deepen their understanding. They explore new language linked to themes such as 'reflection' or 'acting' and explore all aspects associated with the topic. Children have opportunities to take part in activities that are child led according to their interest as the childminder carries out planning for activities to foster development across all areas, and shares those plans with parents and carers within a portfolio.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. Their needs are well met as they follow their normal daily routines as discussed with their parents. This is helped by the sharing of information verbally each day. There is, however, a need for information to be shared with parents regarding procedures for reporting concerns in line with updated regulations and procedures.

Relationships are very positive and children are making early friendships with other children both in the childminder's home and at social groups. Children thrive because their individual developmental stages are recognised and planned for by the childminder. They discuss changes, such as transition into school, in detail giving them the chance to voice any worries and explore the forthcoming routine being familiar with the ideas and settling quickly into the new setting.

Children are beginning to understand responsible behaviour and recognise the needs of others due to consistent boundaries being maintained by the childminder. They plan for, and show appreciation of others, for instance by making cards and gifts for family members. They speak about the reason for the gift being simply that the person helps them and cares for them. Children are supported to understand issues such as bullying through a board game designed to address feelings, and their attitude and support of others. Children are aware of equality issues, such as gender, and explore stereotypes in discussion. They demonstrate an understanding of equality for all and are supported to explore all activities by the childminder. These active and supportive measures from the childminder help to broaden their understanding and fosters good social development.

Children appreciate and understand about other cultures and ways of life because the childminder provides resources to promote conversation and interest. They learn about other cultures and beliefs as they research topics connected to both homework set by school and events in each others lives. Children receive appropriate support that meets their complex needs as individuals because the childminder seeks appropriate information from parents and takes positive steps to inform herself on a variety of special needs.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are secure within the surroundings where they develop a sense of trust in the childminder. They feel at ease in this organised environment leading them to confidently initiate play and explore their surroundings. They respond to new adults with confidence discussing activities and other children who are cared for after school hours, demonstrating security within the home.

Organisation within the home allows access to all play activities both indoors and outside. Children have independent access to personal care facilities and develop responsibility for play materials and personal belongings.

The childminder has a sound knowledge and understanding of the Children Act and most associated regulations. Children's daily care is shared with parents in conversation, this promotes children's welfare and all-round development. Care given is particularly flexible to parental requirements with both early hours and overall hours of care adjusted to meet the needs of families, to ensure ongoing stability for all children.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to clarify procedures for parents to follow in the event of a concern or complaint. Since that time she has provided parents with contact phone numbers for the regulator ensuring they are aware of procedures and maintaining effective communication with parents and carers.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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):

- improve knowledge of procedures to prevent the spread of infection or notifiable disease, or in the event of significant injury to minded children. Ensure that action taken complies with relevant authority requirements
- improve knowledge and develop a system for the recording of complaints, in line with regulations.

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