



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	149653
Inspection date	16 February 2007
Inspector	Susan Ennis
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 1992. She lives with her husband and four grown up children in Hitchin, 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 five children at any one time and is currently minding two children under five all day and two child over eight before and after school on a part time basis. The childminder drives to local schools to take and collect children. The family has no pets.

The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and comfortable home environment. Their health is effectively promoted as the childminder follows consistent hygiene procedures such as, cleaning all areas used by the children on a daily basis and verbally discussing a sick children's policy with the parents which helps to prevent cross infection. Children's immediate safety and welfare is efficiently met as the childminder regularly updates her first aid training and has written permission to seek emergency medical treatment if required. Children are encouraged to understand simple, good hygiene practices such as, cleaning their hands on a wipe before eating and washing their hands when they feel 'sticky'. A child who is currently potty training automatically empties her potty after use and washes her hands 'cause of the germs.'

Children participate in a varied range of physical activities, contributing to their good health. The childminder ensures that there are daily opportunities for outdoor activities, such as walking in the local community feeding the ducks and playing in the garden, even in the rain, experiencing the feel and sensation of the rain drops. Visits further a field to Standalone Farm extend the children's knowledge of the natural world whilst encouraging their spatial awareness and physical skills. Children's physical development is also encouraged through activities such as, music and movement. A child confidently demonstrates their skills by showing the inspector how they can do roly polys and some ballet moves standing on their toes and stretching into the air.

Children's rest and sleep patterns are accommodated with home routines maintained. They are well nourished with healthy snacks and meals, such as cucumber, Satsuma and cooked meals accompanied by a variety of vegetables, promoting their growth and development. Participating in cooking activities increases the children's knowledge of different ingredients and food tastes. Children's individual dietary requirements are fully discussed with parents and abided by at all times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe environment in which they are able to move around independently and freely. A designated play room enables children in choosing toys and activities for themselves. The childminder utilises her many years of experience in sensitively supervises the children's choices ensuring that they are both safe and appropriate for their age and stage of learning. For example, toy money is not stored in the play till as a child may endanger them self by putting it in their mouth. The coins are played with but under full supervision.

Children's safety is further promoted as the childminder continuously carries out informal risk assessments and minimises the hazards to children, for example, accessible plug sockets are covered and low-level cupboards are fitted with safety locks. Children are starting to learn about keeping themselves safe as they are encouraged to, for example, learn about cars and road safety. When getting in and out of the car, children automatically place one hand on the

side of the car staying there until all the children are ready. Children also take great delight in reminding the childminder to put the chain on the front door as their parent leaves further demonstrating their increasing understanding.

Children's welfare is promoted because the childminder has a good understanding of the child protection procedures. She has a solid understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and has the relevant contact details should any concerns arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident, settled and interested in their play. They relate well to the childminder who extends their play and learning experiences and challenges their thought processes by for example, asking open ended questions. When a child is playing with the doctor's set the childminder asks 'can you find the stethoscope?' and 'can you hear your heart beating?' The childminder also uses her child care experience in relating activities to the children's past experiences. When playing with the play dough a child is encouraged to give their snow man model some arms 'like we did with the one we made in the garden last week.'

Children can participate in all the activities because the childminder uses her effective knowledge of child development in adapting activities encouraging all to become involved. For example, when sitting at a craft activity all the children sit together with the younger children given more hands on support from the childminder. Activities are also regularly changed to cater for the younger children's shorter concentration span. The childminder very expertly identifies when minds are starting to wander and tactfully suggests playing with the play kitchen requesting 'can you make me some dinner please.' She is then presented with some toy pizza to enjoy.

Children's development in all areas is consistently promoted as the childminder uses her child care knowledge and understanding of child development enabling the children in learning through play. For example, language skills are encouraged through constant age appropriate interaction and activities such as singing into a tape recorder and recording the songs to give to the parents. Construction ideas are developed through playing with Duplo and Lego and knowledge of numbers is encouraged through activities such as discussing how many eyes the snowman has.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. The childminder ensures that she is aware of the children's individual needs and meets them effectively. Daily conversations take place ensuring that all parties are informed about the child's development and care. The children have a trusting and caring relationship with the childminder coming to her for security and reassurance when needed. Children's sense of belonging is encouraged as their art work is displayed for all to see. A child's picture of the Eiffel Tower is proudly pointed out during the inspection. Children's behaviour is generally good, being reinforced by the childminder's secure

understanding of consistent and age appropriate strategies such as reasoning, distraction and time out to think about their actions. Children are starting to understand the ground rules such as saying 'please' and 'thank you' when asking for a drink.

Children's understanding of the wider community is generally increased by the childminder providing resources and activities that positively promote our society such as, playing with small world figures and play food reflecting other cultures, discussing the children's visits to the gurdwara and participating in events within the community such as visiting a church service held for the elderly members of the congregation. The childminder has some experience in caring for children with disabilities or learning difficulties and is able to effectively care for all children.

Children's needs and welfare are suitably met because the childminder has a stable relationship with parents. Settling in periods are offered at the beginning of the placement helping the child in adapting to their new surroundings and ensuring that all parties' expectations are met. Although parents are made aware of the complaints procedure it is not made readily available to them potentially leading to misunderstandings between the childminder and parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder satisfactorily organises her work, helping children feel comfortable, relaxed and secure. They are confident often initiating their own play and learning by choosing which activities and toys to play with. The individual needs of all the children are met by the childminder through her procedures and policies', ensuring that most relevant information is in place. However, permission to take photographs is not in place potentially compromising the relationship between the parent and childminder.

The childminder uses her many years of experience and broad child care knowledge to assist her in planning a safe, stimulating and caring environment for the children. She ensures that the children are offered a varied range of activities that all are able to participate in. Overall, the needs of all the children are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

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):

- make the complaints procedure more readily available to parents
- obtain written parental permission to take photographs of the minded children.

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