



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	953309
Inspection date	07 September 2005
Inspector	Gillian Charlesworth

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 satisfactory. 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 1999. She lives with her husband and 4 children aged between 4 and 12 years of age. They live in a two storey house close to the village of Abbots Langley. It is within walking distance of parks, shops and schools. Most of the ground floor is used for childminding. This consists of a hall, study area, kitchen and family room, utility area and cloakroom. The lounge is used occasionally for quiet activities or sleep and rest. The first floor is not registered for childminding. The garden consists of patio, decking and lawn areas. There is a selection of outdoor equipment including a large and small trampoline and a wooden playhouse with imaginative play equipment. The swimming pool is made inaccessible with a low level

fence.

The childminder is registered to care for 4 children at any one time and is currently minding 2 children aged 1 and 7 years of age, both of whom attend on a part-time basis.

The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and also has a car to transport children. She regularly attends a local toddler group and story time at the library. She has an extended family who are frequent daily visitors and always supervised. The family has a pet rabbit and a cat.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children walk to the local school, park and shops and have plenty of fresh air each day which contributes to a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy moving freely between the indoor and outdoor environment in fine weather using the large and small apparatus. Young children are supported to develop their balance and physical skills with confidence, they hold hands with the childminder for reassurance and support.

Babies' signs of tiredness are identified and acted upon enabling them to rest undisturbed in a buggy according to their needs. Children discuss the importance of good personal hygiene with the childminder and learn personal routines such as hand washing, through the childminder's constant attention. Babies receive plenty of interaction as their nappies are changed on a comfortable pillow. However, procedures to prevent cross infection are not robust. For example, the changing pillow is used as a cushion, pet food and cat litter are accessible and contagious illnesses, such as sickness and diarrhoea are not routinely excluded to protect others from infection. The childminder attended a first aid course in 2003 giving her the underpinning knowledge to respond to accidents and emergencies. However, the course is not in line with approved guidance.

Children's dietary needs are well met through the childminder's genuine commitment to provide healthy, nutritious snacks and meals in consultation with children. Fruit snacks and cool drinks are taken on outings to school and fresh vegetables and wholesome meals are part of the daily routine. For example, children enjoy a social meal time, munching happily on brown bread sandwiches, carrot sticks and cheese cubes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a spacious, clean and comfortable environment where they confidently make good use of the designated areas for play. For example, they use space in the kitchen/diner for floor play or table top activities; the lounge provides an

area for quiet relaxation or TV and they move freely between the indoor and outdoor environment in fine weather. Indoor and outdoor resources are in plentiful supply and children enjoy the variety. Not all toys such as the trampette and toy cars are in good repair therefore children can sometimes access faulty equipment.

Children are generally kept safe through a combination of constant supervision and the fitting of some physical precautions although not all hazards are addressed. For example, although safety gates and cupboard locks are fitted to prevent children's access to unsafe or restricted areas, electrical sockets are not routinely covered and chemicals are accessible in the toilet which is used independently by pre-school children. As a result, not all precautions are implemented to protect children and they do not always know how to keep themselves safe for example, on the trampoline.

The childminder has the required guidance to hand to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. For example, she has the appropriate publications to support her work and underpin her knowledge of child protection procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled and are actively encouraged to follow their interests, make decisions and have fun. For example, they explore the indoor and outdoor environment freely, choosing from a wide range of activities. They also have daily opportunities for outings which include the local park, library and shops.

They have very positive relationships with each other and the childminder who interacts warmly with them. This, in turn, develops their confidence and self-esteem. They enjoy hugs and often cuddle-up for comfort when they wake from a sleep. They sit on the step together while they look at a book and talk about the pictures and colours. They readily interact with others and are confident to initiate conversation. For example, they enjoy talking about their experiences at school and respond to open ended questions to extend their knowledge. Babies communicate their needs effectively as they point towards toys they see. This is interpreted well by the childminder who responds to their requests. They enjoy a variety of sensory experiences through the motivating environment. They stroke and feed the pet rabbit and explore stimulating resources such as the texture, shape and colour of beads.

Their imaginative learning is supported effectively by the childminder who organises appropriate imaginative resources such as dolls and feeding bottles. She immerses herself in their activities and extends children's learning by demonstrating how babies are dressed which, in turn, encourages children's interest and enjoyment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are constantly acknowledged and affirmed and benefit from the childminder's genuine commitment to treat everyone as individuals. For example, she

encourages children to use comforters and follow their interests. This, in turn, enables children to feel a strong sense of belonging. Local outings give children experience of the wider world although children have little opportunity to explore each others similarities and differences and diversity through play. This is because the activities and resources to promote diversity have not been prioritised.

Relationships with parents are positive, friendly and open. Exchange of information is managed effectively through a combination of an individual diary for young children and daily verbal communication. This contributes to children's positive experiences and continuity in the children's care. For example, parents make a note of what a child has had for breakfast or their sleeping pattern at home in order that the childminder can anticipate their needs. Parents provide an information sheet on their child's routines at the outset and these are willingly acted upon by the childminder to ensure children's needs are met.

Children behave well and respond to the childminder's constant interaction, consultation and her ability to praise. For example very young children decide on their play and exploration of the environment. They move between their chosen activities such as feeding the rabbit, reading books and playing imaginatively without restriction and with constant adult attention. This shows the children they are valued. Babies' communication and gestures are interpreted effectively and combined with strategies such as distraction, this prevents frustration. Children learn to share through the childminder's encouragement to involve all children in play. For example, they willingly share small world people while waiting for their lunch.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The organisation of the environment is managed so that children feel at home and at ease. Children are confident to initiate and extend their own play and learning with plenty of adult support. There are defined play areas both indoors and outdoors with resources in plentiful supply. Equipment is thoughtfully arranged to enhance children's social experiences such as at meal times. However, some areas of organisation such as health and safety are managed informally and are not sufficiently robust to ensure that children's welfare is reliably promoted.

Attendance is organised to give children a balance of one to one adult interaction and social opportunities. Most of the required documentation is in place and openly shared with parents although some records, such as the attendance register, are not consistently managed or their purpose clearly understood. As a result, records are not sufficiently detailed to show all those present and are not always up to date or available for inspection. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder was asked to improve vetting of regular visitors and her knowledge of child protection in order to protect children's welfare; to

develop and maintain appropriate documentation and policies and to address safety of electrical sockets.

The childminder has notified Ofsted of details of regular visitors although due to procedures, visitors cannot be fully vetted. She has undertaken to provide a written statement for parents setting out her arrangements for supervision and welfare of the children while visitors are present. Copies of local and national publications have been obtained to ensure that the childminder can be fully conversant with up to date procedures to protect children. Public liability insurance has been effected. A supply of covers for electrical sockets is available although these are not consistently in place when childminding and although the children are generally well supervised the risks have not been fully minimised to protect children's welfare. Development of registers, illness policy and an emergency evacuation plan has not yet been sufficiently addressed to promote the efficient and safe management of the provision.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- review management of health and hygiene procedures for pets, nappy changing routines and sickness and ensure that an approved first aid certificate is maintained
- review safety arrangements to ensure that all hazards are routinely minimised or inaccessible to children on a daily basis and, devise a risk assessment which is discussed with children and parents' to ensure the safety of children while using the trampoline or playing in an area where the trampoline is sited
- improve knowledge of the National Standards and ensure that the required documentation such as an attendance register is accurately maintained and always available for inspection.

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