



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY231550
Inspection date	15 December 2006
Inspector	Paula Jane Hayhow
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 2003. She lives with her husband and three children aged 12, 10 and five years in the town of Stevenage in Hertfordshire. The ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden and a park available for outdoor play. The local schools and shops are within walking distance.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently minding one child over five years after school and during the school holidays. The childminder attends the local toddler group when she cares for appropriately aged children. The family has a budgerigar and a rabbit.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean home. They are well nourished and their health is promoted due to the childminder's good understanding of healthy eating. They are offered nutritious meals which the childminder prepares using a balanced range of fresh ingredients ensuring that she has regard for foods low in salt, sugar and fat. The children are involved in planting and growing some of their own fruit and vegetables. They harvest the carrots, potatoes and strawberries gaining an active knowledge of the seasons, where food comes from and the growing cycle of plants. The childminder discusses all dietary requirements fully with parents and keeps an accurate record of these, ensuring that she abides by these requirements so that the needs of the children can be met. Children's health is promoted by the childminder's detailed paperwork which documents policies such as what would happen if the children are sick, permissions for emergency first aid and consents for administering medication.

Children participate in a wide range of physical activities, contributing to their good health. The childminder ensures that there are daily opportunities for outdoor activities, such as walks to school, to the local park or lakes where they have opportunities to climb and balance on the climbing apparatus. On inclement days the children can dance to tapes or develop their fine motor skills when they participate in activities such as drawing, cutting, sticking, puzzles and construction toys. These physical activities encourage children to develop coordination and spatial awareness as well as enjoying fresh air and developing finer motor skills. The children are given clear reasons why they need to wash their hands before snacks and after using the bathroom and have options to use products such as soap which needs no water, thus preventing the spread of infection. The children are able to fully participate in the activities because the childminder has a good knowledge of child development gained from her care of her children and her qualified training courses. She provides appropriate activities and supports the children well so that they have confidence to try out new experiences.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and generally safe environment. Risks of accidental injury are minimised because the childminder is vigilant and has thought about her work in order to reduce potential hazards, for example, she carries out daily house checks before the children are picked up from school to ensure that they cannot access any hazard. She carries out regular fire drills and teaches the children about stranger danger and road safety which is practised on their daily walks. However, the fire blanket is not fitted in line with the manufacturer's direction and this could affect the children's safety should there be a fire.

The children use safe resources and equipment and the childminder makes sure that these are stimulating and appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the children. They are able to independently select activities from a good range of quality toys and equipment. The childminder supervises the children's choice of toys and activities, ensuring that they are safe and appropriate. The children's welfare is further promoted because the childminder has the

appropriate documents in place. She holds a current public liability insurance and has devised policies which she adheres to such as health and safety and child protection. She has good understanding of child protection procedures through recent training and knows what action to take should she suspect abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled, confidently choosing activities and moving around the home and play room freely. They relate well to the childminder and their independence is developed as they make choices about toys, books and activities. They are encouraged to explore and learn about their environment through the use of a wide range of activities that cover all areas of development. These include craft work such as cutting and sticking Christmas pictures, play dough, puzzles, board games and outdoor activities such as visits to the library or farm.

The childminder promotes children's particular interests well, for example, investigating pre-historic animals such as dinosaurs and visiting the museum to gain a more thorough understanding of these creatures. The children then made a representation of the size of the dinosaur egg with a balloon and papier-mâché. The childminder is able to use her knowledge of child development gained through various child care courses to adapt activities so that they are appropriate and promote children's learning, ensuring that all children spend their time purposefully. The childminder is particularly good at responding to all the children's questions and interests. The children are therefore given clear reasons and explanations, increasing their understanding of their environment and the wider world.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. The childminder ensures that she is aware of the children's individual needs and meets these, for example, they have a flexible routine which allows time for them to play, have an evening meal and interact with other children, as discussed with their parents. The childminder has a positive relationship with the parents keeping them well informed of their child's progress through the use of daily dialogue, welcome pack and a comprehensive portfolio. The children show concern for each other playing together and learning about sharing and turn-taking. Their behaviour is good and they are well mannered, routinely asking for items politely or thanking the childminder for them. Their behaviour is further reinforced by the childminder's good understanding of the importance of setting consistent and appropriate boundaries for all children.

The childminder appreciates the importance of providing a range of non-stereotypical activities and resources to promote positive images of society and increase children's understanding of this. The children are learning about their local community on routine outings to the local park, shops and library. They learn about the wider world through discussion and craft activities linked to festivals such as Diwali, Chinese New Year and Christmas. The childminder has experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and is confident to judge how well

individual children's needs can be met within existing routines. All children are included in activities and have free access to all of the toys.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met. The childminder organises most aspects of her work well, helping the children to feel comfortable, relaxed and at home. They are confident and can therefore initiate their own play and learning. The individual needs of the children are effectively met by the childminder through her procedures to ensure that she has all relevant information relating to her childminding. She regularly discusses and reviews this with the parents. However, children's welfare could be compromised as the certificate of registration is not displayed for parents to view, the complaints policy does not include the up to date changes to practice as documented in the Addendum and the childminder does not have the details relating to notifiable diseases or Riddor. This could possibly lead to misunderstandings between parents and the childminder thus jeopardising their relationship.

The children's emotional and physical development is well promoted through the childminder's organisation and planning of her daily work, which ensures that children are offered a wide range of stimulating activities and opportunities and that they are able to participate.

Improvements since the last inspection

The childminder was asked at the previous inspection to ensure that written permission from parents is in place before administering medication to children.

The childminder has devised a policy and a permissions sheet which includes written consent for the administering of medication. These measures further improve the children's safety and welfare.

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 the children's safety by ensuring that the fire blanket is fitted in line with the manufacturer's directions
- ensure that the certificate of registration is displayed for parents to view and that details relating to notifiable diseases and Riddor are in place
- review and update information to include the changes in National Standards and regulations as set out in the October 2005 Addendum with particular reference to the complaints policy.

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