

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY283967
Inspection date	01 November 2007
Inspector	Paula Durrant
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 April 2004. She lives with her husband and two children aged four, and seven years in a residential property on the outskirts of the town of Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. All areas of the property are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of three children at any one time and is currently minding four children, three under five years and one over five years. All of the children attend on a part time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children.

The childminder attends the local parent and toddler group and childminder support group. The family have pet fish. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and holds accreditation status with the Hertfordshire Quality Standards.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming home where they learn the importance of high levels of hygiene and personal care. Exemplary practices are strongly encouraged. The childminder helps children to gain an excellent understanding of hygiene and a real desire to become increasingly independent in their personal care. For example, those that can wash their hands on their own, aided by a step stool to the sink. Children's clear understanding of why they must wash their hands after using the toilet, when returning from outside play and prior to eating, substantially reduces the risk of cross-contamination. Children actively learn to protect themselves against the harmful effects of germs as they use antibacterial solutions to cleanse and eradicate dirt from their hands and individual hand towels to dry their wet hands.

The childminder works to detailed, purposeful policies and procedures which she has devised in relation to health, hygiene, medication and illness. Extremely sound procedures are in place for children who are unwell to safeguard the good health of other children who attend the provision. Children receive appropriate first aid because the childminder holds a suitable first aid qualification and actively monitors her provision of medical supplies.

Children are positively encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle because the childminder provides healthy snacks and for those whom would like, meals. She promotes children's knowledge and understanding of nutritional issues through discussion and activities. She always ensures that fresh fruit is available for children. They begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet as they enjoy home cooked food from fresh ingredients and as they plant, tend and grow vegetables that they later taste, building their knowledge of where some food is sourced from. The childminder meets specific dietary needs within the varied menu available to the children and respects parental wishes and preferences. Children are positively encouraged to drink water which is freely and constantly available. They understand the need to replenish their fluid levels in order to stay healthy.

Children enjoy an extensive range of stimulating activities that positively contribute to their good health. The childminder has a robust understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, reflected in the exceptional and regular opportunities to enhance the development of young children's large muscle movements. The childminder has a thorough understanding of appropriate types of activities and levels of support for each child. This promotes children's confidence to try out new skills, set their own limits and recognise when to ask for help. All year round, there are daily opportunities to play in the child-orientated garden. This is equipped with a vast array of toys, games and play equipment which develop children's physical competencies. Children benefit from opportunities to cut, draw and manipulate malleable materials. This supports the development and improvement of children's physical dexterity. Children rest and are active in accordance to their needs. Older children benefit from an opportunity to relax on arrival home from school whilst younger children sleep in line with home care routines.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety takes precedence in this carefully monitored and secure environment. The childminder is highly vigilant, ensuring all necessary precautionary measures are implemented.

She remains with the children at all times. Those that require undisturbed sleep also remain under direct supervision. The use of a monitor to listen, and the childminder herself making periodic physical checks on the children whilst they rest, ensures that they stay safe even when they are not active and cared for in the same room. When out the childminder uses a tagging system, ensuring that each child has on their person her emergency details in the event of them becoming separated from her.

Children are cared for in an exceptionally child-centred and welcoming environment. They are able to contribute to its ambiance as they make pictorial creations to display in the 'Kids Corner' area. Older children write their own rules for behaviour in the home and simplify fire evacuation procedures for their younger peers, again through pictorial illustration. This demonstrates true ownership and connection with the childminder and her home.

Children benefit in developing their learning as they access an extensive range of age-appropriate high-quality resources maintained in good repair. These remain accessible, promoting plentiful opportunities for self-choice. Whilst the childminder encourages independent decision making and will follow the children in their direction of play, she will also ensure that there are sufficient resources, both in number and range, to enable all children access and to provide opportunities for equipment to be used creatively. For example, as when setting out a number of shaped and sized balls which a child chose to hit with a racquet as well as kicking with their foot.

Children's safety is upheld as the childminder ensures all precautionary measures are put in place to eradicate potential harm and remains with them at all times. They learn to keep themselves safe as the childminder sets boundaries, such as holding hands when walking alongside busy main roads, and keeping their identify security tags on their persons at all times when out. Frequently practised fire drills and rigorous risk assessment structures, which are reviewed constantly, support the upholding of children's welfare.

Children are safeguarded as the childminder has a sound awareness of protecting children from harm. She knows how to identify symptoms of child abuse and where and whom she should report this to. Extensive training which is refreshed periodically supports the childminder in ensuring her practice remains updated.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children truly do enjoy and achieve within this well-managed and exceptionally child-centred provision. They are cared for by an exceptionally conscientious and skilled early years practitioner who has a sound and realistic understanding of child development and in providing age-appropriate play-based activities in line with every child's individual needs. For example, she knows that the child who has English as an additional language requires lots of opportunities for rich language to be used. She therefore retains her involvement in this child's play, coaching them through her exceptional interaction and engagement in play. For example, as she asks lots of open-ended questions to give confirmation to the two-way process of conversation and as she names and labels familiar everyday objects in order to support the development of an increased vocabulary.

The childminder is truly attentive to the children in her care. For example, she understands and respects a younger child's immature and incorrect labelling of a desired action such as when they use the word 'gargon' to request to play outside. This is supported with the child receiving the correct version of the word as the childminder repeats the phrase back to them giving

increased emphasise to the final word in the sentence. For example, 'oh you want to play in the garden'. Both child and adult prepare themselves in readiness to play outside as they put on coats and change their shoes prior to moving on to another child-centred area of the home. The child shows sheer delight and content when outside, knowing that their personal preference has been upheld. They immediately set to try out all that is available, taking limited time initially to kick a ball, ride a bike, use a bat and draw with chalk, making marks on the concrete slabs. This soon settles when the childminder offers support and the child realises that there is plenty of time and that they can stay here. The child then begins to practise and experiment in developing their physical skills, they build connections of the bat being able to be swung both in the air and on the ground and that when this makes contact with an item it can affect the movement of another object. They reaffirm their connections through exploring further with the range of resources available, such as the variety of size, shape and number of balls. This supports exploration and experimentation at its best.

The childminder increases children's desire and passion to learn because she knows them well. She retains good records of each child's developmental progress and uses this effectively to guide her in the delivery of purposeful and appropriate activities set within each child's limitations. Planning and assessment is holistic. It enables exceptional potential learning to take place and for extensive progress to be made. The childminder is aware of current climatic changes with early years and is already developing her written plans to incorporate the new terminology of the Early Years Foundation Stage, a combined and unified curriculum for under fives drawn from previous separate resources, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage Curriculum guidance. This is exceptionally good practice.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children truly are part of an extended family unit which epitomises the quality of care offered. They are active members of their own learning. For example, they contribute to the daily routines and practices such as through the making of pictorial illustrations with simple sequential rules to follow in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Children's needs are well known and conscientiously executed. For example, children who have a strict vegetarian diet only receive food items stipulated by parents from the childminder herself such as fresh fruit for their snack, other than this all other food is directly supplied by the child's main carer. Children learn to value each other as they take turns, share and contribute as a team to the childminder's practice. They learn about the wider world through discussion, resources that reflect positive images and through coverage of cultural festivals within the year. For example, children enjoy the opportunity to eat noodles with chopsticks, offering not only a tasting activity, but an experience of culture as they learn to use different tools to eat with. Whilst the childminder herself has no experience of caring for children with defined needs she is extremely open to promoting inclusion and in working in partnership with parents and carers to meet every child's individual need.

Children behave exceptionally well due to the clear direction and consistency of the childminder in the setting of her boundaries. Younger children listen with intent and are able to make choices enabling learning from their actions, whilst older children aid in the development of written rules for the home. This shows understanding and empowerment in sharing responsibility of behaviour. Parents truly appreciate the childminder's professionalism and openness. They know they can speak and share their thoughts and preferences of care and that these will be upheld. Parents benefit from the two-way communication structures in place and in the sharing

of records such as developmental assessment profiles. This provides parents with a clear picture of their child's daily activities and also of their progress. Whilst the childminder invites parental views about her service level periodically, which remains highly complimentary, she has yet to devise a summary annex to document parental concerns. This is an organisational oversight.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by an exceptionally skilled early years practitioner. They benefit from her commitment and dedication to developing her knowledge of early years practices on a continual basis. This in turn supports delivery of highly innovative and inspirational purposeful play-based activities which build on what each individual child knows and can do and what they need to learn in order to further their achievements. The childminder has a sound awareness of early years curricula and uses these purposefully within her planning and assessments structures. This upholds delivery of high quality teaching.

The childminder works relentlessly with the children in her care. She knows each child well and uses her knowledge of each individual to support her in delivery of unique personalised care plans. For example, she knows that some children sleep with comforters, whilst others do not. She respects that some parents have specific stipulated requirements of care for their children which she upholds with complete integrity, such as in only providing organic fruit produce for intermittent snacks should the child request this.

The childminder maintains rigorous records. She keeps her register close to the door so that children's comings and goings are documented at the earliest opportunity. She provides parents with quantitative literature about her service level, although a minor oversight is that of providing a summary annex to manage parental complaints and to retaining confidentiality when recording entries in the accident log book. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was required to obtain the booklet 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused - Summary'. Children's welfare is upheld as the childminder has gained a copy of this documentation and has attended training in this aspect of care to deepen her awareness of safeguarding practices.

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

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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 that documentation is revised periodically so that it remains compliant with current requirements and that confidentiality is upheld, this refers to the complaints process for parents and entries within the accident book.

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