

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY285013
Inspection date	01 August 2007
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 2004. She lives with her husband and child aged four years in the village of Wilstead in Bedfordshire. The ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding together with a bedroom upstairs used for play for the older children. There is a fully enclosed garden and three parks available for outdoor play. The local schools and shops are within walking distance.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding two children both of whom are under five years and one attends on a full-time basis. The childminder attends the local toddler group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are nourished and their health is promoted due to the childminder's good knowledge and understanding of healthy eating. Parents provide the children with meals and the childminder supports the children's understanding of healthy eating through activities such as cooking,

where they make cakes and biscuits using fresh ingredients. She works with the parents to ensure that children are offered wholesome options. The children plant loganberries and tomatoes and enjoy tending to them, harvesting and eating the fresh produce enabling the children to gain knowledge of where food comes from and the growth cycle of plants. The children's dietary requirements are clearly understood, respected and documented by the childminder at the beginning of the placement.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, well ordered and clean home. The childminder promotes good hygiene procedures to ensure that the children are protected from the spread of infection, such as washing hands thoroughly before snack time, after using creative media such as glue and disposing of tissues correctly after use. The childminder provides separate paper towels for each child to prevent cross-contamination and children can explain the reason why they need to wash their hands. 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, playing in the well-equipped garden on the swings, trampoline or playing co-operative games such as swing ball. The children also enjoy walking in the park, collecting leaves, riding their bicycles and scooters as well as having opportunities to use the swings, slide and climbing apparatus. On inclement days the children enjoy making up dance routines to the music, organise obstacles courses and on some occasions they go to the indoor, large apparatus centre or swimming. The children are therefore developing control over their bodies and improve their physical skills, coordination and spatial awareness.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and child-orientated environment. The rooms used for childminding are set up daily with interesting and age-appropriate activities. The children use safe resources and equipment and the childminder makes sure that these are stimulating for the developmental stage of each child attending. Children are able to independently select activities from a wide range of good quality toys and equipment. The childminder supervises the children's choice of toys and activities, ensuring that they are safe and appropriate. She organises the activities to enable the older children to enjoy their play without concern that the younger children may come to harm. For example, the children play with small intricate items in one of the upstairs bedrooms or when the younger children are asleep. This enables all the children to access their own play but prevents the younger children accessing toys which could be harmful to them. The children's welfare is further promoted because the childminder has all of the necessary documents in place. She holds a current public liability insurance certificate and has a good understanding of child protection issues and procedures.

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 safety checks before the children arrive, discusses with the children the procedure should there be a fire and teaches them about road safety on their daily walks. However, the children's safety could be affected by having access to the hazardous items in the under sink cupboard. Whilst the children have never had any accidents regarding this the childminder is to make this area safe or inaccessible to protect the children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very confident and settled. They enjoy a varied, stimulating range of activities including imaginative play, crafts, music, construction, listening to stories and outdoor play. Activities and resources are displayed invitingly and are easy to access. The childminder informally plans the activities but is generally led by the children's interests and thirst for knowledge. The children love making up stories and therefore the childminder provides opportunities, through craft, to foster their imaginative skills such as making balloon men, providing various materials to make faces and helping them to devise stories relating to them. Their overall development is promoted well and they are encouraged to explore and extend their knowledge because the childminder has a good understanding of child development. She carefully considers and includes a balanced and broad range of activities to cover all areas of play.

The children's independence is fostered well as they freely make choices about toys, books and activities. They have built up excellent relationships with the childminder who joins in with their play and demonstrates that she enjoys their company. They also have opportunities to socialise with other children through regular attendance at the local toddler group. She promotes their interest through activities linked to the nature and the wider world. This is further encouraged by visits to the farm, zoo and river to feed the ducks. Children are offered activities and play opportunities that are thoughtfully adapted by the childminder so that they are sufficiently challenging but children are able to meaningfully participate. The childminder is particularly good at responding to all the children's questions. For example, she develops the children's number skills by encouraging them to count numbers forwards and backwards, find the correct number of horses to match the number three and to count using their fingers. They learn about nature and the growth cycle of plants as they plant and tend to flowers and vegetables. They use mathematical language when describing how high the sunflowers grow, which one is the highest or shortest and why some do not thrive as well as others. The children are therefore given clear reasons and explanations, increasing their understanding of their environment and the world about them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. The childminder ensures that she knows all of the children's particular needs, abides by them and documents these at placement time. There is a good settling-in procedure where children and parents take their time to become familiar with the childminder, her home and her practice. The childminder has a positive relationship with the parents, keeping them well informed of their child's progress through the use of daily dialogue, a communication book and through an informative portfolio. This includes all the childminder's qualification and working documents such as Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearances, public liability insurance and written policies relating to the childminder's practice.

The children's behaviour is good and they are learning about playing together, sharing and taking turns. For example, they are supported well by the childminder when she explains the reason why standing on chairs could be dangerous and encourages turn taking through their play such as sharing out the craft items and finding the shapes their friend needs to complete their balloon man. The children are set consistent boundaries so that they know what is expected of them and the childminder gently reminds them about good manners, prompting them to

say 'please' and 'thank you'. The childminder can also refer to her comprehensive behaviour management policy which gives very clear information about the different strategies she could use. The children regularly ask the childminder to intercede for them thus learning skills from her of how to negotiate out of a confrontational situation.

The childminder appreciates the importance of providing a range of activities and resources to promote positive images of our society and increase children's understanding of this. The children learn about their local community on routine outings to local parks, the shops and visits to the river to feed the ducks and swans. The childminder has an effective and practical awareness of how to include and appropriately care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met. The childminder organises all aspects of her work well, helping the children to feel comfortable, relaxed and at home. The childminder has organised the play rooms to facilitate children's learning, for example, the toys are easily accessible and children know where to find their favourite toy, thus enabling them to initiate their own play and learning. The individual needs of the children are well met by the childminder through her procedures to ensure that she has all relevant information relating to the children before they start their placement. She regularly discusses and reviews this with the parents through the use of daily dialogue and diaries. However, children's well-being could be affected as the attendance register does not always document the exact times the children attend and names are not consistently documented on permissions which could possibly lead to misunderstandings with parents.

The children's development is well promoted through the childminder's organisation of her day. She ensures that she plans a balanced range of resources and opportunities making sure all children are offered stimulating activities and that all are able to participate. The childminder improves her childminding practice through ongoing training which enables her to update her current information and develop new ways of working thus increasing her knowledge of supporting the children in her care.

Improvements since the last inspection

The childminder was asked at the previous inspection to develop ways of maintaining a record of children's participation in activities.

The childminder has photograph albums, daily diaries and scrapbooks which records the activities undertaken, samples of the children's craft work and pictures of them participating in the various activities. These measures further improve the children's welfare and communication with parents.

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):

- ensure that hazards to children on the premises are minimised with reference to dangerous substances in the kitchen under sink cupboard
- review the written permission from parents for seeking emergency advice or treatment to include all relevant details such as their names and ensure that the attendance register accurately records the actual times the children attend.

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