



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY286870
Inspection date	20 November 2006
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 was registered in 2004. She lives with her husband and four children aged three, six, eight and ten years in a residential property on the outskirts of the town of Ware. 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. Children requiring undisturbed sleep have access to a bedroom on the first floor. The childminder is registered to care for a total of two children under the age of eight years and is currently minding a total of two children under the age of five years. All of the children in attendance are part-time. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. She runs the local parent and toddler group and takes children to the park. The family has no pets. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they become ill or have an accident as the childminder adheres to environmental health and hygiene guidelines. For example, the home is maintained to a high level of cleanliness and children who are unwell are discouraged from attending in line with stipulated exclusion periods for childhood diseases. Appropriate measures, such as the childminder's maintenance of a valid first aid qualification, sufficient medical supplies and written consents from parents for the administration of medication or emergency medical intervention all contribute to maintaining children's health care needs. Good practice, such as suitable storage and preparation of food, use of antibacterial solutions to cleanse work surfaces and equipment used, means that children's welfare is not compromised as cross contamination is minimised.

Children learn to understand simple good health and hygiene as they follow the daily routine, such as when washing their hands. They know the reasons behind the hand-washing process as the childminder frequently introduces discussions about germs and the effects they can have on their bodies, making them poorly and unwell.

The childminder is flexible in the provision of meals working in partnership with parents and carers. Current practice is that all parents provide a packed lunch which is stored by the childminder in her fridge until required. Children learn about healthy eating as the childminder encourages children to eat savoury foods prior to sweet items. She talks to the children about the food they have and their likes and dislikes. Should a child not eat what has been provided then the childminder will supplement parent's provision. She has a clear understanding of individual dietary needs. Children receive regular drinks throughout the day. Water is preferential as the childminder is aware that it is a healthier option that does not damage their teeth or affect their diet.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. Trips to the local playground and activity centres are frequent. Children also have access to a secure and safe garden area which is suitably equipped with a range of challenging resources to develop increased control and coordination. Children rest and are active in accordance to their needs. Younger children sleep in line with home-care routines whilst older children sit quietly looking at books or watching favourite child-centred television programmes to recuperate their energy levels.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe family home where all necessary safety precautions remain in place. The childminder is highly vigilant undertaking daily checks of the home prior to children's attendance. Children remain in sight and hearing at all times.

Children access a wide range of good quality resources that are well maintained. The childminder abides to manufacturers' recommendations providing age-appropriate equipment that holds a recognised safety kite mark. Children learn to keep themselves safe as the childminder explains house rules and road safety when out. For example, children know not to enter the kitchen when she is cooking as the oven is hot and may burn them and to not open or touch the front door as this is a no go area for their own safety and welfare. When travelling in the childminder's car children know to stay seated with their safety restraints securely fastened until the vehicle has come to a halt, to hold hands alongside busy main roads and not talk to strangers when out in the local community as this may compromise their well-being. Although the childminder regularly talks through and practises her emergency evacuation procedure she has yet to formalise a written procedure and to implement a system for monitoring the frequency of drills undertaken.

Children's welfare is high priority in this household. They are cared for by a suitable adult who has a clear understanding of child development. The childminder has completed vetting checks and demonstrates a strong knowledge of child protection. She knows where and how to record and report concerns in line with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very settled in their surroundings. They are comfortable in the childminder's care due to the strong bond and connection they have formed with her. For example, young children are not phased by the presence of a stranger to the home. They look to the adult and to the childminder for reassurance in their facial expression before responding back to the stranger with a smile. Children develop positive levels of self-esteem. The childminder constantly praises achievements and values children's verbal communications whatever their level of maturity. For example, lovely use of 'mother ease' in response to a baby's babble teaches children acknowledgement that their sounds are valued and understood.

The childminder is very competent in providing a range of stimulating activities which she prepares in readiness. Although informal planning mechanisms are in place to guide the childminder in promoting equal coverage of all areas of development this is not set in stone. The childminder is intuitive to the children's needs and recognises that on occasions other interests may take precedence. She is very skilled at taking her lead from the children and in implementing incidental learning. For example, a young child enjoyed a valuable opportunity to assign meaning to print as they pointed at pictorial illustrations whilst the childminder named the objects when looking at books.

The childminder is extremely enthusiastic and keen to provide inspirational activities for all children. She uses childcare literature and child-centred internet sites to implement interesting topics and activities to spark children's imaginations and desire to learn. For example, older children make silhouettes of a crowd to stick onto their backdrop of a glitter firework picture in order to create a true essence of bonfire night. They learn about cultural diversity through the celebration of events throughout the calendar year, such as Chinese New year where they made lanterns. The childminder has knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and uses this to guide her practice with younger children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs take high priority in this home-from-home provision. A strong working partnership with parents supports the individual care needs and delivery of service. Mutual respect, love and understanding all play an integral part of the childminder's practice. Children are exceptionally polite, courteous and respectful of the childminder and her home. They know the house rules and use social graces, such as please and thank you, without prompt. Children play an active part in their own learning. They make independent decisions in their play and the activities that they wish to participate in. They have positive levels of self-esteem and respect the opinions and actions of others because the childminder consistently praises their efforts and re-affirms their achievements, guiding their social and moral development. Although the childminder openly displays Ofsted's complaints poster she has yet to update her procedure to implement her own system for managing parental concerns in line with current legislative changes.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a conscientious practitioner who has a secure understanding of child development and the way that children learn through play. She makes full use of her childminder training, her life skills as a mother and childcare literature, such as the 'Birth to Three Matters' framework to implement practical age-appropriate activities that appeal and stimulate interest and a desire to learn. For example, she provides a balance of focused adult-led activities in addition to promoting free choice in order for children to re-affirm and practise their skills. Children feel part of an extended family and are comfortable in this well-organised and inviting environment. They confidently make independent choices in their activities and extend their own play and learning in an imaginative way. The childminder effectively uses her written procedures and routines to promote the welfare, care and learning of all the children. 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 ensure that children's attendance hours are recorded daily. Children's welfare is sustained as the childminder maintains accurate records of attendance therefore should an emergency situation arise then she would be able to use this information to verify her attendees. She was also required to ensure that the garden shed, wheelbarrow and building materials in the garden and cleaning materials stored in the bathrooms do not pose a hazard to children. Children's safety is promoted as all potential hazards have been removed. Lastly she was required to request written permission for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. Children's health care needs are maintained in the event of a medical emergency as the childminder has in place all required consents from parents for seeking emergency medical intervention in their absence.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- develop a formal fire evacuation procedure and implement a system to record the frequency of drills undertaken
- ensure there is a system in place to manage parental concerns in line with current legislative changes.

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