

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY289807
Inspection date	24 October 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 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 2004. She lives with her husband and child aged five years in the town of Hitchin in Hertfordshire. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding. 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 four children at any one time and is currently minding three children, two of whom are under five years and all attend on a part-time basis. The childminder attends local toddler groups. The family has a cat.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are nourished and their health is promoted due to the childminder's understanding of healthy eating. She encourages wholesome options such as fruit and raisins at snack time and provides meals using fresh ingredients ensuring that these are low in fats and sugar. The childminder discusses individual dietary requirements with parents and keeps a record of these

so that the needs of the children can be met. Children are cared for in a comfortable and clean home. Their health is generally promoted as there are effective hygiene procedures such as washing hands before meals or after visiting the bathroom. However, the children's health could be affected as the childminder does not frequently check items in the first aid box. This could lead to valuable time being lost in a medical emergency.

Children participate in a range of physical activities, contributing to their good health. The childminder ensures that there are regular opportunities for outdoor activities, such as walks to the school or park to play on the swings, climbing frame, slide, rockers and balancing beams. The children play football and use the small trampoline in the childminder's garden and on inclement days they play musical bumps or dance. This is helping them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical awareness. The children are beginning to understand their own physical needs, for example, they know when they need a snack or a drink. The children are able to fully participate in the activities because the childminder has a sound knowledge of child development. She provides appropriate activities and supports the children so that they have confidence to try out new skills and experiences such as walking unaided and drinking from a cup without the lid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a light, airy and generally safe environment. The childminder is aware of risks, both in and out of the house, and has taken some steps to minimise these. For example, she checks the premises for hazards before the children arrive and ensures that children practice road safety on their daily walks. However, the children's safety could be compromised as children have access to some potentially hazardous items such as unmarked low-level glass, the new fire, an uncovered drain, debris in the garden and the childminder is to check the correct positioning of the fire blanket.

Children have access to a wide range of quality toys and equipment and the childminder oversees the children's choice of toys, ensuring that they are safe and appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the child. Play materials are checked frequently and broken toys are either mended or discarded. The children's welfare is further promoted as the childminder has the required procedures and documents in place. For example, she holds current public liability insurance, has a sound understanding of child protection procedures and would know what to do should she have a concern. However, current information relating to the new child protection board has not been acquired and this could possibly lead to a delay in contacting the appropriate agency.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and interested in their play. They happily choose activities and resources independently from a wide range of stimulating play materials. These cover all areas of development and encourage the children to explore and learn about their environment. These include creative work such as drawing, reading stories, enjoying the pop up and feely books and investigating the objects in the treasure basket. The children regularly have opportunities for outdoor activities which include visits to the library for rhyme time, the farm to stroke and feed the animals and the local childminding group where they meet other children and socialise.

The childminder regularly rotated the toys to add variety ensuring that children have balanced range of opportunities, such as crafts, construction, outdoor play and imaginative games. The children enjoy pretending to cook dinner for each other, build towers with bricks and adeptly put the different shapes in the posting boxes developing their finer hand movements. Their overall development is promoted and they are encouraged to explore and extend their knowledge because the childminder has a good understanding of child development and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. She knows the children's different ways of learning and adapts her activities to accommodate the younger and older children in her care. They are offered activities and play opportunities that are thoughtfully adapted for their next stage of development such as establishing their walking skills, holding their drinking cup, socialising with their peer group and encouraging their concentration abilities. The childminder makes good use of incidental occurrence, counting how many cars, what colour toys are and naming the shapes going into the sorter. The children collect stones to make patterns with, conkers and leaves to make pictures and enjoy investigating snails through the magnifying glass. The children have a good relationship with the childminder who uses her knowledge of each child to provide first-hand experiences and to ensure that children spend their time happily and purposefully.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. The childminder makes sure that she is aware of their individual needs at placement time and is able to meet these. She keeps the parents well informed about their child's progress through daily dialogue and diaries. She ensures that the daily routine allows time for the children to play, relax and interact with other children through regular childminder toddler group visits. The children's behaviour is generally good and they are learning about playing together and sharing. The older children help the younger ones by collecting their toys and playing gently with them. The children are set consistent boundaries so that they know what is expected of them. The childminder has a good understanding of behaviour management and appropriate methods to use.

The childminder appreciates the importance of providing a range of activities and resources to promote positive images of society and increase children's understanding of this. However, children's range of activities and toys reflecting equal opportunities with regard to disabilities and multicultural awareness is limited thus restricting their full understanding and knowledge of this subject. The children are learning about their local community on routine outings to local parks, toddler group, library and shops. Although there are no children currently attending the setting who have any disabilities or learning difficulties the childminder has thought how she will provide care which includes them in the life of the home through discussing their needs with parents and making sure that she can accommodate these.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

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 organise their own play and learning. Most of the individual needs of the children are met by the childminder through her procedures to ensure that she has all relevant information. These are regularly discussed and reviewed with parents. However, the daily attendance register does not include the actual times the children attend and this could possibly

lead to misunderstandings between parents and the childminder thus jeopardising their relationship.

The children's development is promoted through the childminder's organisation of her day. She ensures that her plans include a balanced range of resources, making sure children are offered stimulating activities and opportunities, and that they are able to participate. The childminder improves her childminding practice through the use of the internet and regular visits to the childminder toddler group to see other professionals in the childcare field. This enables her to gain current information 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 make sure that hazards with reference to electrical wires, building materials, paint, bathroom toiletries, bathroom cleaning materials and access to the stairs and fireplace are safe or inaccessible to the children. She was asked to make sure that the garden is secure with reference to the side gate and potential hazards, with reference to the fence at the top of the garden and a petrol can, are inaccessible to the children. She was also asked to provide evidence that a local authority approved childminder pre-registration training course has been completed and that she had request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

The childminder has removed all the hazardous items out of reach of the children, fitted a sturdy locking device to the outside gate and all fencing is secure. She completed her local authority approved childminder pre-registration training course on 21/11/2005. The childminder has written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment for all children attending. These measures further improve the children's safety, welfare and security.

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 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):

- ensure that the first aid box is checked frequently and missing or out of date items are replaced as necessary

- ensure that hazards to children on the premises are minimised with reference to their accessing the new fire area, the low level glass on the inner doors, the uncovered drain, the wood debris in the garden and make sure that the fire blanket is fitted in line with the manufacturer's instructions
- ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- ensure that all children have access to an appropriate range of activities and resources which promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- ensure that the attendance record accurately documents 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