



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY294982
Inspection date	13 June 2005
Inspector	Christine Pettitt

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 13 months. They live close to the town centre of Hemel Hempstead, near to local parks, school and shops. The home is a two bed roomed house. All areas of the premises are used for childminding. On the ground floor children use the lounge and kitchen. The bed rooms are used for minded children to sleep and the bathroom is on the first floor.

The childminder is registered to care for three children at any one time. She currently cares for three children at varied times. The childminder walks children to places of

interest locally. She attends childminding, music and toy library groups with the children. The childminder is a member of the NCMA. She has a nursery nursing qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities, including daily walks to local parks, indoor and outdoor adventure play areas, shops and the library. This physical exercise contributes to promoting the children's good health and provides a model for a healthy life style. Children are happy, cared for and valued. This is promoted through the welcoming, caring approach of the childminder. This supports their emotional well being and encourages their confidence. The home is hygienic and well maintained. Children are routinely learning personal care. They engage in washing their hands at relevant times. Older children do this independently, without being reminded before meals. Children observe and learn from the childminder's appropriate practice regarding food hygiene, nappy changing and general hygiene care in the home.

There is a clear disease exclusion and sickness policy. The children have their own flannels, and have toothbrushes, to use after meals. This practice and the policy minimises the risk of infection spreading. The required first aid resources are available in the home and in the car. The childminder does not have a current first aid certificate, but is booked to attend a first aid course in July. The relevant accident and medication documents are kept and completed clearly. There is a brief hygiene and health policy.

Children enjoy the meals provided by the childminder. Sample written menu's show meals are healthy, nutritious and varied. Older children are becoming aware of healthy eating, due to the meals provided and discussions with the childminder. For example, a child told another child in the playground that you shouldn't eat sweets because our childminder said, they are not healthy. Children have drinks, mainly water, at regular times. Older children access drinks independently. Children enjoy having their meals together. The older children appreciate talking to the childminder during the meal and enjoy watching the younger children eating finger foods independently. Younger children have the opportunity to learn to identify foods through the childminder telling them what the food is as she gives it to them.

Children's physical skills are promoted within the routine. Children are gradually gaining control of their bodies. Walks, use of the play equipment in parks, adventure play grounds or indoor play areas are used so children benefit from exercise. In the home, during free play and attendance at a local music group there is opportunity for children's to improve their fine manipulative skills. For example, children use shape sorters and musical instruments in free play. There are times in the routine when children sleep or have a quiet time, for example they look at a book with the childminder. Sleep times are according to the needs of the child. This contributes to the well being of the child.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and supportive environment. There is a brief statement regarding safety in the health and hygiene policy. Safety measures in the home are in place. There is no written risk assessment. The childminder gives high priority to helping children understand how to keep themselves safe and to conscientiously maintaining children's safety. She has developed safety strategies to do this. For example, when taking two toddlers to the park, the children take turns to use the park equipment, one using the swing, the other remaining in the buggy until it is their turn. Children learn effective safety procedures through discussion and in practice. For example, children use road safety procedures each time they cross a road and are learning safe practice when getting in and out of the car. The children and childminder discussed horse riding safety issues during snack time. Children moved child sized furniture safely.

Children independently select activities from a range of good quality toys and play equipment which meet safety standards. The childminder carefully monitors and supervises the children's choice of toys to ensure they are suitable for their age and stage of development. Toddlers can practice walking safely as the play area is arranged so there is space to do this and for them to be able to hold on to furniture for support. Older children use safely, paint and equipment not suitable for younger children at a high table out of their reach.

Children's well being is promoted. The childminder has a clear understanding of child protection issues and procedures. She has the relevant documentation and procedures to follow. She has devised a child protection policy. The childminder has identified this as an area to gain further training. This shows her commitment and understanding of the importance of keeping children safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and confident in the childminder's home. They enjoy a varied range of exciting, stimulating activities in the home and on outings. For example, outings to farms, museums, parks, library, indoor and outdoor adventure playgrounds. This provides experiences for them to acquire new knowledge and skills. Children experience extended activities. For example, a visit to Hobby Craft to choose and pay for materials to make Easter bonnets and then making the bonnets at home. Children delight in exploring the environment together, looking at and discussing the animals, birds and flowers when on walks. The individual needs of older and younger children are met sensitively and effectively.

Older children engage in their preferred activities after school. For example, ballet and swimming. They also choose and enjoy varied creative activities, cooking, and take pleasure in helping to look after the younger children. For example, they were engaged in making birthday cards for their mother for the following day. Last week they made play dough and cakes. Children's homework needs are met. Children

approach the childminder for help to learn spellings, and to hear them read. The childminder borrows books from the library to foster the children's interest relating to current school topics. Children delight in choosing materials from the craft box to make various pictures or follow a craft idea. They choose books during a weekly visit to the library and take turns in choosing the toys borrowed from the toy library.

Younger children enjoy participating in a music group, childminding group and a toy library. These extend their experiences and promote their social skills. Children enjoy free play and choosing from a selection of play equipment accessible at their level. Children benefit from these being changed on a weekly basis to allow time for children to revisit and learn from using equipment consistently. Children explore objects placed in a low drawer in the kitchen and in treasure baskets. Children approach the childminder happily with toys to show her. Children are supported well in their learning. For example, a new drum brought at the music group encouraged sustained interest and useful interaction with the childminder. Children's language skills are encouraged through the childminder's interaction in play, she talks to them constantly, giving them explanations and encouragement. For example, a child looked at a photo of a child and tried to say his name. The childminder emphasised the name and praised him for attempting to say it. A child attempted to use a shape sorter, the childminder encouraged this, naming the shapes as they were posted. Children access books independently and with the childminder. They show sustained interest in books and know how to use them. The childminder recognises the younger children are developing towards the stage of development where she can plan themed weeks, to concentrate on extending number skills, colour recognition and letters.

Children are secure in their relations with each other and with the childminder. They are well supported in their play and relate to the childminder with warmth. Children are developing confidence and are encouraged in their self esteem through the welcoming, warm, consistent approach of the childminder.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder has a written equal opportunities and special needs policy. The policy highlights the importance of providing a safe and supportive learning environment. This enables children to have their emotional needs met and as a result to progress in all areas of development successfully. Children are relaxed and happy. Children have a growing awareness of their own identity and are finding out what they can do. This encourages their confidence to try new experiences. Children are learning about other cultures from meals and cooking activities, library books and resources from the toy library and books in the home. For example, children used chopsticks to eat a rice dish, this promoted discussion.

The childminder knows the children well and meets their individual needs extremely effectively. Children are listened to, their creative work displayed and emotional needs met warmly. This ensures children feel valued and cared for. For example, the childminder makes a point of listening to what the children have to say, after

collecting them from school. A child just woken from a sleep is cuddled on the childminder's lap, until he is ready to play. Samples of children's art work is displayed on the kitchen notice board and art work is admired when in progress. Older children take an active part in the provision. They help with caring for the younger children. For example doing up their shoes. Children respond willingly and immediately to the childminders request for help. For example, they carried small chairs and a table in to the kitchen for snack time. The needs of the older and younger children are very different. The childminder works hard and effectively to ensure that both age groups individual needs are met. This means they have the opportunity to follow their own interests, and benefit in their individual ways from the activities, outings and resources on offer.

Children are behaving very well. There is a behaviour management policy. Older children participated in devising and making a poster of 'Golden Rules', with the childminder. This is displayed in the kitchen and provides clarity and a reminder for children of the expectations of behaviour. Children ably recognise and are confident to say when others are not keeping the rules. For example, an older child commented on this when younger children were not sharing toys. Younger children are gradually learning to take turns and share. For example, when using the swing in the park, one child sits in the buggy, whilst the other is on the swing. A child shared his pieces of tomato with another child. Children respond positively to the childminder's requests. This is encouraged by the respect and affection they have for her. Behaviour management strategies vary according to the ages and understanding of the children. The childminder understands behaviour may be affected by outside influences. Children enjoy constant, genuine praise and encouragement which promotes acceptable behaviour, confidence and self esteem. For example, the children were praised and thanked for being helpful.

Children's well being is promoted by parents being informed verbally on a daily basis of their child's day. There is no written record. For example, a parent phoned to see how her child was, she was given a detailed account of the child's morning. The child's individual needs are discussed in detail, before arrangements commence. This is also ongoing on a daily basis. A portfolio containing some policies is given to new parents at the initial visits. This does not currently cover all areas. Copies of the policies are given to parents if they require this. This gives parents a view of the childminder's child care practice. Children experience a gradual introduction to the provision, visiting with parents initially and slowly extending the settling in period. This encourages children to settle in well and gain confidence in a new environment.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder is well organised. This ensures efficient and safe management of the provision and promotes the welfare of children. The children respond well to a routine where some aspects of the day are at similar times each day. For example meals and daily collection of older children from school. This gives them security in knowing what will happen next. Activities and resources are planned with the developmental needs of individual children in mind. For example the heuristic play drawer, for

children to experience and explore sensory play independently. The craft box for older children. Plans to provide themed weeks to promote learning for the younger children is in hand. The children's individual interests are acknowledged and time allowed for children to attend after school activities. This time is used efficiently with the provision of snacks and a time to look at books with younger children, while they wait for the older children. Children play safely in the home. The play space is organised to promote safety. On outings, when caring for two toddlers the childminder has developed effective safety strategies to keep children safe.

The required documentation is available, completed and organised. Accidents and medication records are detailed and recorded clearly. Parents can view the portfolio which contains relevant information, training certificates, a reference and some policies. The childminder has a confidentiality policy and keeps documentation secure. The registration certificate is displayed.

The childminder's professional approach effectively benefits the children. She has professional child care qualifications and previous childcare experience to support this. The childminder has a food hygiene certificate and is booked on to a first aid course. She intends to attend further training courses, For example, child protection. The childminder subscribes to a childcare magazine and uses these and 'Birth to Three Matters', for ideas for activities. She plans to use a children's language pack to encourage children to learn French and to make 'family books' with the children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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.
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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):

- review and extend the information for new parents to ensure they have an overview of all areas of child care practice.
- provide a daily written record of the child's day for parents.
- ensure the required first aid course is attended.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk