



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY299968
Inspection date	26 October 2005
Inspector	Kim Wailling

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.
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WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 2004. She lives with her husband, adult child and 14 year old child in St Albans Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house, one bedroom and the upstairs bathroom are used for childminding.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding four children under five and one child over five all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder uses her car to transport children to local schools, nurseries and to take children on outings. The family have two cats.

The childminder is an accredited member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and content in the care of the childminder. Their health needs are known as the childminder talks to parents and adheres to identified individual requirements. For example skin barrier cream is carefully applied to a baby's sensitive skin during a nappy change. The childminder discusses children's rest and sleep requirements with their parents and the daily routine is organised to accommodate these.

Children's good health is well promoted as the childminder follows sensible hygiene procedures such as washing her hands before and after preparing food. Parents are informed of the types of foods that their children are being offered as a copy of the weekly menu sheet is on display. Weaning requirements of babies under one are carefully discussed with their parents and new foods introduced which take account of any possible food allergies. Snack and mealtimes are relaxed and younger children are encouraged to feed themselves. Children are offered freshly prepared food, such as open cheese sandwiches and fresh fruit, which they enjoy. Drinks are available to children on a regular basis in their own individual beakers.

There are opportunities for children to practise physical skills as the setting has a range of equipment and activities such as a baby walker and an indoor ball pool. Outings to the local park are offered on a regular basis.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, safe and secure environment. Potential hazards such as children's access to the front door and stairs have been identified and appropriate measures taken to address these. Toys are kept clean and in good repair.

Minor accidents to children are managed well because the childminder holds an appropriate first aid qualification. There are first aid kits in the setting for family use. The childminder has a sound understanding of child protection issues and the procedures to follow if she had any concerns. Attention is given to helping children keep themselves safe, for example explaining to a toddler how to climb safely in and out of the indoor ball pool. Children are kept within the childminder's sight or hearing at all times.

Children are kept safe when out of the setting. The childminder ensures that children are safely seated when travelling in her car. When walking she uses a buggy with safety straps and encourages older children to hold onto the buggy. Permission is sought from parents before children are taken on outings.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and busy because they are offered a good range of experiences. The childminder and members of her family play with the children and games, such as dressing dolls and colouring in pictures, naturally evolve. There are appropriate attractive resources for babies, younger and older children for example a well stocked treasure basket, a sand tray and a range of books.

Children's learning is promoted effectively as the childminder is knowledgeable about child development. The setting is organised so that children can freely access toys. Everyday events such as counting steps are used effectively. Outings are undertaken, for example to the local children's farm and swing park which are of benefit as they offer variety and challenge.

Children are moved on in their development as the childminder takes a genuine interest in their progress. She plans and provides relevant age appropriate activities for them. For example, specific equipment such as a brightly coloured baby walker has been acquired that a non-mobile baby enjoys using. Children respond to the childminder's sense of fun and join in with singing and other activities that she instigates. Children confidently babble and chat to the childminder who listens and engages them in conversation which develops their language skills. Older children are well supported in their play and are encouraged to develop new interests.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happily settled. They benefit from the attention that the childminder and members of her close family gives them which helps them feel secure. Settling-in procedures that take account of the children's needs and wishes of parents are discussed prior to childminding commencing. Children's preferences, for example their sleep patterns and use of comforters are known and accommodated within the daily routine.

Children have the opportunity to learn about the world in which they and their families live as the childminder takes positive steps to help them. For example dolls of different skin tones are provided and used to illustrate similarities. The childminder sensitively encourages children to enjoy each other's company and to make friendships.

Children benefit from the good relationship that the childminder has established with their parents. Information about what the childminder offers is available to parents and carers before childminding commences. The childminder completes a daily care diary for younger children as well as informing parents verbally about the events of the day. The childminder's use of photographs to celebrate children's achievements with their parents is effective. At the time of the inspection visit parents reported that they felt fully involved and included in the care of their children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care is enhanced by the efficient organisation of the childminder. Policies are in place which promotes children's safety however, accurate times of children's arrival and departure are not recorded. Procedures about the setting which fosters children's well-being are shared with parents but systems for dealing with parental concerns and how to provide parents and carers with the name, address and telephone number of Ofsted are under developed. Children's progress is well monitored and shared with their parents. The childminder is aware of the benefits of continuing her professional development by accessing training and by using the local childminding network support system.

Children's welfare is given high regard as the childminder organises her time well, for example the daily routine includes time for unhurried play, relaxed mealtimes, rest, the school run and outings. This means that the children settle quickly into the childminder's care and enjoy the activities that she has to offer. Overall the needs of the children are met

Improvements since the last inspection

At the registration visit the childminder was asked to draw up an action plan to demonstrate how she would provide a suitable range of equipment, toys and activities to meet the needs of children under eight. This has been fully addressed.

The childminder was also asked to assess possible hazards to children in several areas of her home. An appropriate risk assessment was carried out by the childminder and positive steps are taken to ensure that possible hazards to children are minimised.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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):

- seek advice on the contents of the first aid boxes used for childminding purposes
- record children's arrival and departure times accurately
- review procedures for recording complaints and how to provide parents and carers with the name, address and telephone number of Ofsted.

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