



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY302058
Inspection date	13 February 2006
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 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 2005. She lives with her husband in St Albans Hertfordshire. The whole of the childminder's maisonette is used for childminding purposes.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of three children at any one time and is currently minding one child under five and two children over five, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder uses her car to collect children from school. The childminder takes children to the local parks, the local library and swimming. The family has a cat.

The childminder supports children with special educational needs and English as an additional language, although currently none attend.

The childminder is an accredited member of National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy as the childminder follows sound hygiene procedures, such as wiping down mealtime tables and providing soap and towels for children to use when washing. Children are helped to understand about simple good health and hygiene by being involved in everyday tasks such as washing lunch time dishes and by told why wiping hands before eating and preparing food is important.

Children have their health and dietary needs met well because the childminder has a good knowledge of nutrition and the importance of providing children with foods that they enjoy. Lunch, at the time of the inspection visit, consisted of pasta, accompanied by broccoli (known as green trees) and grated cheese followed by a banana. The cheese was grated into a separate bowl so the children could help themselves according to their taste. Children can access drinks freely and older children have a choice of after-school savoury snacks. Children learn about healthy foods by being involved in the making of everyday meals and cookery session.

Parents are asked to complete individual profile sheets about their children recording health concerns and possible food allergies. These are reviewed on a regular basis. The childminder takes great care to ensure that excluded ingredients, such as egg, are not present in the food she offers. Recent first aid training has been undertaken by the childminder. In addition the setting has a well stocked first aid box to deal with any minor injuries to children. However, there is no procedure in place to check that the contents of the first aid box are replenished on a regular basis.

Children are involved in physical activity on a regular basis. They use the adjoining communal gardens and visits to the local parks for exercise. The local parks have many amenities that the children enjoy such as small and large climbing frames and a clean open air sandpit. Children who enjoy swimming are taken to the local leisure centre and join in sessions with the childminder and other friends. The childminder adapts the physical activities she offers children, according to their individual requirements, for example currently a child who has recently inserted ear grommets is taken more often on visits to favourite parks to replace swimming sessions. Indoors children can use equipment such as a 'disco' mat which encourages vigorous exercise.

There are opportunities for younger and older children to rest and sleep according to their needs. There is a range of equipment for children to use for sleep, ranging from a travel cot to a lower bunk bed and a comfy sofa for rest. Children are offered activities in the afternoon, such as sharing stories and making books and cards so that they benefit from periods of quiet and relaxation.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, well maintained environment. The furniture has been arranged to create uncluttered spaces for children to play. Toys and resources are stored safely and children are encouraged to tidy away toys when they have finished playing with them to prevent possible injury to themselves and others. Potential hazards to children, for example from uncovered electric sockets, had been identified and steps taken to minimise these. A well thought out and informed emergency evacuation procedure is on open display however, children's understanding of what to do is insecure.

Children are kept safe out of doors as the childminder is vigilant and keeps the children in sight at all times. When on outings, for example to the swimming pool, the childminder teams up with another registered childminder to ensure constant supervision. When transported in the childminder's car appropriate car seats are used and the childminder takes care to ensure that all children are safety seated before starting the journey.

Children's welfare is protected as the childminder has a good understanding of child protection issues. Appropriate policies and recording procedures are in place which are shared with parents. The childminder acknowledges the importance of being confident in this area and has accessed further training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are busy and happy as there is a good range of toys and activities available to them. There are many opportunities for them to follow interests, for example making a airport runway, and acquire new skills and knowledge. At the time of the inspection visit, a pre-school child's emerging interest in writing was well fostered. Children confidently share ideas as the childminder listens carefully and shows a genuine interest in what they have to say. Children are very comfortable and happily involve the childminder in their play. This means that the childminder is able to extend children's learning through play, such as teaching them how to fasten clothing when using the well stocked dressing up box.

Children enjoy the activities on offer, older and younger children playing cooperatively together. They benefit from being taken on outings to local places of interest such as the nearby library. The daily routine allows for periods of unhurried play as well as planned activities. The childminder has a good knowledge of how children learn and ensures that older and younger children are offered activities, such as making Valentine Day cards, which are both satisfying and challenging. Children are encourage to take art and craft work home with them to share with their parents. Other activities such as the visit of the local fire officer are photographed to provide a record of events.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual preferences are taken into consideration as the childminder finds out about their likes and dislikes. She allows children to make choices and take decisions, which increase their self-esteem. Children are settled and feel comfortable in the childminder's home, which has features such as individual place mats for the children to use which increases a sense of belonging. Simple rules, such as removing shoes before entering the lounge and the importance of tidying away toys before a new game is started, are explained and adhered to by the children.

Children behave well which is encouraged by the childminder's calm and attentive approach. The childminder makes herself available to children, for example reading stories with them and sitting with them at mealtimes. Their achievements are celebrated by the use of stickers. Children have opportunities to learn about the world around them through outings and the provision of story books and role play resources.

Children are able to feel secure as the childminder has developed a good working relationship with their parents. There is frequent communication between children's parents and the childminder. Personal information about the children, for example possible allergies, is discussed and reviewed so that children's individual needs are met. The childminder offers a flexible service to parents so that continuity of care for children is maintained. The childminder provides information about the service she offers before childminding commences.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the efficient organisation of the childminder. Comprehensive policies, records and procedures are in place which promotes the children's well-being. Children's enjoyment is well fostered as the childminder organises her time very well and ensures that older children who attend on a part-time after school basis are offered a variety of experiences, such as involvement in art and craft projects. Children feel comfortable and at ease in the childminder's home. This means that they are confident to initiate their own play as well as enjoy being involved in more planned and structured activities.

Overall the needs of the children are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There has been no complaints 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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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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):

- check children's understanding of the emergency evacuation procedure
- establish a procedure to ensure that the contents of the first aid box are replenished.

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