



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY315537
Inspection date	03 April 2006
Inspector	Kelly Eyre

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 September 2005. She lives with her husband and 2 children aged 7 and 11 years, in Letchworth, Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a first floor bedroom available for babies and young children to have undisturbed rest. Children have access to the fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 5 children at any one time and is currently minding 3 children under 5 during the day on a part-time basis. The childminder is able to walk to local schools to take and collect children. She attends

the local toddler group. The family has no pets.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean home. Their health is effectively promoted as there are practical daily hygiene procedures, such as washing hands before meals and after playing in the garden. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of the relevance of these practices because the childminder generally discusses these issues with them. Inconsistent discussion of these issues and of healthy eating affects children's overall knowledge and understanding of this area. The children's dietary needs are met as the childminder discusses individual requirements with parents and keeps a record of children's likes and dislikes, ensuring that any special diets are observed. Children are offered home-cooked meals which include fresh vegetables, helping to promote their growth and development.

Children participate in a variety of physical activities, which contribute to the promotion of their good health. They enjoy playing in the garden, making use of a range of toys and equipment such as the swings, football goal, hoops, balls, and ride-on toys, enabling them to develop control of their bodies and improve their skills in these areas. Their physical play and development is continued indoors because the childminder makes sure that there is space for activities such as putting up the pop-up tent. Younger children's development is promoted because the childminder has a sound knowledge of child development, encouraging children in the next stage, for example, ensuring that there is appropriate space for babies to practise pulling themselves up to standing safely.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and safe environment. Their daily safety is given a high priority and the childminder is aware of potential risks. She carries out daily checks before children arrive to make sure that all areas are safe. Children are therefore able to move around safely and independently, both indoors and out. They are offered a wide range of toys and play materials and are able to make choices about their play because the childminder has sorted these into appropriate categories, labelling them with words and pictures and ensuring that they are easily accessible. The childminder sensitively monitors children's choice to make sure that toys are stimulating and appropriate for their ages and developmental stages. An example of this is a young child choosing puzzles and being gently directed to ones which will offer challenge but will be achievable.

Children are building up their knowledge about keeping themselves safe. They are well-informed as the childminder consistently offers them clear explanations, enabling

them to understand issues and make decisions. She talks with them about issues such as road safety, often using appropriate books to aid children's understanding. Children are also very clear about what to do in an emergency situation because the childminder discusses this with them but does this sensitively so that children are aware of dangers but still feel secure. An example of this is a young child confidently explaining the procedures to follow in the event of a fire or accident to the childminder, reciting the emergency services phone number and the address they need to come to. Children's welfare is promoted as the childminder has a sound knowledge of her responsibilities regarding child protection and ensures that she has all relevant information to enable her to record, report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are secure and settled, confidently choosing activities and moving around the childminder's home. They have very good relationships with the childminder who joins in enthusiastically with their play, helping them to feel welcome and valued. They are happy and spend their time purposefully because the childminder is confident in responding to their needs and requests, quickly adapting planned activities to accommodate these. An example of this is children asking to watch a particular film during the school holidays, and the childminder gathering play materials to complement the film and then re-organising the play dough activity so that this also links with the theme of the film. Children have opportunities to play and socialise with other children through regular attendance at a local toddler group.

Children enjoy a wide variety of activities including music sessions, construction, reading, educational games, outdoor play and crafts such as making Easter cards and papier mache dinosaurs. Their development is promoted and they are encouraged to extend their knowledge because the childminder has a clear understanding of child development. She makes good use of open questions and suggestions to encourage children to think further and extend their play. Activities are also well adapted so that they suit the needs and interests of individual children. An example of this is children playing with play dough, where the younger child is encouraged to name shapes and colours, whilst the older child is encouraged to experiment with different sized pieces of play dough to see which sizes make the dinosaur balance best, and to use a ruler to measure the dinosaur's tail. The childminder pays attention to what children want to do and makes effective use of opportunities to extend their knowledge. However, there is currently no structured way of consistently extending learning or of ensuring all areas of development are covered and children's natural curiosity further promoted.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are respected as individuals and the childminder makes sure that she is aware of any individual needs and is able to meet these. Their behaviour is good and they play well together, sharing toys and play materials. They are set consistent

boundaries and are aware of what is expected of them because the childminder has a clear understanding of behaviour management and appropriate methods to use. Children are offered clear explanations so that they understand the implications of their behaviour and can begin to take responsibility for this.

Children's awareness of society and their community is promoted through a range of activities, including the celebration of festivals such as Easter and Christmas, and the use of local amenities such as parks, shops and the toddler group. Their understanding and knowledge of the wider world is promoted because the childminder ensures that they have regular access to a range of resources, such as books, play figures and musical instruments, which give them information and positive images. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress and activities through regular discussions with the childminder.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, the needs of all children attending are met. The childminder organises her work efficiently, enabling children to feel comfortable, relaxed and at home. They are able to initiate their own play as toys and resources are clearly organised and accessible. The childminder has organised her home so that a room has been set aside as a play room, ensuring that children have space to play and helping them to feel secure. The individual requirements and details of the children are documented and the childminder ensures that she has all relevant information to enable her to meet their needs consistently. However, there is no written parental permission for the childminder to take photographs of the children, which could lead to misunderstandings between the childminder and parents.

Children's overall development is promoted because the childminder pays attention to the organisation of her daily work, ensuring that children are offered a range of activities and play opportunities. Their health, safety and welfare are promoted by her clear planning and organisation of all paperwork.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

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

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):

- further develop children's knowledge and understanding of the relevance of hygiene practices and of healthy eating
- further develop children's activities and play opportunities to ensure that all areas of learning are covered and that children are challenged and have opportunities to build on their natural curiosity as learners
- obtain written parental permission to take photographs of minded children.

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