



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY331272
Inspection date	07 September 2006
Inspector	Sarah Catherine Jex
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 2006. She lives with her husband and two children aged three and five years in a village near Hitchin in 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 children to have undisturbed rest. Children have access to the fully enclosed rear garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and does not provide overnight care. She currently cares for five children for various hours and days of the week.

The childminder walks to the local school and pre-school to take and collect children.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn about the importance of hygiene and personal care. They are cared for in a very clean and welcoming home. Encouraged by regular routines, discussion and the examples set by the childminder they are aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They know why they must wash their hands after playing in the garden or using the toilet and before they eat. Children are protected from infection because the childminder is well informed about children's health care matters and has procedures regarding children who become ill or have been diagnosed with a contagious or infectious condition. She contacts the parents immediately if children are ill, protecting other children from infection. A system is in place to record children's accidents or administered medications and parents would be requested to countersign the entry to ensure they are fully aware of the incident to their child. The childminder has a good knowledge of first aid procedures and is currently awaiting to complete the course which she is booked on. Therefore children's welfare is not fully protected at present.

Children are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. Children have access to drinking water throughout the day and eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. The childminder takes account of the wishes of parents and works with them closely to provide nutritious snacks and meals that appeal to the children as well as meeting their dietary needs.

Children enjoy activities which contribute to their health. They play in the garden, walk to and from school and visit local parks regularly to benefit from the fresh air. Children experience different types of play to enhance and develop their physical skills. They learn to balance and co-ordinate their bodies. They become adept at using tools, utensils and equipment. Children feed themselves. They draw and colour to help with pencil control. Children use their fingers to push buttons, pull levers and turn knobs on the technology and home play toys and sort shapes to put into the shape sorter.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe home. Risks are identified and minimised to keep them free from harm. They move around safely and freely choosing play from a range of developmentally appropriate toys and resources. This encourages their independence and confidence. There is space to play, explore and move independently and the childminder is alert in her supervision. Children learn to protect themselves. They use restraints on the low chair, follow crossing codes to cross the road and are aware not to approach strangers or dogs that they do not know. The childminder uses sensitive reminders to keep them safe in the home, reminding them not to run and to be careful in the garden. An emergency escape plan has been devised to get out of the house quickly in the event of a fire. However, the children's and childminder's knowledge of emergency evacuation is restricted as she has not practised the written procedure, therefore this compromises their safety.

Children have access to a suitable range of toys and equipment and individual needs are mostly met. They are able to freely choose the available resources from storage boxes at child height. Children are encouraged and are beginning to help tidy up when finished playing. This helps the children to learn to look after things and to keep themselves and others from tripping up and hurting themselves. Children experience different play environments due to the childminder incorporating outings within the daily routine to the local park and the wider community.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. The childminder is fully aware of her responsibility to protect the children in her care, and has a secure understanding of child protection in line with local procedures

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and contented as they take part in a range of activities. They have formed good relationships that enable them to feel safe and have a good sense of belonging. The childminder is aware of the children's developmental needs and is helping them to develop their personalities by giving them access to a suitable range of developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor activities. The childminder is aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework but does not have a copy. Children have opportunities to explore activities by the childminder allowing them time and space to do so. For example, when playing the spotty dog game the children are encouraged to take turns, to count the spots on the dice and match them with the dog with the right number of spots. The childminder was on hand to offer guidance and reassurance. The childminder effectively interacts with the children during their play and her kind warm approach encourages the children to respond to her. This helps the children feel relaxed and at ease in their environment.

Children's social and language development is being enhanced by the interaction with the childminder at their own level. They are beginning to develop their communication skills as they attract the attention of the childminder who responds to their sounds and single words during play. For example, when playing with a variety of wooden toys by mouthing and manipulating them with their hands and feet the child was making sounds and gesturing that they were enjoying the experience. The childminder clearly knows the child well as she was able to decipher these gestures and language, thus avoiding the child becoming despondent and frustrated. This allowed the child to continue to play. Children have opportunities to socialise with others as they visit friends and enjoy trips in the local community. Outings to the local park are arranged within her daily routine where children benefit from new experiences and can explore new areas of interest, particularly exploring their physical capabilities and discovering nature.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder has a positive attitude and provides the children with a balanced view of the wider world. She helps them gain an understanding and awareness of diversity as they access

a range of resources such as books, dolls, dressing up clothes. All children are valued and treated as individuals and are able to take part in all the activities.

Children are well-behaved and respond to the childminder's clear guidance and praise. They know and accept the realistic boundaries in place and this impacts positively on their behaviour. Children are beginning to know what is expected of them and they are encouraged by having simple explanations when being asked to do something. Through gentle discussion and reassurance the children are beginning to understand and appreciate the feelings of others. This has a positive impact on the children's self-esteem, confidence and behaviour.

Children benefit from a strong partnership between the childminder and parents who exchange information frequently. The childminder works hard to meet their individual needs and ensures children follow their daily routine which is established with parents. They have daily discussions and the childminder keeps a diary to record the achievements and routines of the younger children. This helps keep parents informed of how their child's needs are being met and their developmental progress. Parents are not fully informed about the how to make a complaint nor does the childminder have a system in place to record or share appropriate action regarding a complaint. This could potentially compromise children's well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children's needs are met through generally effective organisation and communication with parents. Space and equipment is prepared so that children can access resources easily and independently. This enables them to make choices about their activities and play safely. A balance of child led activities and organised play ensure children have a range of different enjoyable experiences whilst they are with the childminder. They benefit from routines which make them feel secure and relaxed. Children play, eat, sleep and rest as they need to.

The childminder is generally organised with her documentation and records these are used effectively in most areas to promote the welfare of the children. The childminder is aware of keeping her records up to date and maintaining ratios at all times. This enables her to support the children's individual needs. Overall, the childminder meets the needs of all the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable. First inspection since registration.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have 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 aware 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):

- devise a system to record any complaints and make details available to parents
- obtain a copy of 'Birth to three matters' framework
- ensure children develop an understanding of the fire evacuation procedures and to provide evidence of this in your practice

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