



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY336262
Inspection date	12 March 2007
Inspector	Paula Jane Hayhow
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 partner and three children, one of whom is an adult. The other two children are aged three years. The family live in a village, close to the town of Dunstable, in Bedfordshire. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding except for one of the bedrooms upstairs. There is a fully enclosed garden and a park available for outdoor play. The local schools and shops are within walking distance.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of two children at any one time and is currently minding one child under five on a part-time basis. The childminder regularly attends the local toddler group. The family has a dog.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well nourished and their health is promoted due to the childminder's good knowledge and understanding of healthy eating. They are offered nutritious meals and snacks which the childminder prepares using a balanced range of fresh ingredients. The childminder limits the children's intake of salt, fat and sugar, for example, dividing one bag of crisps between all the children, using drinks with no added sugar and providing plain wholemeal biscuits with dried fruit for snack time. The childminder discusses individual dietary requirements with parents and keeps an accurate record of these so that any particular needs, likes or dislikes of the children can be met. Children are cared for in an airy, well maintained home where the premises is cleaned daily to prevent the spread of infection. The children's health is promoted as there are good hygiene procedures in place such as washing hands thoroughly after using the bathroom and routinely putting hands over mouths when coughing. The childminder discusses with the children the relevance of this thus encouraging their understanding of the importance of keeping themselves healthy.

Children participate in a wide range of physical activities, contributing to their good health. The childminder ensures that there are daily opportunities for walks from school or the park, as well as outdoor activities in the garden where children have opportunities to use the slide, bikes and play co-operative games such as football and bouncing balls with precision. On inclement days the children have opportunities to join in with indoor bowls, bean bag games, hide and seek and colour musical statues. This helps children develop control of their bodies, and improve their physical awareness. Children are able to participate in the activities because the childminder has a good knowledge of child development. She provides appropriate activities and supports the children well so that they have confidence to try out new experiences such as allowing the ladybird to walk over their hands and gently putting it outside.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, light and child-orientated environment. The childminder has set up a designated area for the children which contains their play materials stored in low and easily accessible units and boxes. There are samples of the children's work and colourful posters displayed for both children and parents to see. The premises is generally safe so the children are able to move around independently and freely. The childminder is aware of risks, both in and out of the house, and has taken some steps to minimise these. For example, she checks the premises for hazards before the children arrive and teaches them the rules of road safety. The children know they must 'stop, look and listen' and have enjoyed making a poster relating to this. The children practise their road safety routine on their walks around the village. However, children's safety is compromised as they have access to hazardous items such as antibacterial spray and the new pond. The children do not have opportunities to practise house evacuation which limits their understanding of what to do should there be a fire.

The children use safe and stimulating resources and equipment. The childminder changes these every two days to add variety. She supervises the children's choice of toys and activities, ensuring that they are safe and appropriate for the age and developmental stage of each child. The play equipment is checked regularly for safety and suitability and children are able to independently select activities from a wide range of quality toys and equipment. The children's welfare is further promoted as the childminder has the required procedures and documents in place, for example, she holds current public liability insurance and has a sound understanding of child protection procedures and would know what to do should she have a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are confident and interested in their play, happily choosing activities and resources independently. The play area is set up with appropriate play materials for the children which are changed regularly to add challenge and interest. These cover all areas of development and encourage the children to explore and learn about their environment such as craft activities like play dough, sticking and drawing. The children have a good relationship with the childminder who joins in enthusiastically with their play and demonstrates that she enjoys her time with them. They also have opportunities to socialise with other children through regular attendance at the local toddler group. The childminder informally plans for the children and ensures that all activities are stimulating and appropriate for the age and ability of the children attending. The children are learning through play and daily routines such as learning to write their names, listening to stories linked with different letters of the alphabet, recognising letters sometimes with the support of a picture, for example, 'f' for fireman. The children count in a meaningful way, for example assessing how many children are there for snack time and collecting the correct number of cups needed. This is engaging the children in practical maths and problem solving.

The children come to the childminder to ask questions or if they want help. She uses her knowledge of child development to respond to all their queries by giving simple and clear explanations, increasing their understanding of their environment and the wider world. She adapts activities so that they promote children's understanding, ensuring that children spend their time purposefully. For example, the children enjoy playing games using technology such as the 'monkey game' which promotes their understanding of colour or the animal sounds game where children love to guess what animal is making which sound. The children's independence is fostered as they freely make choices about play materials and are encouraged to hang their coats on their pegs or put their shoes on. They are also involved in homely activities such as making and carrying the sandwiches out to the impromptu picnic or collecting the bowls up after snack time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. The childminder ensures that she is aware of the children's individual needs and meets these, for example, they have a flexible daily routine which allows time for them to play with various activities and enjoy the garden or the local

park. Parents are kept informed about how their children are progressing and developing through daily dialogue. They are informed of the childminder's practice through a portfolio which gives details of the family and explains the policies and procedures the childminder operates. The children show care and consideration for the childminder and each other learning about sharing and turn-taking through games and joint activities. Their behaviour is good and they are confident within the childminder's home, happily making choices about their play. This is reinforced by the childminder's good understanding of the importance of setting consistent and appropriate boundaries for all children.

The childminder appreciates the importance of providing a range of activities and resources to promote positive images of our society and increase children's understanding of this. However, the toy resources are few and this limits the children's awareness of the wider world. The children learn about their local community on routine outings to the park and walks from school where they can see the grass cutter or watch the road works in operation. Although there are no children currently attending the setting who have any particular needs the childminder has thought through how she will provide care which includes them in the life of the home through discussing their needs with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, children's needs are met. The childminder organises all aspects of her work effectively, helping the children to feel comfortable, relaxed and at home. They are secure and confident within the childminder's home, independently selecting their activities and enjoying their time with her. The individual needs of the children are soundly met by the childminder through her procedures to ensure that she has all relevant information on the children. The childminder ensures that the toys are stimulating, easily accessible and meets the intellectual needs of the children attending. The children's particular needs are met by the childminder through her procedures to ensure that she has all relevant information about them.

The childminder has completed relevant training courses such as an approved childminding course and is currently undertaking her first aid courses. All persons living on the premises have been checked for their suitability and the childminder is vigilant in ensuring that she supervises the children at all times. The children's overall development is promoted through the childminder's planning and organising of her daily work, which ensures that children are offered a range of stimulating activities and opportunities and that all are able to participate.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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):

- ensure that hazards to children on the premises are minimised with reference to the uncovered pond, the accessibility of the antibacterial spray and improve fire safety by practising regular house evacuations
- ensure that parents have current information with reference to who they should contact in the event of a complaint and improve the toy resources to reflect equality of opportunity and children's understanding of the wider world.

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