

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY340631
Inspection date	28 March 2007
Inspector	Paula Durrant
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 registered in 2006. She lives with her three children, aged 12, nine years and fourteen months, in a house in Welwyn Garden City. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's home is used for childminding, with the exception of the upstairs bathroom. There is an enclosed garden for outdoor play. The family has a pet cat. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of three children at any one time. She is currently caring for two children, one aged five years and another child of 21 months. All of the children in attendance are part-time. The childminder takes and collects children from the local school. She makes full use of community based amenities such as local parks, lakes and parent and toddler groups. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident as the childminder rigorously adheres to environmental health guidance. For example, the premises are maintained to a high level of cleanliness, food is stored appropriately and surfaces where

food preparation takes place are cleansed with antibacterial solutions prior to use. Comprehensive written health and hygiene procedures support the childminder in her practice. For example, children who are unwell or display symptoms of communicable diseases are discouraged from attending in line with stipulated exclusion periods. Children wash their hands in line with the daily routine. They understand the purpose of why they complete this task as discussions about bacteria and germs are frequently held. This means that the potential for cross-contamination is effectively minimised.

Children receive a nutritious balanced diet. The childminder is flexible in the provision of meals in line with parental preference. Current practice is that children have a light lunch midday comprising of a sandwich with optional fillings in addition to a home cooked meal in the evening. All meals comply with individual dietary needs. Children stay well-hydrated as drinks are offered routinely throughout the day. Water is preferential as the childminder feels that this does not affect children's diet or damage their teeth.

Children take part in regular physical activity. They have access to a secure and safe garden area which is suitably equipped with a range of challenging resources to develop increased control and coordination. They also participate in regular walks in and around the local community and access amenities such as parks and activity centres. Children rest and are active in accordance to their needs. Younger children sleep in line with home care routines whilst older children sit quietly looking at books or watching child-centred television programmes to recuperate their energy levels.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe family home where all necessary safety precautions remain in place. The childminder is highly vigilant undertaking daily checks of the home prior to children's attendance. Children remain in sight and hearing at all times. For example, they are accompanied upstairs to the toilet facilities or when accessing the kitchen.

Children access a diverse range of resources that are suitably maintained. The childminder abides to manufacturers recommendations providing age-appropriate equipment that holds a recognised safety kite mark. Children learn to keep themselves safe as the childminder explains house rules and road safety when out. For example, children know not to climb on the sofa as they may fall and hurt themselves and to sit down when eating as there is a potential to choke on undigested food. They know to hold an adults hand alongside busy roads and to stop and wait until the road is clear before crossing. Children's safety is maintained in the event of an emergency evacuation as there are clear written procedures to be followed which are practised regularly with the children. These are also recorded for reference of their frequency on the emergency plan.

Children are safeguarded as they are cared for by a suitable adult who has a clear understanding of child development. The childminder has completed vetting checks and demonstrates a strong knowledge of child protection. Formal training in this aspect of care supports the childminder in recognising signs and symptoms of abuse and on acting on information gained. She has a clear understanding of how and where to report concerns in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board committee procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are extremely settled in the childminder's care. They freely access her for affection and to have their needs met. For example, a young child backs into the childminder to sit on her lap for a cuddle whilst looking at the story book of 'Everyone's hungry'. This demonstrates a strong bond between child and adult. The childminder is highly intuitive to the children in her care. For example, the childminder spontaneously bursts into song as she responds to a child who has put on bunny ears. The child immediately follows the direction of the actions of the song 'hop little bunny' as they lie down to sleep and jump up when the bunny is awake. The childminder knows this is a favourite song for the child, therefore she repeats this over and over until the child becomes disinterested.

Children benefit from a wide range of practical activities. The childminder is flexible in the provision of her daily routine taking her lead from the children. Although she plans some aspects of what she is going to do, she recognises that the moods and preferences of the children on that day may not always be in line with her intentions. Current care of two very young children means that play is highly sporadic and intermittent as the children's levels of concentration are low in line with their age and stage of development. The childminder therefore allows the children the opportunity to make independent choices in their selection of play materials and uses this to draw learning from spontaneous events as she sits alongside them making use of open-ended questions to extend language and mathematical concepts. For example, whilst playing with a floor puzzle the childminder reaffirmed the name of the animal so that the child could repeat the word back to her. She also extended children's understanding of the experience through making the noise that the animal makes in addition to making use of the situation to introduce colour recognition. The childminder has a sound awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework which she uses to guide her in her practice.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs take high priority in this home-from-home provision. A strong working partnership with parents supports the individual care needs and delivery of service. Mutual respect, love and understanding all play an integral part of the childminder's practice. Children are exceptionally polite, courteous and respectful of the childminder and her home. They know the house rules and use social graces such as please and thank you without prompt.

Children play an active part in their own learning. They make independent decisions in their play and the activities that they wish to participate in. They have positive levels of self-esteem and respect the opinions and actions of others because the childminder consistently praises their efforts and reaffirms their achievements, guiding their social and moral development. Children learn about the wider world as they access resources that reflect positive images and participate in cultural celebrations throughout the year.

The childminder openly displays Ofsted's complaints poster and has devised and implemented a procedure for managing parental concerns in line with current legislative changes which has also been shared with parents. This remains empty.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a conscientious practitioner who has a secure understanding of child development and the way that children learn through play. She makes full use of her childminder training, her life skills as a mother and childcare literature, such as the 'Birth to Three Matters' framework to implement practical age-appropriate activities that appeal and stimulate interest and a desire to learn. For example, she provides a balance of focused adult-led activities in addition to promoting free choice in order for children to reaffirm and practise their skills. Children very much feel part of an extended family and are comfortable in this well-organised and inviting environment. They confidently make independent choices in their activities and extend their own play and learning in an imaginative way. The childminder effectively uses her written procedures and routines to promote the welfare, care and learning of all the children. Although the childminder maintains a vast majority of required records in compliance with the National Standards, due to the children's continued repetitive hours of attendance the childminder has not maintained her register. This means that children's attendance is currently not recorded. This is an oversight by the childminder as she has in place a system for managing this. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the first inspection since registration.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 good. 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 a record is maintained of children's times of arrival and departure.

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