

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY344071
Inspection date	22 October 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 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 2006. She lives with her partner and three children aged 11, four and one who is under a year. The childminder lives in the town of Potters Bar, in Hertfordshire. The ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding. The garden is out of bounds but there are three parks available for outdoor play. The local schools and shops are within walking distance.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently minding one child aged under five years who attends on a part-time basis. The childminder attends the local toddler group. The family has goldfish as pets.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children participate in a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. The childminder ensures that there are daily opportunities for walks to and from the shops, local fields and parks where the children can run and play ball games or use the swings, rocker

and climbing ropes. They regularly have opportunities to attend the toddler groups to use climbing apparatus, tunnels or push buggies, negotiating between people and furniture adeptly. On inclement days the children have opportunities to dance to music or learn how to throw soft balls with precision into hoops. This helps children develop control of their bodies, building on their coordination skills to improve their physical abilities. Children are able to participate in the activities because the childminder has a good knowledge of child development and how to develop children's physical abilities. She provides appropriate activities and supports the children well so that they have confidence to try out new skills such as balancing bricks into towers.

Children are well nourished and their health is promoted due to the childminder's good understanding of healthy eating. They are offered nutritious meals and snacks which the childminder prepares using a balanced range of fresh ingredients which includes options low in salt, additives, fats and sugar, such as jacket potatoes, pasta meals, fruit and vegetables. The childminder discusses individual dietary requirements with parents and keeps an accurate record of these so that any particular needs of the children can be met. Children are cared for in a clean, well-ordered home. The childminder cleans the home regularly paying particular attention to areas such as the kitchen and bathroom to ensure that children are protected from the spread of infection. Their health is further promoted as there are good hygiene procedures such as washing hands before meals, after using the bathroom and stroking animals. Each child has their own towel so as to cut down any possible cross-contamination. However, children's health could be affected as the first aid box does not contain all items recommended on the first aid training and this could lead to a possible delay in treating a child effectively in the event of an accident.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and generally safe environment and are therefore able to move around independently and freely. Risks of accidental injury are minimised because the childminder is vigilant and has thought about her work in order to reduce potential hazards. She has various safety pamphlets and has developed policies and procedure relating to the children's safety which she can refer to when needed. She carries out daily house checks before the children arrive to ensure that they cannot access any hazards. She actively teaches the children the importance of road safety and reminds them of the Green Cross Code when using the zebra crossings and standing at the kerb. However, children's safety is affected as they have access to hazardous items in the under sink, hall cupboards and to the kettle.

The children use safe resources and equipment and the childminder makes sure that these are stimulating and appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the children attending. Children are able to independently select activities from a wide range of quality toys and equipment because the childminder has arranged the toys in low units and toys boxes for easy availability. The childminder supervises the children's choice of toys and has graded the toys into differing abilities which ensures that children can access appropriate play materials. The children's welfare is further promoted because the childminder has a good understanding of child protection procedures and would know what action to take should she have a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and have settled in well. The children's knowledge is being actively developed through the activities and opportunities offered. The childminder informally plans for the children she cares for and uses the input from the 'Birth to three matters' framework when appropriate. The children have built up good relationships with the childminder who joins in enthusiastically with their play and demonstrates that she is there to support and help develop their skills. The children also have opportunities to socialise with other children through regular attendance at toddler groups. The childminder is good at developing projects linked to the children's interests, for example, her placement loves the fish and enjoys the daily routine of feeding them and as there is a young baby in the family she has organised activities linked to caring for babies such as imaginative home care, shopping, feeding and putting dolly to bed. This is developing opportunity for the children to learn about how to care for young and vulnerable beings.

The childminder is particularly good at responding to the children's responses and queries giving clear reasons and explanations, therefore increasing their understanding of their environment and the wider world. She spontaneously uses play situations to aid learning such as counting cars, recognising the red bag or making the animals sound in tune with the animal farmyard game. The children's independence is developed as they make choices about toys, books, activities and sing rhymes. The play area is set up to enable the children to easily access their own learning and play because toys boxes and units are positioned low for easy reaching. The children are encouraged to explore and learn about their environment through the use of a wide range of activities that cover all areas of development and the childminder rotates her resources to provide variety. These include creative work like drawing, play dough, stories and outdoor activities such as nature walks to the park and fields which incorporate looking for the birds and collecting leaves. The childminder is able to use her knowledge of child development to ensure that the activities available promote children's learning. She encourages them to spend their time purposefully and to learn through play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are respected as individuals and their particular needs are identified and documented at placement time. There is a gentle settling-in procedure which enables parents and children to become familiar with the childminder's practice and her home. The childminder has a positive relationship with the parents keeping them informed of their child's progress through the use of daily dialogue and communication book. Although there are no children currently attending the setting who has any disability and/or learning difficulty the childminder has thought through how she will provide care which includes them in the life of the home. This will be accomplished through discussions of their needs with parents at placement time and ongoing dialogue.

The children's behaviour is good and they are learning about sharing and turn-taking, for example, taking turns with the childminder to build a tower of bricks. The childminder has a good understanding of behaviour management and appropriate methods to use. She is calm and gently responds to any issue with encouraging support and clear explanations. For example, the children are told why the fish only need to be fed once a day; she distracts them away but she ensures they understand the reason why. The childminder appreciates the importance of providing a range of activities and resources to promote positive images of society and increase

children's understanding of this. The children are learning about their local community on routine outings to the local parks, shops, school, toddler group and sports centre.

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 confident and can therefore organise and access their own play and learning. 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 relating to them, such as their likes and dislikes regarding food and their daily sleeping patterns. However, children's arrival and departure times are not accurately recorded and some policies and procedures are not in line with current publications. This could lead to misunderstandings between parents and the childminder which could affect their relationships and the children's welfare.

The children's overall development is promoted through the childminder's informal planning and organising of her daily work, which ensures that children are offered a wide range of stimulating activities and opportunities. She has completed relevant training, such as first aid and the approved childminding registration course. 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.

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 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 the contents of the first aid box are checked frequently and replaced as necessary

- ensure that hazards to children on the premises are minimised with reference to the kettle, children's access to the contents in the under sink and hall cupboards
- review information shared with parents to include the changes set out in the October 2005 Addendum to the National Standards for under 8's day care and childminding and make sure that the attendance record accurately documents the actual times the children attend.

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