

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY344368
Inspection date	14 June 2007
Inspector	Hilary Preece
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 husband and two children aged seven and three years in St Albans, Hertfordshire. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently minding two children under five and one child over five after school on a part time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. She runs a local parent/toddler group. The family has a cat and goldfish. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well nourished and lead healthy lifestyles. They enjoy fresh fruit, raisins or rice cakes for snack and take an active part in choosing and preparing their foods. Carefully planned menus are displayed for parents to show them what meals their children eat. Children enjoy

making healthy choices when selecting their favourite fruits for snack or sandwich fillings when making 'Danish' sandwich lunches. Children understand the importance of good hygiene. They enthusiastically wash their hands before eating and after painting or getting dirty in the garden. Some effective practices promote good hygiene, such as using individual bed linen and colour coded towels to minimise the spread of infections. Opportunities are used during personal care routines to reinforce why it is important to wash away germs.

Children are fit and active. They have many opportunities to walk, run and play outside in the fresh air. They confidently explore a wide range of physical play apparatus in the garden and enjoy ball games in the local parks. Children rest or sleep according to their individual routines. They receive cuddles and comfort when they are tired or upset and are helped to understand their feelings. This helps develop their emotional well-being.

Children receive appropriate care if they are sick or hurt because the childminder has completed a first aid course and follows appropriate guidelines for treatment. She keeps thorough records of children's health issues and shares these with parents. This ensures children's individual health needs are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have plenty of space in which to play and explore their surroundings. Space is used creatively to allow children to sleep comfortably in individual bedrooms, take part in messy play and use the outside area for different purposes. The premises are secure and hazards have been minimised to ensure children can play safely. The childminder carries out daily checks around the home and is now aware that these should be carried out consistently to maintain a safe environment. Children have easy access to a wide range of interesting resources. These are arranged thoughtfully to encourage children to be independent and make choices. Regular checks are made on toys and equipment to ensure they are safe, clean and appropriate for the children.

Children develop awareness of how to keep safe. They are reminded how to master coming down the climbing frame ladder safely and to sit sensibly on their chairs. They learn through meaningful experiences about the danger of fire and how they can help keep themselves safe in an emergency. They visit the fire station, discuss the dangers of playing with matches and practise the emergency evacuation drill. Safe boundaries are set for children when they are out and about so they develop an awareness of road safety.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because the childminder clearly understands her responsibilities with regard to child protection. She has attended training workshops on child protection to give her a sound understanding of issues and has developed well documented procedures to follow in the event of any concerns she may have.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well. Their individual needs and care routines are met because the childminder works closely with their parents. Children are encouraged to be very independent. Appropriate equipment is provided to enable them to accomplish tasks for themselves, such as cutting up their fruit, making sandwiches and washing their hands with minimal help. They are praised for

their effort and enjoy special reward stickers for certain achievements. This develops their confidence and self-esteem.

Children take part enthusiastically in play and activities and are busily engaged at all times. Children experience a wide range of activities that support their development and learning. They enjoy regular outings to the local toddler group, which helps develop their social skills alongside other children. They investigate the natural world by planting tomatoes and pumpkins in the garden and use their senses to explore sand, water and corn flour play. Children are encouraged to be creative with paint and chalks. They observe changes when colours are mixed together and experiment with different types of brushes and rollers. They make marks with chalks on the ground, which helps develop later writing skills.

Children confidently express their imagination and creativity through music, dance and dressing up. They negotiate together to play musical instruments and perform disco dancing. Children's learning and thinking is developed through everyday situations. For example, the childminder skilfully encourages problem solving as children match up pairs of socks and challenges their thinking with questions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals and equal attention is given to ensuring they are happy and their needs met. They are developing awareness of the needs of others as they learn to share toys and realise the consequences of their actions. Children are becoming aware of the wider world and its people through some interesting resources and activities. They eat crispy duck and noodles with chopsticks at Chinese New Year and dress up in multicultural dressing up clothes. They share books that help them value the fact that everyone is different. Appropriate procedures have been considered to ensure children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their needs met.

Children are beginning to understand responsible behaviour because routines are planned to encourage them to be helpful. They enjoy helping to wash up the paint pots and brushes after use or setting the table for meals. This develops their self-esteem as they make a positive contribution to the setting. Appropriate strategies are used to manage unwanted behaviour, such as distraction and explaining to children what is acceptable. Any sensitive issues are discussed with parents but there is no facility for recording incidents of behaviour. This means, in some circumstances, that behavioural issues may not be fully addressed.

Children's needs are met because the childminder has established good relationships with parents and carers. They receive some comprehensive information about the setting at the start of the agreement and further information is displayed on the parents' notice board. This ensures they understand the setting's policies and procedures. Personal information about their children's daily activities and well-being is recorded in brief daily diaries and through discussion, so they are aware of their children's progress. The views of parents are valued and feedback sought through useful parent questionnaires. This helps the childminder to develop the care she provides and work with mutual respect for parents and carers. A formal complaints procedure is provided should there be any issues of concern.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder organises her resources and time well to provide children with a stimulating environment and many opportunities for children to learn through play and make a positive contribution. She carefully ensures attention and support is given to meeting all the children's needs and plans appropriate routines for younger children and those that attend after school. The childminder has regard for the 'Birth to three matters' framework and Foundation Stage curriculum to provide age-appropriate activities for children.

Children's health, safety and enjoyment are supported by some robust policies and procedures that are clearly documented and shared with parents. Records are efficiently managed and all regulations met. Children benefit from the childminder's commitment to providing a professional childminding service. She takes her responsibilities seriously and has completed a considerable number of training workshops. She effectively introduces ideas and knowledge gained from training into her practice to improve the outcomes for children. She plans ahead and is proactive in identifying further areas for development, which has a positive impact on the children.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

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):

- keep records of incidents of behaviour and share these with parents.

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