

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY344544
Inspection date	17 May 2007
Inspector	Susan Ennis
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 15 in Letchworth, Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor and one bedroom 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 three children at any one time and is currently minding one child under five all day and one child over five before and after school. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local parent and toddler group. The family has no pets.

The childminder can support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and comfortable home environment. Their health is suitably promoted as the childminder follows sound hygiene procedures such as cleaning all areas to be used by the children on a daily basis and providing individual towels for each child. A written 'Sick Children's Policy' also helps prevent cross infection. Children's immediate safety and welfare is soundly promoted as parental permission to seek emergency medical treatment is in place and the childminder is trained in first aid enabling her to react quickly in emergency situations. Children are starting to understand simple hygiene practices such as washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Discussions about germs and the need for such procedures increases the children's understanding further.

Children participate in a varied range of physical activities, contributing to their good health. The childminder ensures that there are daily opportunities for outdoor activities, such as the walk to and from school, playing in the garden with sit and rides cars and the Wendy house and playing in the suitably equipped park on the swings, roundabout and climbing frame. Children are encouraged and supported in climbing on the apparatus themselves as the childminder shows them how to climb properly. This is also building their confidence and self esteem. They also enjoy trips to local play centres where they meet their friends as a child confirms 'We play at the Wilbury with my friends. I'm lucky.' Children's coordination and spatial awareness is also encouraged through indoor activities such as playing musical statues and dancing and swaying 'Like the trees'. Children's rest and sleep patterns are fully discussed with parents and accommodated.

Children are suitably nourished with healthy snacks and meals such as ham or cheese sandwiches, yoghurts and fruit promoting their growth and development. Drinks are ongoing with the children confidently asking for one when they become thirsty. Children's individual dietary needs are fully discussed with the parents and adhered to at all times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe environment in which they are able to move around independently and freely. The childminder carries out informal risk assessments and takes effective steps to minimise the hazards, for example, accessible plug sockets are covered and low-level drawers and cupboards are fitted with safety locks. Children's understanding of fire safety is developing as they regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedure with older children being shown how the front door unlocks and younger children learning the assembly points. When the childminder asks 'What do we do when I make this noise' children confidently say 'We go through the garage'. Written policies regarding uncollected and lost children reassure parents of the action taken should these incidents occur. A written 'Accident and Emergency Policy' also details what action would be taken in this instance and who the childminder's back up carer is again reassuring the parents and ensuring the children's welfare at all times. Children are starting to learn about keeping themselves safe as they are encouraged to learn about road safety by stopping, looking and listening 'Like the hedgehogs.' The childminders also sensitively gives reminders such as 'Mind your legs on the step' when entering the house and 'Use both hands' when drinking out of a cup.

Children are able to independently select activities from a good range of toys and equipment. The childminder sensitively supervises the children's choices ensuring that they are both safe and appropriate for their age and stage of learning. Resources are regularly washed often with the children joining in 'To make the dolls smell nice'. Children's welfare is effectively promoted because the childminder has a secure understanding of the child protection procedures as recorded in the written 'Child Protection Policy' and has the relevant contact numbers in place should a concern arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident, settled and interested in their play. They relate well to the childminder who extends their play and learning experiences through asking open ended questions such as 'What colour is this?' when reaching for a coloured pencil and 'How many candles did you have?' when discussing the children's birthdays. Children's starting points are noted through observation, ensuring that they are appropriately challenged and moved on in their development. Children can participate in all the activities because the childminder uses her good knowledge of child development and the Birth to three matters publication to adapt activities encouraging all to become involved. For example, giving the children smaller sized scissors to use when cutting whilst at the same time developing their independence and self-esteem.

Children's development in all areas is effectively promoted. Number skills are developing through matching activities and language is developing encouraged by reading books and age-appropriate interaction. Having read a story about 'Kipper' the child retells the story using the pictures as prompts. Visits to local attractions increases children's experiences and their knowledge of the world around them. Talking about a recent trip to Standalone Farm, a child enthusiastically recalls how they fed the chickens with the food and played on the climbing frame. Children make decisions about their play asking for items as they want them. The childminder organises the resources ensuring that they are to hand keeping the children stimulated and interested in the activity. For example, during the inspection the child enjoys colouring in 'Fifi' pictures which the childminder had printed off the night before as the child had shown an interest in this character.

Children respond positively to each other and the childminder. When the childminder's daughter briefly calls home, she is welcomed happily by the minded child who demonstrates how confident and settles they feel by, also on more than one occasion telling the childminder 'I love you'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and respected as individuals as the childminder ensures that she is aware of the children's individual needs and meets them effectively. A settling in period and home visit at the start of the placement helps ensure this. Daily conversations take place ensuring that all parties are informed about the child's development and care. The children have a trusting and caring relationship with the childminder coming to her for security and reassurance when needed. When starting to feel tired a child asks for a cuddle and then snuggles into the childminder for a reassuring hug. Children's behaviour is good, being reinforced by the childminder's secure understanding of consistent and age appropriate strategies. Children are starting to understand the ground rules such as not wearing their shoes indoors and not jumping

on the furniture. They are also learning to share and take turns having to patiently wait for their favourite coloured pen if it is being used by someone else.

Children's understanding of the wider community is generally increased by the childminder providing resources and activities that positively promote our society such as dolls, play figures and musical instruments reflecting other cultures. However, resources reflecting those with disabilities are limited as are activities celebrating the world around us. Although the childminder has no experience in caring for children with disabilities or learning difficulties she is able to effectively care for all children. However, her understanding is limited at the present at the present time.

Children's needs and welfare are suitably met because the childminder has a sound relationship with parents. Information is regularly shared and parents are given a copy of the required policies and procedures including the complaints procedure.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder effectively organises her work, helping children feel comfortable, relaxed and secure. They are confident often initiating their own play and learning. The individual needs of all the children are met through the childminder's comprehensive procedures and policies', ensuring that relevant information is in place. Children's actual times of attendance are correctly recorded ensuring their safety should an accident or incident occur.

The childminder uses her good child care knowledge to assist her in planning a safe, stimulating and caring environment for the children. She plans attendance on training to increase her knowledge, enabling her to improve the level of care she offers. She ensures that the children are offered a varied range of activities that all are able to participate in. Overall, children's needs are met.

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):

- improve the range of resources and activities that positively reflect those with disabilities and increase children's awareness of the wider community
- ensure that appropriate action can be taken to promote the welfare and development of children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

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