

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY346629
Inspection date	14 June 2007
Inspector	Karen Molloy
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 2007. She lives with her husband and two children aged four years and nine months in Watford, Hertfordshire. The whole ground floor 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 during the day. The childminder is able to walk to local schools to drop off and collect children. The childminder attends the local toddler group and takes children to the library and nearby park.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and holds an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. Young children are given the necessary support to wash their hands and an explanation is given to them about germs and why it is important to keep our hands clean. Children's independence is encouraged with a step in the bathroom, and tissues that are easily accessible to them. Children stay healthy as there are suitable procedures in place to protect them from infection; nappies are changed regularly and disposed of appropriately, surfaces and changing mats are wiped down and floors are cleaned at the end of each day. Children who are infectious do not attend the childminder's home and if they become unwell, parents are contacted to collect them. All the relevant medication and accident records are in place to ensure children's health is safeguarded. Children also benefit from the childminder's up-to-date first aid knowledge.

Children enjoy regular physical activity which contributes to their good health and helps develop their physical skills. In the garden, children have access to a range of resources such as water play, a sand pit, balls, a slide and a see-saw. Once a month, children visit a local play area where they can be active and participate in a variety of physical activities for all ages. Children rest and sleep according to their needs. A travel cot is available upstairs so they can sleep undisturbed. Their own routine is followed and the childminder makes sure children have any comforters they need.

Children are well nourished and benefit from a range of healthy meals and snacks. Mid-morning or afternoon children enjoy breadsticks, rice cakes, fruit or malt loaf. Cooked meals include pasta bake or vegetarian Bolognese. The childminder aims to ensure children receive at least three of the five recommended portions of fruit or vegetables each day. Any dietary requirements are discussed with parents and taken into consideration when planning meals. Parents provide milk for very young children and the childminder stores and prepares these appropriately. Children have their own cups and water is readily accessible throughout the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and secure environment where risks are identified and minimised. This means they are able to move around safely, freely and with some independence. A risk assessment of the home helps to identify any areas of concern. Appropriate safety measures are in place such as socket covers, safety gates and door 'bumpers'. Suitable fire precautions include smoke alarms, a fire blanket and fire procedure, which all contribute to children's safety.

Children are kept safe outdoors. The garden is all enclosed and gates and sheds are locked. The water table is emptied when children are not playing outside and the childminder supervises them closely. When out and about, children's safety is promoted. Children travel in the car using appropriate car seats, car doors have child locks and the necessary insurance is in place. Safety arrangements are discussed with parents in relation to taking children out. As a result, children travel in the buggy or wear wrist bands or reins to keep them safe.

Children use safe and suitable equipment. They have access to a varied selection of toys and books that provides them with challenges and stimulates their interest. These are rotated

regularly to provide further choice. Many are easily accessible, stored in low-level boxes or drawers which enables children to make independent choices. Toys are clean and well maintained.

Children's welfare is protected as they are cared for by a childminder who understands her role in child protection and is able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. She has previously completed training in this area and is keen to update this knowledge. The childminder is aware of signs and symptoms and aware of the need to record any concerns. She has some relevant literature to support her practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. They have the opportunity to play, rest and enjoy various activities at their own pace. Children are beginning to form positive relationships with the childminder as she responds appropriately and promptly to their requests and needs. In turn, children approach the childminder confidently for cuddles or reassurance. Children have their individual needs met. Although there is a general routine, the childminder adapts this according to the children's needs, organising events or activities around their mood or interests. The childminder ensures she meets the needs of all; for example, she feeds the younger children, organises some drawing for older children and then gets a drink for another child. All children receive one to one attention from the childminder, older children have time when younger ones are asleep, and in the afternoon when older children are at nursery, younger children have their individual time with the childminder.

Children show an interest in what they do. They enjoy making cakes and take delight in talking about how they mixed all the ingredients together. They are keen to show off their efforts and share them around. Children participate in a range of activities and experiences to support their all round development. Indoors, children have the opportunity to be creative, play imaginatively with a selection of role play resources and look at books. They acquire new skills and knowledge, for example, older children are supported in learning to copy their name and are helped to look at diagrams and follow the instructions. Younger children's development is fostered and they develop basic skills such as learning to walk, feeding themselves and more recently, starting to communicate. Children also benefit from new experiences such as cooking and vegetable printing. There are opportunities for children to develop social skills and become aware of the wider community, as they visit toddler groups and other local facilities such as the park, library and leisure centre. Children's learning is supported by posters that depict different fruits, vegetables and a large map of the world.

Children are beginning to develop confidence and self esteem as the childminder encourages them to try new things, whilst still being there to support them when needed. They are offered praise and recognition for their efforts and are becoming more confident when they visit toddler groups.

Special occasions or events are planned for by the childminder, although she is keen to be spontaneous in her day-to-day activities. The childminder is familiar with 'Birth to three matters' and has linked some of her planning to this framework for the younger children. Photographs illustrate the different aspects of the framework and this information is displayed for parents to see.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for by a childminder who respects the children and values their differences. They are given clear and useful explanations, appropriate to their age and stage of development. The childminder has made a conscious effort to obtain some resources that reflect diversity and has identified further items she wishes to purchase. This enables children to develop an understanding of people around them and become aware of a wider society. People's differences are discussed in a positive way and any questions the children ask are answered openly and honestly. Activities and play opportunities are used as a way of finding out about various cultures and religions. The children enjoy dressing up in saris and looking at books that show children from around the world. Children are settled in gradually and sensitively. Parents and the childminder complete forms detailing the children's needs, such as their routine, sleep patterns, comforters, special words, likes and dislikes. This ensures the childminder is fully informed when the children start and enables her to meet their individual needs. Children with special needs would be supported and fully integrated into the setting. The childminder has some previous experience of caring for children with special needs and works in partnership with parents to meet any additional needs. She has relevant literature to support her good practice.

Children understand responsible behaviour and become aware of the boundaries as they become more familiar in the childminder's home. Sensible rules ensure the children's safety. If children display unacceptable behaviour, the childminder will explain why it is unacceptable and ask children to apologise or give the 'injured' child a cuddle, if appropriate. Time-out may be used if behaviour persists. Children's positive behaviour is actively promoted. Games are organised to develop children's understanding of taking turns and sharing, and as yet, there have been no squabbles or difficulties. Children are given lots of praise and encouragement to reinforce good behaviour and stickers put in children's books so that parents can see and praise them too, thereby working in partnership with the parents.

Children are cared for by a childminder who works well with parents to establish an effective partnership and meet children's individual needs. She listens to parents, talks to them regularly, answers their questions and aims to be approachable. The childminder is flexible and accommodating to parents' requests and keen to develop a friendly, but professional relationship with them. A book is shared between parents and the childminder which details the child's day and includes information on their activities, sleep, food and anything special that has happened. A profile is kept for each child and includes photographs of activities, outings, art and craft work and weekly observations. These enable the childminder to monitor children's development and to plan ahead effectively. There is some information regarding complaints although no complaints record or procedure for sharing this with parents in place. Therefore, parents may not be fully aware of factors that potentially impact on the children's well-being. The childminder has developed a comprehensive folder about the service she offers and this ensures that parents are well informed. Parents' feedback is positive and comments on the childminder's accurate paperwork, her flexibility and activities and visits that are organised to encourage children's development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a childminder who has a high regard for children. She has a sound knowledge of the National Standards and regulations and a good knowledge of child

development. The childminder holds a recognised child care qualification from the Nursery Nursing Examination Board (NNEB) and has previous experience working as a deputy manager of a day nursery. The childminder has recently completed the required first aid course and the Introduction to Childminding Practice. She has also undertaken a food hygiene course and has attended a briefing session in relation to the new Early Years Foundation Stage. The childminder is keen to keep up-to-date with current practice and attend further training.

The childminder is very well organised. An emergency plan has been developed should there be an incident or occasion where the childminder is unable to care for the children. Food is often prepared in advance and activities are often planned ahead, whilst still allowing flexibility. Children are comfortable within their environment. This enables them to make their own play choices, yet still approach the childminder for support or reassurance. Although the childminder is caring for three children under five, all children receive one to one time and attention. Space and resources are organised effectively to meet children's needs. Children benefit from a balanced range of activities indoors and out of the home.

All the records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision are in place. In addition, the childminder has a planning file and information that relates to the National Standards. A comprehensive file has also been developed for parents and these are presented in a useful format. Documents are kept safe and secure and the childminder is aware of the need to notify Ofsted of any significant changes or events.

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

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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 knowledge and develop systems for the recording of complaints, in line with regulations.

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