



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 123477
Inspection date 04 January 2006
Inspector Christine Pettitt

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 has been registered since 1989. She lives with her husband and their two children in a three-bedroomed, semi-detached house in Wheathampstead. They live close to parks, the countryside, woods and fairly near local schools and shops. The childminder mainly uses the ground floor for childminding purposes. This includes the dining area, kitchen and a bathroom. The first floor of the premises are used for minded children to sleep. There is a large secure garden for outdoor play. The family has a cat.

The childminder currently cares for 3 children under 5 years. They mostly attend four

days each week. The childminder has a current first aid certificate and has attended both the initial and 'Developing Childminder Practice' courses. She is willing to take children to toddler groups.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in an exceptionally hygienic and well maintained home. Children's health is promoted well through effective food and general hygiene practice and through a sickness policy. Children have individual flannels, towels, bedding and cups. Packed lunches are stored in the fridge. Children are learning to wash their hands after having their nappy changed, using the toilet, outside play and before meals and cooking activities. A sickness policy ensures parents are aware of infectious diseases. This helps them to know when to keep their child at home if they are ill. There is no written hygiene or health policy.

Children's dietary requirements are met. Some children bring a packed lunch. Meals are also provided by the childminder. These are well balanced, home cooked and include fresh vegetables and a wide variety of fruit. Children are offered drinks frequently during the day, and these are accessible for children to help themselves. Mealtimes are social occasions, children sit next to each other in high chairs. They are enthusiastically encouraged to feed themselves, but are given help when required.

Children greatly enjoy and benefit through daily walks to local parks, countryside, woods and garden play. They generally play in the garden after taking older children to school, using the slide, swing, sit and ride toys and a small trampoline. These promote their balance, coordination and large physical skills. Children run around the spacious area in the kitchen and play ball indoors if they are unable to play outside. Sometimes children attend indoor play areas to extend their physical play experience. Children have a rest period after lunch when they sleep according to their needs or look at books quietly with the childminder.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into a safe environment. Safety precautions are in place, these include safety locks on kitchen cupboards where there are hazards, and stair gates on the main play area. The garden is securely fenced and includes a bark area under the large play equipment. Children are supervised well and are learning about safety. They are learning how to cross the roads safely when out for a walk and look at a book about road safety with the childminder. When in the car they notice the traffic light colours and know red is for stop. In the home they practise an emergency escape procedure in the form of a game. They know not to touch hot drinks or objects. The childminder has a conscientious approach towards safety. During recent

building work she assessed the risks to children and had a written agreement with parents that children would not play in the garden until the work was finished.

Children's welfare is promoted through the childminder's knowledge of child protection. She has completed two modules of a child protection awareness programme and has information of local contact numbers and procedures to follow. The childminder has a current first aid certificate and the required resources to use in the home or on outings in the event of an accident. There are no written safety or child protection policies.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are greatly benefiting from a caring, stimulating, rich childminding experience. They delight in daily outings which are varied. These include visits to the library, indoor play areas, music sessions, toddler groups, park, shops, farms, museums, the recycling tip, and bus trips. All outings and activities are used to extend children's understanding, improve their skills and broaden their experience. In the shops children learn the names of fruit and vegetables and are given products to carry to the till. This helps their language skills and gives them a sense of responsibility, and an understanding of being helpful. On walks children collect flowers, leaves and objects of interest, they look at these and with the childminder identify what they have found.

Within the home children are relaxed and happily engage in free play, independently accessing a range of resources. They delight to explore these and progress in their development through the childminder using these to extend their language, and number skills. They enjoy creative and cooking activities, making things out of recyclable materials or using their senses to explore texture. Children's emotional and social needs are met well. They have a warm relationship with the childminder and go to her for reassurance, comfort and support. Her constant interaction and play with the children shows them they are valued and encourages their self-esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children play extremely well and harmoniously together. They receive praise and encouragement for being polite and respond immediately to the childminder's requests if they behave unacceptably. Behaviour is managed well and discussions with parents regarding behaviour management promotes this. Children are given explanations as to why behaviour is unacceptable and an understanding approach is evident if a child is feeling unwell.

Children's individual needs, characters and preferred play are known and met well by the childminder. Children are treated equally and individually, for example, children are toilet trained when they are ready and according to parents wishes. Activities provided are adapted according to the children's varied stages of development and

concentration span. Opportunities for children to progress and to develop skills towards independence are encouraged. Children with special needs are welcomed. Cultural awareness is promoted through some cultural play equipment, books and explanations.

Effective partnerships with parents are in place. Expectations of parents and of the childminder are made clear at the initial discussions regarding the childminding arrangements. Children's daily activities and routine are recorded in a diary for the parents. The book is also used as a communication book between the parents and the childminder. Regular discussion with parents also takes place. A portfolio and information sheet are provided for new parents about the childminding provision. The portfolio contains some policies and training certificates. References from current parents are extremely positive. They include comments such as the childminder being 'extremely caring and capable', 'organised', 'children play and learn in a safe, happy, clean environment', and 'she provides a variety of toys and outings'.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's wellbeing is promoted through the organisation of the childminder. Children experience a consistent routine. This provides a sense of security for children because they know what will happen next. Safety in the home is of high priority. The play area provides space for children to play safely, has safety precautions in place and a variety of resources stored at a low level for them to access. Activities are provided which promote stimulation and progress for young children, taking into account their individual stage of development.

The required documentation is in place but pre-formatted records are available but not currently used. Contracts are renewed annually and parental permission for varying aspects of care are obtained from the parents. There is a portfolio for new parents to view but this does not include policies relating to all the Standards. A daily diary is provided to inform parents of the child's day and verbal information is given. Information posters are displayed for parents to view.

The childminder has attended the initial childminding course and 'Developing Childminding Practice'. She has a current first aid certificate. A road safety workshop has been attended. The childminder uses 'Birth to three matters' and the National Childminding Association folder for reference. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the previous report the following recommendation was made: ensure the range of toys and equipment promotes equality of opportunity.

The childminder has play equipment on offer for girls and boys to use. She also has dolls and some books which reflect other cultures. Children are made aware of different cultures through library books and discussion about food from other

countries when shopping. Children meet people from different cultures within the family and explanations are given when the situation arises.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints since registration.

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):

- extend and enhance the written information provided for parents.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk