



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	126309
Inspection date	24 February 2006
Inspector	Susan Jennifer Scott

Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since 1993. She lives with her husband and two teenage children. They live in a house on the outskirts of Maidstone. The whole of the ground floor of the house is used for minding as well as the bedroom of her youngest son and the bathroom and toilet upstairs. There is a large, secure garden with trees and plants.

The childminder is registered to provide care for no more than six children under eight years; of these, not more than three may be under five years, and of these, no more than one may be under one year at any one time. The childminder may provide care for two children under one year for a limited period only. The childminder may provide overnight care for two children under eight years. The childminder provides care for ten children in total, five of these are under eight years and two are in receipt of funded education. All children attend on a part time basis. Children with English as an additional language and with special needs attend.

The childminder has several pets, including 3 cats, 2 rabbits, a lizard and fish. She regularly attends childminder groups and is a member of the local childminder's network and able to offer funded education to children of three and four years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through routines such as washing their hands after visiting the toilet, before cooking and eating food and they are aware of why they need to do this as well as having sufficient rest as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Children are protected by good precautions to ensure that children who are infectious do not attend, thus preventing the spread of contagious illness amongst the children. Children risk of cross-infection is minimised by the good practice when changing nappies, such as using gloves and wipes.

Children receive appropriate support in an emergency as the childminder ensures she has contact numbers for parents and has completed a paediatric first aid course. She is prepared to seek emergency treatment if needed and has written permission to do so.

Children benefit from the childminder's good understanding of healthy eating for young children. She is aware of children's preferences and parental instructions so that food is prepared appropriately and complies with dietary and religious needs and preferences. She ensures that children are well nourished and healthy by providing foods such as fruit, salads or sandwiches at regular times.

Children experience a good balance of energetic activity with times for quiet play and rest; they have a variety of daily physical exercise, using large toys and equipment in the garden or on outings in the locality. This helps them understand the need for regular exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Due to the warm and supportive care given by the childminder, the children's wellbeing is promoted effectively. Children are able to rest and sleep according to their individual needs, and are encouraged to develop their own preferences. For example, they choose what to play with and develop their independence by helping themselves to drinks. They have a strong relationship with the childminder who is responsive to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are successfully encouraged to feel well settled and secure through the good organisation and use of space. They benefit from being able to move around safely and independently. Children are made to feel welcome when they enter the house as toys, pictures, posters and examples of children's handicrafts are clearly displayed. The displays of children's work effectively enables them to feel valued.

Children are kept safe in the home. They enjoy their play in a safe environment as a risk assessment of the house has been carried out and the childminder has taken all necessary steps to minimise risks.

Children benefit from a good range of safe and suitable toys, resources and equipment. These include low sofas and a table, car seats and harnesses and reins. Children are able to independently access boxes of well organised and age appropriate toys which are varied and rotated to ensure their interest is stimulated. These include books, craft materials, puzzles, games and imaginative toys such as dolls and cars. Toys and resources are carefully selected to ensure they are suitable and are checked regularly. Items with small parts are not accessible to babies.

Babies and toddlers are keen to crawl and pull themselves up using domestic style furniture and the childminder is very well organised so she can ensure they are able to explore and move safely. Babies and toddlers are beginning to know when and how to ask for help from the childminder who is exceptionally attentive and successfully interprets their needs.

Children have easy access to the garden and they are kept safe through good supervision when they are playing outside as all hazards are inaccessible. Children are kept safe when on outings through the use of written consents, good supervision, clearly understood rules and the use of harnesses with the younger children.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by the recent training the childminder attended on child protection. She has good working knowledge and experience of the procedures to protect children in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children who attend the setting are confident and secure. They develop good levels of self esteem and have a warm and relaxed relationship with the childminder. Children have access to a variety of play space both inside and out, although the garden use is mainly restricted to warmer weather. The childminder is developing her knowledge of the Birth to three matters training and babies and young children benefit from her understanding of this resource. For example, she accurately assesses the developmental stages of one child using the Birth to three matters framework and how to use appropriate activities to enable him to progress. As a result, babies and young children enjoy a range of experiences that are well suited to their stage of development. The childminder gathers all relevant information from parents before children start, but there are no formal initial profiles of their development in place for all children. Children have good conversations with the childminder, who asks open ended questions and encourage them to talk about themselves.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children's assessments are regular and frequent and cover their progress in all six areas of the curriculum. Children are assessed during planned and spontaneous activities. The childminder adapts the programme and activities so that these provide good learning opportunities for children to make good progress. Interesting themes such as 'creepy crawlies' help children to appreciate the world around them as they hunt for and identify insects in the park, and during a matching activity using pictures and a pack of model insects.

Children develop their personal, social and emotional development when they explore topics about their families, when they are encouraged to discuss their home lives and experiences during routines such as at meal times, which enables them develop their confidence and feel valued. Children are encouraged to help themselves to drinks and to wash their hands in preparation for cooking which develops their independence effectively.

Children extend their communication and language skills when they discuss and share books and listen to stories. They have free access to mark making facilities and are beginning to recognise and write their names. Children are encouraged to recognise labels, letters and words during activities. For example, one child recognises a letter from her name of the sugar bag when cooking and the childminder tells her it starts the word 'Kilo'.

Children confidently participate in counting activities, developing their familiarity with numbers. They build these skills by answering questions such as 'What is one more?' or 'one less' or by measuring ingredients, for instance, when they make cakes. Children mix icing for cakes, developing their understanding of colour and observing changes.

Children experience interesting opportunities to celebrate varied festivals such as Holi and Chinese New Year. They develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through planned opportunities to learn about animal care when they occasionally go horse riding. Children extend their knowledge of technology by using the computer and choosing the software they wish to use. They enjoy making cakes and observe them at differing stages of cooking, enthusiastically discussing the colour, smell, taste and texture.

Children's physical development is successfully encouraged through both outdoor and indoor activities such as play in the garden and action songs, which they enjoy. They develop their dexterity when they use a variety of resources and equipment such as paintbrushes, pencils, scissors and spoons to spread icing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to develop a positive attitude to others through playing with resources that reflect positive images. This practice successfully builds on their understanding and helps them develop a balanced view of the world. Children are made to feel good about themselves, gaining confidence by being acknowledged by their carer as important individuals. The childminder has a positive attitude towards diversity and encourages children to talk about things that are important to them such as, their home and family events; this helps them develop a sense of belonging.

Children with special needs are supported effectively, the childminder ensures that all children's developmental needs are discussed with parents. The needs of all the minded children are considered so that they can all receive individual attention or play together well. The care they receive helps them develop a positive self-image, as the childminder acknowledges their individual routines and preferences. For example, children's individual sleeping and eating routines are supported to ensure the care they receive suits their needs. The childminder is aware of the Code of Practice for the identification of special educational needs although she does not require individual education plans at present.

Children behave very well and play together harmoniously. They benefit from lots of praise and encouragement and their good behaviour is promoted effectively. The childminder manages children's behaviour in a positive way; For instance, when they try to take each other's drinks she explains firmly and clearly, giving each child the correct drink. Children are constructively occupied to enable them to experience recognition for their achievements. This gives them a sense of pride and boosts their self esteem. Children begin to understand right and wrong through clear explanations used by the childminder to ensure they know how to behave appropriately. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from a very good partnership with parents. Parents are welcomed into the childminder's home and kept fully informed of her practice through the use of contact books and verbal feedback. Parents have good access to a variety of clear and helpful information about the childminding service including policy statements and information on how to contact the regulator. This develops their confidence in the service and ensures the children's welfare.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from clearly defined and well organised space, dedicated time and a broad range of resources which are used well. They receive very good adult support to help them feel secure and confident. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

The childminder keeps herself well informed of current childcare practices by attending relevant courses. She has a current first aid certificate and has attended workshops, as well as a good variety short courses, and ensures her knowledge and skills are up to date. The childminder receives good support and guidance from the local childminding network which also promotes the effectiveness of her service.

Children benefit from the childminder's good planning and use of all relevant and mandatory documentation. Records and information are informative and used effectively to support relationships with children and parents. Records are confidential, well maintained and easily accessible.

The childminder safeguards the welfare of the children in her care by ensuring that she keeps all the contact numbers for parents and carers available so she can contact them in an emergency. The childminder ensures that all people who have regular contact with children have been checked.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the childminder was recommended to develop two aspects of her service and has made good progress in doing this. She has procedures to ensure the safe supervision and care of children and their access to visitors. The childminder has continued to attend a variety of short courses, such as those for mark making, sensory training and anaphylactic shock.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints since the last inspection. 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.

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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):

- continue to develop the use of individual profiles of development to ensure that play experiences promote children's progress

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop the use of individual education plans to support children with special educational needs

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