



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY319171
Inspection date 20 April 2006
Inspector Margaret Coyne

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 2005. He lives with his wife and three children aged 13 years, 10 years and 20 months in Dunstable, Bedfordshire. Most of the ground floor and one bedroom and bathroom on the first floor are used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding four children on a part time basis some of which is on a weekend. The childminder drives to nursery to take and collect children. He works alongside his wife who is also a registered childminder. The childminder attends the

local parent and toddler group. The family has a pet dog.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because the childminder follows current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. He gains full information from parents about the immunisations given to the children and is alert to any childhood illnesses which may be harmful to those without full cover. Due to the childminder's policies he has in place about children who are unwell he is able to protect all children from infection and keep parents up to date with any infectious illnesses within the home. The childminder has consents from parents for the administration of medication and maintains the accident and medication records extensively. However, as the childminder is working alongside his wife who is also a registered childminder the consents to administer medication are not in both names to ensure the children's health and welfare. Parents are kept informed of any incidents whilst children are in the care of the childminder and a home link book records useful information with them. Children learn about how and why they wash their hands and are developing good hygiene practices. They have separate towels and flannels to prevent cross-infections and to encourage children to use them independently. Parents also supply toothbrushes and paste for some children so they can learn the importance of brushing their teeth after meals.

Children are well-nourished and they enjoy the home cooked meals provided by the childminder. He works closely with his wife to ensure that all children receive nutritious and varied meals. Snacks are also provided which are healthy, giving children opportunity to learn about healthy choices. Information is gained from parents to ensure their dietary needs can be fully met and the childminder takes these into consideration when planning, preparing and serving meals and snacks. The children take part in some cooking activities to give them an understanding of hygienic food preparation and to make food interesting and exciting. Strategies are used to encourage children to try new tastes and experiences such as making food fun or disguising food such as mashing cauliflower into potato. Children independently access drinks regularly and they are beginning to understand why it is important for their health.

Children enjoy a good range of energetic physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They have access to plenty of fresh air as they enjoy regular walks in the local community and access local facilities. They access a range of indoor equipment to develop their muscles and control including prams and sit and ride cars. Children's dexterity and hand and eye coordination are developed through an extensive range of activities using one handed tools to draw and paint and when completing jigsaws and building with construction blocks. Children are encouraged to have a sleep when they become tired and individual sleep patterns are observed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a safe, clean and well-maintained environment. The childminder safeguards children's welfare and has an excellent awareness of safety. A thorough risk assessment is carried out on the premises, toys and activities to ensure potential risks are identified and minimised. Children are able to move around the home and garden and explore and take risks in a safe, controlled environment. Space and resources are organised to allow maximum free space for the children to enjoy and access safely. Children benefit from an effective range of safety measures, for example, stair gates, socket covers, inaccessible cables and a range of fire safety equipment. Sleeping children are checked regularly and a baby monitor is in place, should a child sleep in another room, to ensure their safety and well-being. Regular emergency drills are practised giving children opportunity to develop an awareness of how to evacuate in an emergency situation. Extra precautions are taken in the garden with the new puppy and at present a lot of outdoor activities are conducted out of the home. Children are protected from the effects of the sun because the childminder ensures they have sunhats and wear sunscreen.

Children have access to well-maintained, developmentally appropriate toys and equipment. These are selected according to their age and ability to ensure they gain maximum benefit from them and can play safely with them. Well planned activities ensure the children's safety at all times and ensures children learn about playing safely with others. For example, when younger children are attending, older children learn about which toys they can have out to prevent younger children coming to harm. They learn about the safe use of toys and equipment such as not throwing balls indoors but rolling them, not climbing on the furniture and helping to tidy away to make room for other activities to be used safely.

Children learn about staying safe as they enjoy outings into the local community and are taught to respect the environment and keep themselves safe, for example, always staying within site of the childminder, holding hands or the buggy and the importance of road awareness. They understand and use the road safety procedures and know this helps to keep them safe. Children use the crossing patrol when crossing roads and recognise that this is good practice.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect as the childminder has a clear understanding of the procedures to follow regarding any concerns. He works closely with his wife to maintain confidentiality and is confident to notify the appropriate authorities should any concerns arise in order to protect the children in his care. He has a clear understanding of his duty of care towards the children. There is a child protection policy in place which helps form a secure working relationship with parents as they are aware of the childminders responsibility to the children in his care. Most supporting documents are in place to guide and assist the childminder with the exception of the 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abuse - Summary'. The childminder is fully aware of the importance of keeping records up to date to provide secure evidence of his practice and to support him in the event of any allegations made against him.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and contented as they take part in an extensive range of activities both in and out of the home. Children have excellent opportunities to socialise with others as they attend toddler groups and get together with other childminders and their children. They also enjoy trips in the local community. The childminder arranges outings to the park, adventure play grounds, the Downs to walk and fly kites and to the farm where the children benefit from new experiences and can explore new areas of interest. Their creativity is developing as they use a range of equipment and tools to create spontaneously, for example, using 'magic wet pens' to draw on special plastic sheeting. Recently children have enjoyed a cinema day where they have enjoyed watching films shown on a white sheet to make the experience realistic and exciting, including tasting popcorn.

The childminder is skilled at introducing the children to new experiences and provides a wide range of well presented toys and equipment. Children are free to access all items and play contentedly together or alone. They confidently seek support, reassurance or cuddles when needed and are developing skills to tackle problems or emotions for themselves. For example, behaviour issues are managed as the childminder gives the children a choice and rewards good behaviour with praise and stickers. This helps children learn to manage their emotions and develop their maturity. Children benefit from consistent support, praise and encouragement as they move from dependence to independence. Warm relationships with the childminder have contributed to this confidence and to the progress the children make. Children's understanding in various topics such as nature and the wider world is extended through the childminder's skill in being an active listener and talking with the children to encourage their natural curiosity.

The childminder works closely with his wife and between them they have gained considerable knowledge when introducing the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This has helped children learn through various topics and activities and aids the childminder to focus his skills when planning purposeful activities for them. It also assists him when identifying what children can learn from the activities and how they develop. For example, when younger children communicate their needs using gestures the childminder understands these and avoids children becoming frustrated or despondent.

The childminder provides a flexible routine for the children. Children benefit from this as they know what to expect and can ask for favourite activities. The secure planning of activities helps create a wonderful balance between adult and child-led play and encourages children to make suggestions for their own play ideas. Children have access to the range of toys and resources that are suitable for their age and stage of development. They are challenged and enjoy the activities on offer. Children are inquisitive as they move between activities and exhibit delight when they achieve for themselves such as when building with bricks or making marks with colouring pens.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children can freely choose from a range of resources which helps to develop their independence skills. They have access to resources that reflect positive images of gender roles and can play in an environment free from discrimination or stereotyping. Resources have been extended with books, dolls, dressing up clothes, jigsaws and printed sheets showing disability and gender roles. The childminder has a sensitive understanding of meeting the needs of the children and helping them gain an understanding of others in the home and community. Children are developing good self-esteem and respect for others. Those children who require additional support from the childminder receive appropriate care which enables them to fully participate in the activities. Information gained from parents and carers enables the childminder to provide a high level of care in order to meet each child's differing needs.

Children generally behave well because the childminder has a consistent approach and implements an efficient, positive behaviour management policy which dwells on the positive rather than the negative. This ensures children develop good feelings about themselves and enhances their self-esteem and confidence. Children are encouraged to share and take turns and the childminder will only intervene if the children cannot resolve differences themselves or may come to some harm. He has realistic expectations of the children, uses praise and encouragement and gives simple explanations when discussing right from wrong. This has a positive impact on the children's belief in themselves and promotes the fact that they can achieve things for themselves. Most children are gaining a secure awareness of the boundaries and know what is expected of them. Suitable strategies are used to further develop children's understanding of acceptable behaviour, given positive attention, rewards and sensitive reminders. Children are learning to manage their behaviour because they feel valued and respected by the childminder.

Children are cared for by the childminder who works well with parents and carers to meet their individual needs. Secure relationships with parents and carers have been developed which impacts on the children's feelings of belonging, trust and security. The childminder uses a link book as well as regular verbal feedback to ensure parents are fully informed of the activities their children have been involved in and other areas such as meals and sleep times. A wide range of policies and procedures are in place and shared with parents, helping them to understand how their children are cared for in a safe and nurturing environment. A two way sharing of information is encouraged to ensure any changes in circumstances are recorded in order to continue to meet the children's needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and contented in this child-friendly environment. The space, resources, flexible routine and support offered by the childminder helps to encourage the children's independence and overall development. The childminder works closely as a team with his wife in order to provide a well-organised home environment. The children are relaxed, happy and secure because the childminder organises routines and activities in order to meet their needs and to take account of individual

personalities. He is able to enrich the experiences he provides for the children so they are stimulated and challenged in all areas of their play. The childminder has well-organised records and documentation which are shared with his wife. These are used effectively to promote the care, welfare and learning of each child. Records are shared with parents and both written and verbal information is provided about their child's progress. A complaints policy and a system to record any complaints is in place which helps create an open, honest and trusting relationship with parents and which impacts positively on the children.

The childminder has developed an efficient system of record keeping, all of which are securely kept and up to date. Ratios are maintained to enable him to fully support each child and meet their individual needs. The time he spends with the children is well-organised so he can provide them with some individual time and attention as well as group events and activities. A purposeful range of policies and procedures are in place which are well-implemented and shared with parents in order to promote the children's welfare. The childminder is keen to develop his practice and has completed his 'introduction to childminding practice' course and his first aid course. This has enabled him to extend his own knowledge of how children develop and his organisational skills. He would like to further this with additional training where ever possible. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

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.

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted 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):

- ensure the medication consent obtained from parents reflects both names of the childminders administering medication when working with another childminder
- ensure all supporting documents are in place relating to child protection with regard to the Department of Health leaflet 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused - Summary'.

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