



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	113053
Inspection date	25 May 2006
Inspector	Elly Bik-Kuen Wong
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 was registered in 1989. She lives with her husband on the outskirts of Eastleigh, Hampshire. The whole property is available for childminding, including a fully enclosed garden for outside play. There is a toilet on each floor, and the ground floor includes a lounge, dining room, kitchen and playroom.

The family have no pets. The childminder is registered to mind six under-eights at any one time; she currently minds two full-time and ten part-time children during different days of the week. She is an accredited member of the National Childminding Association Hampshire Cluster Childminding Network, and currently has three children in receipt of funded early education. The childminder attends the local toddler group with children. She has an NVQ Level 4 qualification in Early years practice.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in a warm, clean and homely environment where their health and hygiene is promoted extremely well through the childminder's daily routines. The childminder carefully ensures that areas and surfaces used by children are cleaned or disinfected daily to reduce germs. Each nappy change involves the use of disposable gloves, which helps to prevent cross infection. The childminder works to a sound sickness policy; she takes sensitive care of children who become unwell during her care, and parents are fully aware of their responsibilities if their child is ill. Children show an excellent attitude towards personal hygiene and self care; they readily wash their hands after toilet and messy activities, as well as before food. They access individual flannels and bed linen, if sleeping. Children also take an active part in the regular cleaning of toys and so learn about caring for the resources.

Children enjoy consistent opportunities for fresh air and physical exercise during daily walks to and from schools, pre-schools and parks, which also helps them to develop a good sense of time and place. They also gain important bodily awareness, for instance, about how regular exercise helps them to remain healthy. They are encouraged to spend some time outdoors each day if the weather permits, either in the garden or at local parks. Children have excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills during regular outdoor play; they also learn to negotiate space while having fun with ride-on toys, balls and bats, push-and-pull, ropes; and on larger equipment for sliding, climbing and swinging. Young children thoroughly enjoy indoor physical games purposefully planned by the childminder; some become very supple and develop good control of their bodies. Children from toddlers to school age have plenty of opportunities to develop manipulative skills during construction play, and when handling small tools or cutlery, such as when holding a training spoon or cutting cheese with a blunt knife. A three-year-old child gains great dexterity when handling icing to decorate cakes or gingerbread men. All these activities are extremely helpful in promoting children's confidence in their abilities while developing their physical fitness, balance and co-ordination.

Children gain important awareness about the link between foods and health when the childminder discusses with them why some foods are good for them and some are not. They love the food tasting sessions specially planned for introducing them to a wide range of fresh fruits including grapes, oranges, strawberries, kiwis and bananas. Children also occasionally help to water and care for the vegetables in the garden, and learn about their value in a healthy diet. They benefit from a varied range of balanced meals and snacks provided daily which include healthy and nutritious options to help promote their good health and growth. Children are made aware of the need to drink regularly to prevent dehydration and to promote healthy metabolism. Their drink cups or bottles are put in readily accessible locations so even the younger toddlers can help themselves to water, squash or milk when they feel thirsty. Daily menus are displayed to inform parents, while all dietary and health requirements are thoroughly discussed and met effectively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a safe and secure environment where risks have been identified and reduced, due to the childminder's vigilance and high safety standards. She has installed safety devices such as a stair gate, socket covers, smoke alarms, window locks, and cupboard locks to ensure hazardous substances are out of children's reach. This impacts on children being able to move around the home to access toys safely by themselves. Young children are cared for with age-appropriate equipment such as cots, buggies, high chairs and walking reins. The childminder works to rigorous safety procedures to safeguard children on the premises and during outings. Children receive good attention and support, and are supervised within her sight or hearing. The childminder monitors the safety of sleeping children upstairs by checking them at regular intervals. Parents are familiar with the daily routine of signing children out when collecting them at home time; anyone else collecting on their behalf have to be notified, and usually given a password to ensure security. Signed permissions are requested from parents for local day-to-day outings, and specific forms completed for extra trips such as during school holidays. She carries minded children's photo cards and her personal details and contact numbers during outings in case of emergencies. Rigorous records are kept on accidents and medicines, which are all shared with parents.

Children are encouraged to develop safety awareness during the daily routine. They are instilled awareness about the hazards of the road, and know how to stop at the pavement and look carefully before crossing. Children are taught not to play with sockets or electrical appliances, nor in the kitchen or during cooking. They practise fire safety during regular drills based on the childminder's emergency fire plan. The childminder is qualified in first aid, and able to assist children who may be affected by accidents and emergencies. She is vigilant when handling children's on-going dietary and health conditions; she follows parental instructions and undertakes necessary training if necessary, to promote children's health and safety. The childminder shows knowledge of child protection procedures, though it requires updating in line with all relevant guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a welcoming and child-centred environment, where their needs are met well and according to parental preference. Young children, including babies and toddlers, alternate between active play and quiet rest. They develop communicative and intellectual skills when the childminder helps them learn through the senses; she talks to them about what they see, hear, touch, smell and taste during daily activities. A young toddler is happy when she recognises different animal cartoon characters such as cat and mouse, and develops her emerging vocabulary when the childminder asks 'what's this?'. Toddlers develop manipulative skills when learning to hold a feeding spoon, training cup, or finger foods. The childminder is familiar with the Birth to three matters framework; she knows the developmental needs of babies and toddlers, and gets down to their levels to encourage their participation. The childminder monitors and supports children in their choice of resources, while extending their play. She adapts activities to suit children of different ages, so they play enthusiastically

together, for example, when they dress up eagerly as certain popular story characters, enjoy small worlds like cars and trains, or relax over play dough together.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The childminder sets challenges that extend children's ideas and thinking whilst helping them to develop good attention span and concentration. A rising four-year-old is engrossed in making a life-size portrait of herself, and perseveres through the childminder's encouragement and support. Children are encouraged to learn through direct and first hand experiences; they predict and then check the colour of their eyes by looking in the mirror, and draw around each other's body on the floor to produce their own full-size portraits. A child shows good creativity and imagination, for example, when she counts three of herself in the room: the real self; her representation by the life-size portrait 'sitting' on the settee; and its reflection on the television screen. Children learn to use mathematical language for size and position. The same child says that her 'long' picture is too big to take home, though she also begins to problem solve by saying that it can be folded up to fit into the car. Children learn to differentiate between colours while building duplo model towers; they count and compare the numbers of the differently coloured bricks, so developing concepts of numbers and adding. Children draw or paint enthusiastically; they have fun making animal masks, finger puppets, as well as cakes which they decorate with icing. They enjoy songs and rhymes, as well as stories and books read to them by the childminder. However, the storage of books and play resources are not always well organised. Some bulky toys take up a lot of prime space in the playroom, while the storage drawers/boxes for books and creative tools and materials lack labelling to promote self-initiated learning. While children relish being read to by the childminder, they have inconsistent opportunities for accessing and handling books by themselves for their own enjoyment.

The childminder builds on children's interests, and asks questions skilfully to help children recall past events and relate them to the present. A three-year-old child's memory development is promoted well when encouraged to recall the pleasant experience of a family outing, or a visit from the grandparents from abroad. Pre-school children develop a good sense of time and place when they are asked to recount their daily journeys and destinations in sequential order, such as about the schools and pre-school that they walk to and back. Children gain important awareness about their own identity, family and the pre-school or nursery that they belong to during the themed study of 'ourselves'. This impacts on young children developing a good sense of self and of belonging to a wider community. The childminder manages a wide range of behaviour in a consistent yet sensitive manner; this helps children to learn about right and wrong, and how to play socially. Children also learn about nature and the wider world, such as when they grow plants, or learn about creatures, heat, light, floating and sinking. They have regular access to modern technology such as a computer and camera; the latter is sometimes used by the children to take pictures of one another.

The childminder continually updates her knowledge and skills in early education through training; she demonstrates a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and its six areas of learning. The childminder makes simple long, medium and monthly curriculum plans for children's nursery education. All aspects of the six areas of learning are gradually covered over a pre-school child's placement, though certain aspects are not always given enough emphasis, such as linking

sounds and letters. Children practise pre-writing and writing skills, and learn that print carries meanings. They are encouraged to make marks on their work, though not consistently or purposefully to reinforce their understanding in this matter. The childminder makes observations on children's play and learning, and records their achievements against the stepping stones or early learning goals of the Foundation Stage of learning. However, such information on their assessments is not always retrieved effectively to inform future plans for individual children's learning. For example, a rising four-year-old who shows interest in rhyming words and sounds, is not extended purposefully through planning about other common sounds and how they link to the letters. Although there are spontaneous daily opportunities to develop children's confidence and social skills, those who appear to be lacking in these areas may not be targeted for focused activities within their individual plans for improving such skills. The childminder uses her time well to support all minded children. The care of the under three's, however, who at times are demanding of her attention, impinges on the amount of time and support available for learning during part of the week. All the above factors impact on pre-school children making good rather than rapid progress generally in nursery education.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel settled and at ease; they relate well to the childminder, who knows them well and is familiar with their routines and needs. She has long-standing positive relationships with parents; she liaises closely with them over their children's health and diet, and to help individual children reach the various developmental milestones, such as potty training. Children look forward to going to the childminder's. They show good motivation to learn; they persevere very well during play and learning, such as when making 3-D models of cardboard snakes, or painting large scale floor pictures. These tasks are often purposefully given by the childminder, to focus children's interest and develop their concentration and patience. Children are given routine opportunities to express their opinions and preferences. They are asked about their choice of snacks; what purchases they make at the shop; and which game they play, so children feel important and respected. They are given opportunities to practise self-reliance when dressing, preparing food such as sandwiches, eating, and toileting. Children gain a sense of responsibility and self-esteem, for example, when helping to clean toys, wash up and lay the table. The childminder praises children constantly to encourage good behaviour. She gives children clear consistent boundaries, and manages a wide range of behaviour firmly and sensitively, using age-appropriate methods such as distractions, re-direction, and explanation. These practices are explained to parents at placement, and they work closely to help resolve any behaviour issues by agreeing on common strategies if appropriate. Children practise good manners and how to play socially and co-operatively during play, for example, when they draw round each other's body on the floor to make life-size portraits.

The childminder provides first-hand experiences for children to develop a positive attitude towards people who are different, whilst learning about each other's similarities too. Children are routinely encouraged, while being out and about with the childminder in the local community, to talk to and assist residents from a local housing project with varying degrees of disability. The minded children are well known to the assistants at the local post office/shop, as they often assist with purchases by passing money or goods over the counter on behalf of the

residents. The childminder has undertaken various training and is experienced and positive about including children with a wide range of needs, often by adjusting her practices to suit the particular child involved. All children and families receive good support and are treated with equal concern. Children are helped to develop a sense of identity within their own cultural group. They gain an awareness about different ways of saying and doing things as in different cultures, and develop an appreciation of them through books, toys, and through celebrating their own and other festivals. Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is outstanding.

At joining, parents are provided with high quality information about the childminding service and operation. The childminder has developed four superb packs of information to be given in order and as required. The first two explain clearly the childminding policies and procedures, and the records and consent forms used. The last two are extremely helpful in introducing parents to the Birth to three matters framework, and the six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage. This impacts on parents being very well informed about the care and learning that is to be provided for their child to suit his/her age and ability. Parents also receive excellent verbal feedback routinely at handover time, as well as through a simple daily diary.

At placement, parents are asked to complete a form to share what they know about their child. This is because the childminder places an extremely high value on children's preference; this also enables her to form an initial picture of their development so as to plan for their next stage. The childminder observes children and makes perceptive assessments; she keeps succinct developmental records on each child, which include illustrations by photos of the different types of play and learning achieved. She ensures confidentiality while encouraging each parent to take their child's personalised folder home to read at the end of each term, or indeed at any time. This ensures that parents are very well informed about their children's achievements and progress. The childminder has a firm belief in parents' primary role and involvement in their children's learning. They are warmly welcomed to share what they know about their child's on-going development and learning style. Some happily share their experiences which are meaningful for the child involved, such as about a family holiday/wedding, or about nature and wildlife. This enables the childminder to build on children's interests, and to extend and consolidate their thinking in these matters. The excellent partnership between parents and the childminder continue to help promote positive outcomes in children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children and parents experience a friendly and well organised service for promoting children's care, play and learning. The childminder has rigorous systems in place for maintaining children's safety during the daily routine, which is re-assuring for parents. There is a wide range of stimulating play resources both indoors and outdoors for children, though the organisation of some books and play resources indoors are not always conducive to self-initiated learning. Children thrive on a sense of order through structured daily activities on and off the premises. They benefit from extra play and learning opportunities during local outings, social visits, and longer trips, which enhance their intellectual, physical and social development.

The childminder is a long-standing child carer, and is very experienced with children of a wide range of ages and abilities. She holds a Level 4 qualification in Early years practice, and is currently working towards a Foundation Degree in early years with the Open University. The childminder shows excellent stamina and an enthusiastic attitude towards childminding and early education for children. She adopts a professional attitude towards updating her knowledge in early years; she has undertaken numerous training courses about the Foundation Stage since the last inspection, including those about child development, observation, planning and assessment. However, her knowledge regarding certain procedures for child protection require updating. The childminder is an accredited member of the local childminding network, and currently provides funded early education for three pre-school children during the week. She makes curriculum plans for their learning based on the Foundation Stage, though some individual learning plans do not always focus on specific learning needs identified in the relevant assessments of children's learning. The childminder is currently approved for minding four under-fives, and all children receive good support for their care and welfare. However, the care of the under-threes, who at times are demanding of the childminder's attention, impinges on the time and support provided for nursery education during part of the week.

All required documentation is in place, and there are detailed policies and procedures to explain to parents her comprehensive operational plan for childminding, and for children's learning according to the Birth to three matters framework or the Foundation Stage. All records are easily accessible, and stored in an organised and secure manner, thus preserving confidentiality. The childminder is pro-active in updating herself about the latest guidance regarding the National Standards and related requirements. She has sound systems in place for monitoring her nursery education practices. She does a formal evaluation every term to see how her plans work. She attends planning meetings organised by the National Childminding Association (NCMA). She also has regular visits from the NCMA network co-ordinator, and works closely with her to monitor her planning and delivery of education. They discuss her strengths and weaknesses, and how to further improve the care and learning for children. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to inform parents in advance of meals to be given. She has since started the practice of informing parents through a simple daily menu displayed in the playroom every morning.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004.

The childminder 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 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 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):

- update knowledge of child protection to further safeguard children

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):

- improve planning by making effective use of assessments and evaluations to identify individual learning needs to move children onto the next stage.
- improve the organisation of books and play resources, such as through appropriate labelling, to enhance self-initiated learning.

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