



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	152552
Inspection date	17 July 2006
Inspector	Ann Hilary Guy
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 registered in 2001. She lives with her husband and three children aged fourteen, twelve and eight years in a village in South Buckinghamshire. The childminder uses the whole house for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding seven children under five at various times and five children over five before and after school on different days. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. She attends the local parent toddler group and takes children to the local park. The family have five cats, one hamster, two gerbils and two rabbits as pets.

The childminder can support children with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities. She is a member of an approved childminding network and is currently in receipt of funding for early education for three and four-year-olds.

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. They learn the importance of personal hygiene through the daily routine and activities, washing hands before food, on most occasions, and independently dealing with their needs on the toilet; together with a sound nappy changing procedure. The organisation of the day enables all children to have a period of rest and relaxation after lunch, when they either have a sleep or do a quiet activity. Children access outdoor play daily, with very good use made of the garden to encourage their physical skills. They have a wide range of equipment available and also regularly visit the local park and walk to and from school.

The children are cared for by an experienced childminder who creates a very child friendly atmosphere and keeps clear records of all accidents, incidents and medication. Children begin to learn about nutrition and the importance of healthy eating through the very balanced menu offered, which includes two hot meals a day with plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit. They have regular drinks of water throughout the day and occasionally have a snack. Special dietary needs are well catered for, in consultation with the parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in the safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment. Children use most areas of the house, although the main play area is in the lounge. The childminder has identified risks within her home and, through working closely with parents and having clear house rules, monitors children's safety. Children play safely and independently in both the house and garden, with the pond being securely fenced off and the gate closely monitored. They understand the house rules and abide by these at all times, including when out walking with the childminder. Children are beginning to understand the need for protection against the sun, moving between the full sun and shaded areas of the garden whilst playing.

Children greatly benefit from the wide range of equipment available for them. It is stored in easy to access boxes in the lounge, with additional equipment in the garage. It is all in a good state of repair. Activities are pre-selected but children can request a specific activity. Good use is made of supplementing the toys with specific items borrowed from the toy library. Children's welfare is safeguarded at all times, supported by clear documentation and the childminder's clear understanding of her responsibilities regarding child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children make very good progress in an environment that offers flexible care tailored to their individual needs. A wide variety of interesting activities, stimulate the children, helping them develop in all areas. Children benefit from the individual attention they receive from the childminder or her assistant and learn through everyday activities, visits and routines, together with special planned activities. Provision is made for school age children to do homework or play with toys containing small pieces, whilst the younger children are playing in a separate area of the room. Children have many opportunities to explore and learn for themselves, one young child had a fascination for footwear, feeling and looking at the differences between a pair of boots and a flip-flop. They also show fascination in the flora and fauna within the garden, feeling leaves and watching bugs.

Activities offered embrace all developmental areas, resulting in the children being busy, stimulated and having fun at all times. They begin to learn about the difference between right and wrong, and benefit from the positive and consistent behaviour management techniques, that incorporate much praise and encouragement.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are actively involved in their learning and experience a varied and interesting curriculum, which has a strong emphasis on science and nature. They are encouraged to explore and find things out for themselves, supported by the childminder who skilfully extends their thinking and vocabulary. They observed grass seed and soil, which was then mixed together by the children, counting spoonfuls to ensure the correct ratio. With the help of the adults present the mix was put inside a sock and this made into a caterpillar shape with the use of elastic bands. Children discussed with the childminder what the seed would need to encourage it to grow, demonstrating a sound understanding. These were to be sent home for the children to nurture and grow a hairy caterpillar.

The childminder is effectively developing the children's knowledge and understanding in all areas, although not all aspects of learning are covered in as much detail. Planning is clearly linked to the stepping-stones and based on a topic. Regular observations are noted and recorded against the stepping-stones, together with identifying the next steps of learning. These are used when planning for the future, ensuring children receive challenges to extend their abilities, knowledge and understanding. Children benefit from the integrated approach to learning and the individual time they receive from the childminder. The topic-based curriculum enables them to have a good variety of experiences to stimulate their minds.

The children confidently explore and discover the various activities planned for them. They have good relationships with the other children in the childminder's care and are beginning to develop friendships with their peers. They have a very good relationship with the childminder, who ensures they have opportunities to develop their concentration span through the activities offered. Children are happy and settled, they communicate well, demonstrating a very good command of language, which is ably extended and developed by the childminder. They have opportunities to mark make and are beginning to link sounds and letters through their names.

They have opportunities to develop pencil control with the use of a wide variety of media; chalk, pencils, crayons and paint. Number skills are developed through being integrated into children's play and other activities; for example counting the number of spoons of soil and seed to make the caterpillars, or the number of children at the table. They are beginning to look at comparison, and observe shapes in everyday objects.

Through topics and festivals children learn of different countries and cultures, they also have many opportunities to learn about the natural world, observing the changes in nature in the garden. They have had the opportunity to use a programmable toy and also have tills, calculators and telephones to use in their play. Their imaginative skills are extremely well developed, with children creating their own imaginary settings using the small world toys both inside and outside the house. They have many opportunities to enjoy creative activities, using paint, glue and scissors. They enjoy singing songs and action rhymes and playing musical instruments. Children have plenty of opportunities to develop their physical skills both inside and outside the house and are beginning to learn about health and bodily awareness.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are part of an extended family, to which they feel a strong sense of belonging. Their individual needs are successfully met by the childminder, who works very closely with the parents, to ensure they are fully involved in the life of the setting. Through the toys, books and conversations, children begin to appreciate other cultures and traditions. They enjoy discovering about nature through their topic work, the garden, and walks in the area and all ages get on very well together. Children generally behave well and understand the difference between right and wrong, adhering to the basic house rules. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Children greatly benefit from the good relationship and regular discussions between their parents and the childminder. Children's observations and assessments can be seen on request and are sent home at the end of each year for parents to see. Parents greatly value the good communication links ensuring their child receives consistent and supportive care at all times. All parents receive the policies together with clear written information about their child's day. They are given a clear explanation of the foundation stage, together with an explanation of what it will look like in practice. Newsletters and a large white board ensure parents are kept well informed, and they enjoy various social events at the childminder's home, enabling them to meet in a more relaxed manner during the year.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The effective organisation of time, space and resources ensures children's individual needs are well met. The policies and procedures underpin the care given and promote the children's health, safety and enjoyment. A clear registration system, together with good procedures for recording accidents, incidents and medication, ensures children's safety and welfare. Leadership and management are good. The nursery education is carefully planned to meet the children's

individual needs and help them to develop in all areas of the curriculum. The childminder evaluates sessions and knows her strengths and weaknesses. She has attended many courses to broaden and extend her knowledge, enabling her to offer a high standard of care and education.

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 ensure all low level glass is safe or inaccessible and a procedure is in place to protect children from the cats. Low level glass has been covered with safety film to ensure it is safe for children. Cats are not allowed into the bedrooms children sleep in. They have free access to the house and sometimes come through the areas children are playing. The childminder frequently cleans these areas to pick up the loose cat hairs. This has ensured the safety and cleanliness of the areas in which children play.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted 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):

- ensure all children's hands are washed before eating.

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 a system for ensuring sufficient emphasis is given to all areas of the curriculum.

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