



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	140780
Inspection date	20 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder registered in 2000. She lives with her husband and one child aged five years in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. The childminder uses the whole of the ground floor 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, when working alone, and seven children at any one time, when working with an assistant. She is currently minding five children under five, either all day or part-time, and three children over five before and after school and school holidays. 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 two cats as pets.

The childminder supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities. She holds the Nursery Nurse Examination Board certificate and is a member of an approved childminding network, 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 outstanding.

Children stay in extremely good health as the childminder follows current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. They learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care through the extremely well organised daily routine. Their independence is encouraged, especially when washing hands and going to the toilet, putting on aprons for meals and dressing themselves appropriately to play outside. Children rest and sleep according to their needs, and parental wishes, regularly monitored to ensure their well-being.

They experience a stimulating and exciting range of activities that contribute to their good health and help them to develop excellent skills and control over their body movements. Their physical activities, both inside and outside the house, offer challenge and variety, as they play on the swings and slide, ride bikes and trikes and go for walks to the park, where they experience more challenging play equipment. All are closely monitored to ensure children's safety is maintained at all times. The children enjoy being cared for by an extremely experienced childminder and assistants, who together create an exciting, child-friendly, inviting environment.

Children learn about healthy eating and nutrition through the excellent menu offered, supported by their topics and helping to grow fruits and vegetables in the garden. They receive large quantities of extremely good quality home made, food and drink, which provides a balanced, nutritious diet. All special dietary requirements are extremely well met, through the childminder working closely with the parents and keeping them fully informed of what their child has eaten during the day. Drinks are readily available throughout the day and children are reminded to have regular drinks on very hot days.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in this extremely safe, welcoming, child-friendly environment. They have plenty of space for play in the conservatory, which is a dedicated playroom, together with the extensive and well equipped garden. They have the use of the entire ground floor and one bedroom for sleeping, however, the lounge is mainly used for quieter activities or by older children doing their homework. When the weather is suitable, the garden is laid out as an extension to the house, with many activities being moved outside. Children particularly enjoy free access to sand, water, painting and a cosy book corner under one of the large shrubs. All documentation is carefully monitored and maintained to ensure the safety of the children and identify any possible hazards or risks, which are swiftly rectified. Children move around and play safely and independently both in the house and garden.

Children have access to a wide variety of toys and games that offer age appropriate stimulation throughout all age groups. They are regularly checked for safety and maintained in a good clean condition. These are stored in clearly labelled boxes on open shelves or in cupboards. Basic house rules and routines ensure children's safety both at the house and when away from it. Their welfare is safeguarded at all times, supported by extremely clear documentation, all of which is in place and appropriately used. The childminder has a very clear, good understanding of child protection and attends refresher courses to ensure her knowledge is as current as possible.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children of all ages have their needs exceedingly well met through the wide range of stimulating and exciting activities and experiences provided. The childminder has embraced the Birth to three framework and integrates this very effectively with the Foundation Stage planning, ensuring all children experience an extensive range of exciting activities that assist them to develop their understanding and skills. Children make extremely good progress in all areas and the childminder and her assistants skilfully fully integrate the various ages, so all are involved and stimulated at a level appropriate to their individual development.

Children thrive in an environment offering flexible care, tailored to their individual needs. They benefit greatly from the individual attention they receive and learn through every day activities, visits and routines. For example, learning about the properties of water and volume whilst playing in the water tray and discovering the properties of everyday objects, using them in diverse ways, through the heuristic play box. Younger children are skilfully included into any activity of their choice, with adaptations made by the adults present, to ensure they learn at their own level and are offered suitable developmentally appropriate challenges. Two children playing with puzzles were given similar boxes, but the individual puzzles contained a different number of pieces. Their concentration level was closely monitored and they were given assistance according to their individual needs, both feeling a great sense of achievement, and offered much praise and encouragement from the childminder.

Children's achievements are well documented through photographic evidence and observational recording, enabling the childminder to clearly see how they develop whilst in her care. These records are shared with parents.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are very actively involved in their learning and experience an excellent, varied topic based curriculum. They demonstrate confidence and an ability to work independently, with the childminder and her assistants effectively developing their knowledge and understanding through an integrated programme that covers all areas of learning. A very high standard of support and encouragement is given to the children. Plans are topic based and very clearly linked to the stepping-stones. The planning system ensures the next steps of learning are addressed for every funded child and activities are clearly evaluated, enabling the childminder to improve and adjust her teaching, appropriate to the needs of the child. Much learning is through experiential play and the discussion that goes

alongside. Children enjoy a great many varied experiences including planting fruits and vegetables in the garden and monitoring their growth, to looking at how people live, and homes in different parts of the world. Throughout all these topics, the childminder and her assistants skilfully interweave all areas of learning, ensuring children get plenty of opportunities to reinforce any new concepts learnt. Very clear assessment records are maintained, and used effectively when planning the next steps of learning. Observations are made and cross-referenced to the stepping-stones, which assist in ensuring all areas of learning are covered in sufficient detail.

Children have extremely good relationships with the childminder and her assistants who set activities out in a way that encourages curiosity and interest from them. They are developing very good concentration spans and enjoy the mixture of free choice and guided activities offered. Children communicate with clarity, using a broad range of vocabulary, which is superbly extended through their play, by the childminder and her assistants. They have many opportunities to link sounds to letters and effectively mark make using a wide variety of resources, chalk, pens, crayons, felt pens, paint. Children experience opportunities to count and calculate through every day experiences and the daily routine. They are encouraged to count how many girls and boys are present and compare which number is largest. Shape, volume and measure is taught through practical activities, measuring their height against a picture of a sunflower and writing their names on the leaves, clearly showing who is the tallest. Through their exciting topic work, children learn about different countries, cultures and religions in a practical way. They enjoy listening to stories and reading a wide variety of fact and fiction books.

Extremely good use is made of the garden to enable children to develop their physical skills with both large and small equipment readily available. Their imaginative skills are well developed through the excellent use made of small world toys, dressing up, and a wide variety of uses for the 'home corner' area; for example a garden centre with real seeds and some real tools. Children experience an excellent variety of art and craft opportunities, some guided and others self selected. One child chose to paint a background using four brushes, each containing a different colour paint, at the same time. She then used her finger nail to scratch a picture into the colourful background and was thrilled with the results. They have many opportunities to learn about technology and simple scientific concepts. Children enjoy singing, both as a group and spontaneously. They have opportunities to listen to a wide variety of music, including pop and classical, and use a good selection of interesting percussion instruments, enabling them to develop their musical skills and appreciation.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are fully included and feel a very strong sense of belonging to an extended family, whilst in the childminder's care. Their individual needs are extremely skilfully met by the childminder and her assistants, who work very closely with the parents. The children relish discovering about the natural world, through exploration in the garden and their walks in the local community. Through the toys, books and topics, together with the wide variety of traditions of the children cared for, they learn to appreciate other traditions, cultures and customs.

Children of all ages play extremely well together and are very caring towards each other. They happily share resources and take turns when using equipment. Children with English as an additional language are extremely well supported and fully integrated. They are developing a clear understanding of right and wrong and adhere to the simple house rules. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Children greatly benefit from the excellent relationship and regular discussions the childminder has with the parents. The parents greatly value the good communication links and daily diary, keeping them fully informed of all aspects of their child's care and meeting the individual needs of their children. New parents are very well informed and the childminder obtains extensive information from them to enable her to provide the most suitable care for their child. Parents of children in receipt of funded education receive detailed information about the Foundation Stage, together with a daily report of their child's achievements and an end of year report on the whole of the Foundation Stage. Assessment records are shared with the parents, on request.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The very effective organisation of time, space and resources, together with the friendly inviting atmosphere, ensures children's individual needs are given utmost priority and enables them to effectively develop. The extensive policies and procedures, together with the regular evaluations of the care offered, ensure children receive the highest possible standard of care at all times, and promote their health, safety and enjoyment effectively.

The clear registration system and other paperwork, plus a comprehensive risk assessment, regularly updated, ensures children's safety and welfare at all times. Children greatly benefit from the amount of individual attention they receive from the childminder or one of her assistants.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Children thrive in the well-planned and organised daily routine, and are very happy and secure. The childminder and her assistants work extremely well as a team, providing an extensive range of interesting and stimulating activities, ensuring children experience the entire curriculum over a period of time, revisiting areas and working at the child's pace, to ensure full understanding. Planning is clearly linked to the foundation stage curriculum and this together with the informative evaluations, enable clear and effective planning for the next steps of learning.

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 make available to parents a written statement, providing the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint. She has a very clear complaints policy in place, and also a poster within the play room clearly showing the contact number for Ofsted. All policies are made and readily available for parents to see.

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

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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