



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	222326
Inspection date	15 December 2006
Inspector	Heidi Falconer
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 outstanding. 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 1988. She lives with her husband in the town of Cambridge. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is 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 three children under five all day, and two children over five before and after school. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends local parent and toddler groups with minded children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive and their good health is maintained because the childminder follows highly effective and robust procedures and practices to meet children's physical, nutritional and health needs. For example, children enthusiastically explore, test and develop physical control through stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences that provide them with high levels of challenge. For example, under the close supervision of the childminder, children enjoy climbing trees, using rope swings and climbing on small and large pieces of apparatus at the local park. In the childminder's garden, children enjoy opportunities to dig and use tools as they grow lettuces and play on her work bench, wearing safety goggles and helmets. Other activities such as puddle jumping, going for walks in the rain and exercising to an 'exercise bear video' significantly enhances children's positive attitude to physical exercise, as part of their daily routine.

Children are protected from the risk of cross-infection, because the childminder is an excellent role model to them on hygiene practices. For example, all children, including young babies are encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet or having their nappy changed. This helps children to develop a very good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. Children independently and enthusiastically wash their hands at appropriate times with little adult intervention, demonstrating their good understanding of personal care routines. Older children, understand why they need to wash their hands and have created laminated signs in the childminder's kitchen and bathroom which remind others to 'wash your hands and not your feet, before you eat'. Children are consistently protected from cross-infection as they have individual face sponges which are for their exclusive use.

Children are developing an excellent understanding of healthy living and how to look after their bodies through planned activities and everyday routines. For example, children are involved in the preparation of some food such as, helping to chop up fruit for a fruit salad. On the day of the inspection children chose five pictures of healthy fruit and vegetables, which they thought Santa, would like to eat. This gave the childminder the opportunity to talk to the children about different foods which promote their growth and development. In addition, a 'Five a day' sticker chart, in the childminder's kitchen, shows the children how many portions of fruit and vegetables they have had each day. Parents provide their child's packed lunch, and this is stored in the fridge so that food remains fresh and appetising for the children to eat. The childminder has an excellent understanding of each child's dietary needs and rigorously checks the ingredient list on all food that she provides, to ensure that children's health is maintained.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder gives high priority to promoting and protecting children's welfare. Children are protected by the childminder's in depth understanding of child protection policies and the correct procedures to follow if she had concerns about a child. This knowledge has been gained through training, and her understanding of local guideline, as set out by her Local Safeguarding Children's Board. Parents are fully informed of the action that would be taken in the event of

a concern through the childminder's detailed child protection policy, which they receive a copy of.

Children learn about their own and others safety through following the excellent practice of the childminder. Children learn about road safety through discussions and role play scenarios with the childminder. In addition, after children asking a lollypop lady 'can I have 2 lollies pops please' the childminder talked to the children about the role of the lollypop lady and how she helps to keep them safe. Children are involved in regular fire drills and fire safety discussions. For example, the childminder has purchased a video about fire engines and fire safety, which she uses to sensitively talk to the children about how they could keep themselves safe in the event of a fire.

Children's welfare is promoted through the childminder's extensive knowledge and procedures she puts in place to protect their safety and reduce accidents. For example, comprehensive health and safety risk assessments are carried out to identify hazards with regard to equipment and areas of the home which children access. In response to this the childminder has taken additional precautions throughout her home such as, securing the bookcase to the wall. In addition to ensure that young children are safe when they are sleeping, the childminder always carries out an 'arm test' before laying them down to sleep. This check ensures that children are unable to reach any potentially dangerous items from their cot.

Children are cared for in safe and secure premises which are extremely suitable for caring for children. Children have plenty of space to move freely, and great emphasis is given to making sure the environment is welcoming, to aid their development and help children feel a sense of belonging. For example, downstairs the children freely use the spacious lounge and dining area and upstairs they have a dedicated playroom, which is decorated with children's drawings and artwork. The playroom is equipped with an extensive range of safe and well-maintained resources, which are suitable to the children's ages and stages of development. The organisation of these resources in low-level units allows children to access them freely, which significantly enhances their independence and development.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an extremely relaxed and friendly atmosphere where they develop warm and affectionate relationships with the childminder and her husband. This contributes significantly to the children's enjoyment and feelings of security. Children's play and learning is very well supported by a childminder who has an excellent understanding of how children learn. For example, the childminder is very knowledgeable about schemas, and she ensures that her practice does not hinder the development of these. In contrast, she provides activities and resources such as, wheels and wheeled toys which promote a particular schema. To ensure that activities meet individual needs the childminder expertly uses documents such as, 'Birth to three matters' and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning.

Children are happy to attend and relish their time in the childminder's care because she creates a stimulating environment, which puts them first. Children demonstrate their high levels of

confidence and enthusiasm to join in activities and include the childminder. For example, children invite the childminder to join them in making a crown for the party saying 'I'll pass some crayons to you, and you can also make a crown'. All children engage eagerly in a wealth of purposeful play and first hand experiences. For example, they watch butterflies grow in their 'live butterfly garden', and then they use a range of creative materials to create pictures of the changes that they have seen. These are then displayed, demonstrating how the childminder values children's contributions. Children's experiences are enriched and enhanced by the interaction of the childminder, who uses her knowledge of each individual child to adapt and extend activities to suit individual needs, so that all children can take part. For example, children talk excitedly about a recent Halloween party and how they had to 'bob' for apples. The childminder adapted the activity by allowing the younger children to 'bob' for their apples using forks. As the children recalled this activity, they said 'I couldn't do it could I?' the childminder replied 'no, but it was good that you tried'. This support promotes children's self-esteem and confidence. Children of all ages have opportunities to visit a wide variety of pre-school activity groups with the childminder. This gives children the opportunity mix with children of a similar age and broadens their experiences.

Children play a dynamic part in the setting, making decisions about how they spend their time. Children lead play activities, particularly role play. For example, when playing shops children confidently direct their own play saying 'Can you wait please, I just need to fix my till madam, now what have you got in your basket'. Children further extend these activities by confidently accessing additional resources, such as play credit cards, from the playroom to develop their play. The childminder is perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and uses questions very successfully to challenge children's thinking and develop their language skills. For example, when making crows the childminder asked the children to consider if their head would be bigger or smaller than hers.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

An excellent partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being in the setting. Parents are fully informed of all aspects of the provision through the childminder's excellent portfolio. This includes an extensive range of written policies, procedures, previous inspection reports and training and insurance certificates. In addition, all new parents receive a parent pack which contains information on how to make complaints, contracts and permission forms for their child. This excellent organisation ensures that all of the required documentation is in place for each child prior to them being cared for by the childminder, thus promoting their welfare and safety. Written parental feedback shows that parents greatly value the care offered by the childminder. They value the regular exchanges of information and the childminder's flexible approach to delivering this information. For example, the childminder discusses with the parents which forms of communication best suit them, such as written daily diaries or verbal feedback. The childminder shares the knowledge that she gains from training courses with parents. This ensures that parents are kept up to date with any changes in the provision, which may affect their child. Through discussions with the childminder parents know how their children are progressing and developing. These steps ensure extremely effective continuity of care for the children.

Children's sense of belonging is fully fostered through the warm, welcoming and homely atmosphere, and the childminder's overwhelming dedication to their care. She works hard to ensure that she knows the children's individual characters and needs well, and organises the provision around these. Children have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned themes and spontaneous conversations with the childminder. For example, the childminder uses children's interests as a starting point. Recently the children asked why a family close by were having fireworks in their garden. The childminder talked to the children about the families' culture, explaining that they were celebrating the festival of Diwali. The childminder then used some of her resource books to share further information with the children, still ensuring that it was appropriate to their level of understanding.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They have developed a good understanding of acceptable behaviour and what is expected of them as a result of familiar routines and consistent expectations. For example, children tidy away resources and take them back to the playroom when they have finished with them. The childminder develops young children's understanding of the need to share and take turns by encouraging the children to share popular resources. The childminder has high expectations and sets consistent boundaries for older children, which helps them learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children benefit from being cared for by a highly qualified and skilled childminder who continually strives to improve her current excellent practice through attendance on courses. These include training in child protection, parental drug use and the impact that this has on children, playing with sounds, schemas, the Foundation Stage curriculum, and information, communication and technology. The childminder also regularly attends childminding conferences and she belongs to her local childminding network, where she meets with other childminder's to share good practice. In addition, as part of her completion of the National Childminding Association accredited quality assurance scheme 'Quality comes first' the childminder regularly monitors and improves the quality of the care that she offers.

A wealth of detailed documentation is in place. Policies, records and procedures are clear and comprehensive, underpinning the childminder's outstanding practice of promoting positive outcomes for all children. All documentation is completed correctly and regularly reviewed, to ensure that it reflects current legislation. For example, the childminder has updated her complaints procedure, and has developed a system to record any complaints which she may receive.

Children's care and enjoyment is greatly enhanced by the childminder's exceptional quality of organisation. The childminder's home is organised extremely well to allow the children to make decisions and pursue their own interests in a very safe environment. For example, children have free access to the indoor space, maximising their play opportunities. As a result children confidently play in the different areas of the home which best suit their play. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to ensure that parents are made aware of her child protection policy. The childminder now ensures that all new parents receive a copy of her policy prior to their child starting. This improves the effectiveness of her partnership with parents.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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.

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 outstanding. 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

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