



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	259871
Inspection date	12 October 2006
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
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 2001. She lives with her husband and two children aged nine and six years in the Brickhill area of Bedford. The living room, kitchen and entrance hall are used for childminding and there is a first floor bedroom available for children staying for overnight care. Children have access to the fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding three children under five during the day on a part-time basis, and one child over five before and after school on a part-time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. She attends the local toddler group. The family has a goldfish and a tortoise as pets.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean home. Their health and development are consistently promoted because evidence demonstrates that the childminder has a good understanding of healthy eating, producing menu plans which contain a balanced variety of all food types. Children's dietary requirements are discussed with parents and clearly recorded. The spread of infection is minimised as there is clear guidance about the exclusion of children who are unwell, with each parent being given written information about this. This area is further supported by good practices such as the regular changing of sand in the sand pit and the provision of separate face cloths, cutlery and crockery for each child. Children are encouraged to wash their hands before meals and cooking activities and their understanding of the relevance of good personal hygiene is promoted because the childminder talks with them about issues such as how germs can cause illness. However, this area is not always promoted because children are not always encouraged to wash their hands before snacks.

Children participate in a wide variety of physical activities, contributing to the promotion of their good health. They have regular opportunities for outdoor exercise and fresh air, for example, they enjoy walking in the woods, using local parks and visiting the farm. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills such as balance and co-ordination as they play in the garden with the climbing frame, ride-on toys, ball pool and small trampoline. They also enjoy structured activities such as dance sessions and making 'assault courses'. Children's development with regard to finer skills is promoted because they are encouraged through a range of activities such as craft activities where they learn to hold scissors and pencils correctly, or making pizza where they use utensils, mix ingredients and knead the dough.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's daily safety is given a high priority because the childminder is aware of potential risks and takes positive steps to minimise these. She has written clear safety policies, for example, covering procedures to follow in the event of a fire, practising these with the children so that they become familiar with them. Their safety is further enhanced because the childminder continuously assesses her home and implements clear procedures such as not allowing children to use the climbing frame without her direct supervision. However, their safety is affected because they are able to access the electrical cord on the vacuum cleaner which is stored next to their toy storage area.

Children use safe toys and equipment and the childminder makes sure that these are accessible and appropriate for their ages and developmental stages, for example, there are different sized swings for different age groups. Children are always offered a good selection of toys and resources because the childminder regularly purchases additional ones, checking carefully that these meet all current safety standards.

Children are building up their knowledge about keeping themselves safe. They are well informed as the childminder talks with them about daily safety issues such as crossing the road safely and checking doors and drawers before opening and closing them. The children's welfare is well promoted because the childminder has a good knowledge of her responsibilities regarding child protection. There is a written policy in place to support this area and the childminder has made sure that she has all relevant information and paperwork to enable her to record, report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very secure and settled, thoroughly enjoying their time with the childminder. Their achievements are high because the childminder is skilled and knowledgeable and has realistic yet high expectations of each child. This creates a positive environment in which children can play and learn confidently. They are consistently offered a high standard of care because the childminder has an excellent understanding of child development. Children's play and learning are further enhanced because the childminder has a very good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and clearly recognises the holistic nature of play, learning and development. She confidently utilises this framework throughout her daily work and in her planning and assessment for younger children, ensuring that their play is fun, purposeful and stimulating.

Children are very well settled due to the childminder's confidence and her meticulous attention to all details relating to their individual needs. All daily routines and requirements are recorded and reviewed regularly to ensure that these are up to date and children's needs are being consistently met. Children are motivated and interested in their play, picking up on the childminder's enthusiasm and her genuine enjoyment of their company. They have excellent relationships with the childminder, listening intently to stories, joining in with conversations and readily approaching her for help and comfort whenever needed. They are given numerous opportunities and encouragement to develop their creativity due to the childminder's particular skills in supporting this area of play. For example, children make tents in the living room and use cardboard boxes as houses and cars. They thrive in this environment where it is safe to express their feelings and try new experiences.

Older children's play is enhanced and their development in all areas is consistently promoted because the childminder has a very good knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. She uses her knowledge to bring all areas of learning into the children's play and routines and to make this fun. For example, autumn walks are used as opportunities to collect leaves and these are later transformed into collages and leaf prints. Children enjoy an extensive, stimulating range of indoor and outdoor activities because the childminder is meticulous in her planning and evaluation of these. Children are offered opportunities to access familiar play resources and activities such as role play, reading and construction, promoting their confidence in these areas. They are also offered a creative range of opportunities to participate in additional activities which are linked to themes and are changed on a monthly basis. This provides opportunities for them to look in more detail at topics such as 'Autumn' where they make harvest rolls, collages and visit a local farm.

Children's understanding of the world around them is greatly increased because the childminder is skilled in using daily routines and incidental occurrences as learning opportunities. For example, before children visit the local bird sanctuary they talk about what they are going to see and make cardboard binoculars to make the visit meaningful. 'National Butterfly Week' has more meaning to children because they discuss this and visit a nearby butterfly park. Understanding different creatures becomes realistic as the children help to care for the goldfish, learning that they have to be gentle and discussing why the fish needs to stay in water.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are welcomed and play an active part in the daily routines because the childminder values their individuality and has an excellent understanding of issues which affect children's daily lives. Their behaviour is excellent and they are exceptionally well supported in learning about sharing, negotiating and turn taking. The childminder has high expectations of the children and they react positively to this environment. They are set realistic, consistent boundaries and are always offered explanations so that they can begin to understand their behaviour and make decisions about this. All issues are discussed with parents so that children's behaviour is managed consistently.

Children have extensive opportunities to learn about their community and the world around them through planned activities and outings to local places of interest such as parks, farms, toddler groups, the library and the zoo. Their understanding of the wider world and diversity are promoted through their participation in activities connected with festivals such as Diwali, Chinese New Year, Christmas, Harvest Festival and Easter. Their understanding and knowledge are further promoted because they have daily access to resources which give positive images, such as books, dressing-up clothes, dolls and play figures.

Children who have special needs have their needs and requirements clearly identified and consistently met. The childminder has previous experience of caring for children with special needs and is confident to judge how well individual needs can be met within existing routines. All children are included in planned activities and daily routines and are able to easily access a vast assortment of toys. This area is further enhanced because the childminder carries out her own research to ensure that all disabilities and specific needs are fully understood and she is able to act in the children's best interest at all times.

The childminder has an excellent partnership with parents, which contributes significantly to the children's well-being and development. Children's ongoing needs are recognised and consistently met because the childminder pays meticulous attention to exchanging information with parents, ensuring that she is available at the beginning and end of the sessions to discuss any issues or concerns. This area is further supported and parents are kept exceptionally well informed of their children's progress and activities because the childminder keeps daily diaries for each child. These contain detailed information about issues such as how children are settling in, their participation in activities and their daily play, as well as informing parents of forthcoming activities and plans. There is a clear complaints procedure and all parents have been given Ofsted's contact details. The childminder's positive attitude and her involvement of parents in

all aspects ensures that they are kept fully informed and appropriate care is consistently provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met. Their care is enhanced by the childminder's good organisation and her attention to detail in all areas of her work. She organises her time very well and ensures that children are always able to eat, sleep and play comfortably. They are able to initiate their own play and learning, assured that the childminder will always be available to support them when needed. Children's overall development is consistently promoted through the childminder's attention to detail in planning and organising her daily work, ensuring that children are always offered a wide range of stimulating activities and opportunities.

Children's individual needs are consistently and comfortably met because the childminder has paid thoughtful attention to the organisation of her home. This has been organised so that the varying needs of children of all ages can be met and they can be offered a wide range of activities and play opportunities. For example, the living room is cleared to make space for the train set and construction activities, whilst the kitchen is used for crafts and messy play. Children's safety and welfare are consistently promoted because all details and information are accurately recorded and regularly updated. The childminder ensures that all records are accessible but are also stored securely and confidentially. The daily implementation of practical policies and procedures and the regular review of work further enhances the care provided.

Improvements since the last inspection

At her last inspection, the childminder was asked to develop her knowledge of child protection. She has now ensured that she has all relevant leaflets and information and has carried out her own research in order to keep up to date with current practice, enabling her to further promote children's welfare. She was asked to take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and has provided lists of infectious diseases, sharing this information with parents, thus promoting children's health and minimising the spread of infection. The childminder was also asked to establish procedures with parents regarding the departure of children and their release to named individuals. She has now introduced forms specifying this, a password system for emergencies and all individuals are now stated on the contract with parents, further promoting children's safety and well-being.

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.

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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):

- improve children's health by ensuring that good hygiene procedures regarding hand-washing are consistently practised
- improve children's safety by ensuring that they are not able to access the electrical cord on the vacuum cleaner.

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