



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	256942
Inspection date	06 March 2007
Inspector	Anna Davies
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 1981. The childminder lives with her husband in a house just outside Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. She works with another registered childminder at this property. The whole ground floor of the 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 alone and 12 when working alongside another childminder. Currently they care for six children under five on a full and part-time basis, and one child over five before and after school on a part-time basis. Both childminder's have joint responsibility for the childminding practice. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. She attends the local parent and toddler group and takes children to the local park.

The childminder 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 are well protected from the risks of infection and cross contamination. For example, children use sensible hygiene practices such as hand washing before meals and after toileting, as part of their daily routine. The childminder promotes children's awareness of good hygiene procedures. For example, she answers children's questions about why she is wiping the table, giving them appropriate information on maintaining a clean environment to prevent the spread of germs. A written policy is in place regarding sick children which has a 24 hour exclusion period for some illnesses so that all children's health is well maintained. The childminder records all accidents using appropriate documentation. She has a suitably stocked first aid kit which means that there are appropriate resources to provide effective first aid to a child in the event of an accident. This is supported by the childminder holding a valid first aid certificate. The childminder has undertaken further training of specific medical conditions which ensures that children's individual health needs can be met.

Children's routines are agreed with parents so that they have their needs for rest and sleep met in a consistent fashion which suitably promotes their emotional well-being. The childminder is flexible in her own routines as she settles new children into the provision. For example, she offers babies rest and food on demand whilst she gets to know their routines. Children enjoy a good range of physical activities which promotes their health. For example, when younger children visit the local toddler group, they climb on equipment such as climbing frames, which provides suitable challenge. Toddlers are developing their physical skills as they confidently push walkers around the available play space and take their first unaided steps. Older children develop their balance and co-ordination as they negotiate the 'washing up bowl' stepping stones. They use a wide range of smaller equipment which effectively develops their hand and eye co-ordination, such as bats and balls, skipping ropes and hoops.

The childminder works closely with parents to ensure that children's dietary needs are met and encourages children to eat a varied diet, although her co-childminder takes responsibility for providing food for children whose parents do not wish to supply their own food. Children choose from a variety of fruits at snack time and are kept well hydrated throughout the day with regular drinks. This helps to ensure that a healthy lifestyle is promoted. Children's awareness of healthy options is developed as the childminder uses activities such as growing cress, to ensure that they learn through play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder works in her own house and shares responsibility with her co-childminder for keeping children safe in a warm, clean environment. The childminder ensures that most necessary safety precautions are taken both inside and outside her home. For example, she ensures

external doors are kept secure and cupboards and drawers have safety catches to ensure that children cannot access hazardous materials. Children are well protected from the risks of fire because appropriate detection and prevention measures are in place, smoke detectors are regularly checked and an emergency escape plan is discussed with the children. As a result, children are able to move about safely and freely.

The childminder encourages children to think about their own safety. For example, when they are out on walks, the children learn to 'stop, look and listen' as they cross roads safely. They wear visibility vests along with wristbands with her emergency contact number on in case they get lost. Children are transported safely in the childminder's car using appropriate restraints and the required parental permission is obtained. However, written parental permission is not obtained to take children on public transport which does not effectively promote children's safety whilst on some outings. Older children are encouraged to consider younger children's safety as they use resources containing small parts. For example, children play with construction kits at the table so that young children cannot choke on the small bricks.

Children are able to play with a good range of quality toys and resources, which are appropriate to their age and stage of development. These are well presented on low-level shelving and units which enables children to make independent choices. The childminder takes particular responsibility after the minded children have gone home, for checking the safety of resources, and remains vigilant throughout the day to ensure that toys continue to be safe and suitable for children to use.

The childminder has a good awareness of child protection issues and has attended training in this area. She passes on her knowledge and understanding to her co-childminder to ensure that children are well safeguarded. The childminder is secure in her knowledge and reporting concerns to appropriate authorities in order to promote children's well-being effectively.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The childminder provides a positive learning environment in which children are encouraged to participate in a good range of purposeful activities. Children are able to direct their own play and also have opportunities to take part in many themed activities such as art and craft. For example, photographs show a large Autumn collage, created when children collected leaves to create the tree trunk and used their handprints to represent foliage. These activities are jointly planned by the childminder and her co-childminder to provide children with rich learning opportunities.

Children's communication skills are well promoted as the childminder ensures that she spends time talking to the children and encourages them to repeat words. The childminder sits young children on her knee and shares stories with them, pointing out pictures of interest. Children confidently name other children on photos displayed around the room. Regular trips out into the local community such as to soft play centres, shops and local toddler groups, effectively promotes children's understanding and awareness of the wider world.

The childminder has warm relationships with the children who are happy and content. For example, babies bounce happily on the childminder's lap and older children play contentedly together on the floor. The childminder effectively supports children as they play. For example, children are encouraged in their mathematical development as they are asked to identify and match shapes during a game. The childminder provides effective support to students as she helps them to stimulate young babies with appropriate toys and resources.

Children have good opportunities to develop their creativity and imagination, as they use their senses in a range of activities. These include water, sand and foam play and they also enjoy dressing up. The childminder has attended 'Birth to three matters' training and as a result, is developing different aspects of the framework within her practice. For example, some children have a 'celebration of achievement' booklet which includes photos and observations of them participating in the different activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals. They are happy and interested in their play. The childminder has developed a basic understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage but has not attended any training. The childminder generally plans activities for children, which cover the six areas of learning. However, activities do not always have an identified learning intention and do not show how the activity will be adapted for children's different needs. Some observations are recorded for children. However, these are general and are not used effectively to show what children can do and how they will be moved on to the next stage of their learning. Time and resources are used effectively to enable children to experience inside and outside play opportunities.

Children are friendly and show care and concern for each other. For example, children remind each other that they should close their mouths when eating food and show patience as younger children want to share resources with them. Children confidently speak to share experiences as they describe how they get themselves dressed in the morning and they demonstrate independence as they confidently use the toilet and wash their own hands. Children are provided with opportunities to write as they copy letters and link the letter sounds to people's names.

Children learn about mathematics in a variety of ways through interesting and practical activities, for example, they count spoonfuls of mixture as they make peppermint creams. Children are learning to solve simple number problems as they work out how many spaces they need to seat all the children at lunchtime. Children use mathematical language during their play, for example, they discuss the 'big' and 'little' pieces of ham at lunchtime.

Children have regular access to creative material and are able to explore colour and texture through activities such as painting, junk modelling and shaving foam. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted because the childminder asks open-ended, age-appropriate questions such as 'which animals live in the snow?' However, children are not always given enough time to demonstrate what they already know and this is not effective in helping them to consolidate the knowledge that they already have or to move them on to the next step in their learning. Children are gaining knowledge of their community and the wider

world through topics, resources and activities. These include visits to the local library, celebrating different cultures and traditions and visiting the local country park to learn about the animals that live there.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are warmly welcomed into the childminder's home and this enables them to feel a good sense of belonging and self worth, for example, photographs of the children are displayed around the room which demonstrates that they are valued. The childminder demonstrates a very positive attitude to following the parents wishes for the care of their child. This ensures that children receive good quality care that is consistent with their home routines. All parents receive a comprehensive 'welcome pack' which introduces them to the services that the childminder and co-childminder provide. Parents of older children receive feedback in the form of daily discussions and a daily booklet is used for younger children to keep parents up-to-date with their child's day.

Children learn about other cultures and festivals through a wide range of activities. For example, children create a 'tree of life' to celebrate May Day and make traditional sweets to celebrate Hindu festivals. A good range of resources helps to promote children's awareness of diversity, for example, children dress dolls in traditional Indian clothing. Children's behaviour is good. The childminder has a clear and consistent approach to behaviour management, which means that children know what is expected of them and they feel secure. Children play happily together, sharing and taking turns. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The childminder works closely with parents and outside agencies to support those children with learning difficulties and or disabilities and ensures that she provides suitable resources, such as over-sized dominoes for visually impaired children, to effectively promote their development and individual needs.

Partnership with the parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive some verbal information about the Foundation Stage. However, this is not sufficient to ensure that all parents know how the activities provided by the childminder, help children learn and make progress towards the early learning goals. The childminder and parents discuss children's progress. Children benefit from this two-way sharing of information to enhance their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children receive good levels of adult support which makes them feel safe and secure. However, the names and times of attendance of the adults or students looking after the children are not routinely recorded. This is not completely effective in ensuring that correct adult to child ratios are maintained at all times of the day.

The childminder is well organised and keeps all necessary contracts and most permission forms in a safe and accessible folder. Parents are well informed of the way the childminder runs her

service because they receive a copy of her policies and procedures. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Regular training courses, such as first aid, child protection, healthy eating and food hygiene, help the childminder to develop the way she cares for the children and continue to improve her practice. The childminder meets regularly with other accredited childminders and works in partnership with a network coordinator to develop and improve her practice for children in receipt of nursery education funding.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to attend a child protection course to update her knowledge of child abuse. The childminder has completed training in this area and has a good understanding of child protection procedures in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board which means children's welfare is well safeguarded. The childminder was also asked to draw up a written agreement with parents that sets out the expectations of both parties as to the care of the child, activities provided and business arrangements. Each child now has a written agreement in place and a business contract which ensures that the childminder works in partnership with parents to meet the needs of the children. The childminder also agreed to ensure the time of children's arrival is entered into the register at the beginning of the day. The attendance records are accurately maintained to include children's time of arrival and departure.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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 satisfactory.

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):

- obtain permission for children to travel on public transport

- further develop the record of attendance to ensure that the names and hours of attendance of all persons including students, looking after children, are recorded.

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 knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how to use planning and assessment to provide and plan opportunities for children's next steps in their learning
- provide parents with information on the Foundation Stage so that they know how the activities provided help children learn and make progress towards the early learning goals.

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