

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221398
Inspection date	09 July 2007
Inspector	Susan Marriott

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 was registered in 1995. She lives with her husband and three teenage children, in a house in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. The childminder provides funded nursery education places. The house is close to local amenities and Croyland Park. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder is currently providing care for five children under five-years-old on a part-time, flexible basis and out of school care for two older school age children. Childminding activities are centred upon the downstairs accommodation where there are toilet facilities. The childminder is a member of the local Childminding Network, the National Childminding Association and regularly attends local carer and toddler groups.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder conscientiously works to detailed, written, purposeful policies and procedures which she has devised in relation to health, hygiene, medication and illness. The childminder ensures children are well cared for if they have an accident or become ill. Any injured or sick children are given plenty of reassurance and any first aid treatment that is required. The childminder rigorously maintains an accident, incident and medication folder, which details all accidents and incidents that happen and records any medication that is given to children. Children receive appropriate first aid because the childminder holds and regularly updates a suitable first aid qualification.

Children are cared for in an exceptionally clean and welcoming home where they learn the importance of high levels of hygiene and personal care. Exemplary practices are strongly encouraged. The childminder helps children to gain an excellent understanding of hygiene and a real desire to become increasingly independent in their personal care. The childminder prompts the children to recognise their own needs and respond appropriately. For example, she points out the location of the tissue box. Children use hand wipes in the cloakroom and have their own toothbrushes and toothpaste to actively promote positive dental hygiene habits. Children's clear understanding of why they must wash their hands after using the toilet and before handling food substantially reduces the risk of cross contamination. The childminder has clear procedures for the use of disposable gloves when dealing with bodily fluids to prevent the spread of infection.

Children enjoy regular physical activity specifically according to their individual needs and capabilities. Children visit the park on a regular basis where they have the opportunity to climb, run, slide and swing. On fine days the children spend time out in the garden playing with a vast range of equipment. The children enjoy outings to Wicksteed Park, the soft play park at Thurleigh and occasional train trips to Leicester. Indoor activities include singing, dance and marching with musical instruments.

Children learn about the importance of healthy eating and drinking in this exemplary setting where the childminder works exceptionally hard to promote healthy eating in accordance with parental wishes. Children do not become thirsty because they have constant access to their drinking bottles which are topped up throughout the day. Positive messages about healthy foods are conveyed through discussion during play and at meal times. When the children pretend to eat a 'play food' chicken leg, a sensitively guided discussion ensues about vegetarians not eating meat. When the children exclaim that the strawberries are cold, the childminder gently acknowledges their comment and explains that they have been kept in the fridge to keep them fresh. The conversation continues about the stinging nettles which try to grow around the strawberries and memories of strawberry picking last summer. Children are provided with nutritious, balanced meals and snacks appropriate to their individual needs. The childminder takes account of parental preferences and keeps notes of what food has been offered to the children and what the children have enjoyed and not enjoyed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are really well cared for in an exceptionally welcoming, safe and secure home environment. The childminder makes purposeful use of the available space in her home to provide a flexible domestic environment which serves their particular needs. She arranges exciting outings to foster confidence and effective learning, geared to the children's stage of development. Children can readily access equipment, toys and resources independently and safely because the childminder has thoughtfully equipped her home with the promotion of children's independence in mind. Toys and equipment are safe, suitable, stimulating and challenging. The childminder checks the toys on a regular basis and any damaged toys are removed from use immediately for disposal or repair. The childminder checks packaging to see what age range the toy is designed for and checks all toys for small parts. Children are only given toys to play with that are suitable for their age. Toys for older children are kept up high out of the reach of the younger children.

Children are able to move around and play safely, freely and independently because the childminder has identified and minimised all risks, expertly balancing freedom for the children and setting safe limits. Children actively learn to keep themselves safe because the childminder has clear rules and routines in order to maintain their safety inside and outside the home. For example, the children enjoy jumping off the bottom steps of the stairs. The childminder reminds them that big jumps have to be done outside and they must be careful of the television. She then positions herself in front of the television and joins in their imaginative game. All desirable domestic safety measures are in place. The childminder carries comprehensive contact details on her person at all times. Excellent practices actively contribute to the safety of children such as, thorough risk assessments, extensive and detailed emergency evacuation procedures and frequently practised fire drills. Children are very safe with the childminder, who has an exceptionally robust knowledge and understanding of child protection in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. She has attended an appropriate training course and keeps informative documentation to which she can refer for guidance at any time.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive here and settle rapidly in the friendly, relaxed family atmosphere where the childminder purposefully puts her training and life experience to highly skilled use. The childminder has an exceptionally competent understanding of child development and continues to develop her expertise through her Network membership and professional contacts. Children relate exceptionally well to their childminder and each other, adapting readily to the presence of visitors in the home. The childminder reminds the older children that younger children are only little and will gradually learn to share and take turns. For example, the children sit at a small table in the kitchen to make flapjacks. Each child is fully involved taking turns to measure on the scales and count their spoonfuls into the saucepan. The childminder organises a twice weekly music group for parents and carers and their children. She delivers an exceptionally good pace of activities and her minded children benefit from active participation in a wide variety of songs, action rhymes and regular opportunities to experiment with musical instruments.

The childminder is comfortably familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and uses this to guide her practice for children under three-years-old. The childminder completes detailed and highly informative observations under the components of the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are engrossed in a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which enrich their development and overall learning. The childminder earnestly plans activities prior to the children's arrival. She is highly aware of the learning opportunities presented by a wide range of activities and identifies the potential components or stepping stones which can be accessed by the children. The childminder makes effective use of unexpected opportunities for children's learning that arise from everyday events and routines. For example, a heavy snowfall provided the chance to build a snowman. She works closely with her sister, who is also a registered childminder, sharing planned activities in one another's homes. For example, the children celebrated 'Holi' by splashing brightly coloured paints in the kitchen.

The childminder provides exceptional support for children's play and learning, using the children's interests to guide her planning and responding readily to the children's needs. She extends children's language skills through play, offering the word 'aubergine' during kitchen role play with play food. Children have their name cards on the kitchen wall to promote name recognition. The childminder effectively develops language for thinking as she talks children through the process of taking their vests off when dressing up and suggests that they put their socks inside their shoes so as not to lose them. The children's folders contain information from home which provides an appropriate baseline from which to gauge children's progress. The childminder keeps meticulous records which she uses exceptionally well to support children's learning and development. She jots down her observations on yellow sticky notes to correlate with the stepping stones for the Foundation Stage children. The childminder supports her comments with photographs and examples of children's work. Tracking sheets are highlighted to follow children's progress through the stepping stones and demonstrate the rapid progress being achieved by the minded children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy an interesting and stimulating range of activities and resources which are highly effective in helping children appreciate and value diversity. An extensive range of dolls, puzzles, play people with disabilities and ethnic dressing-up clothes are supplemented by books and posters which reflect positive images. The childminder is always happy to talk about any issue which arises, in a manner appropriate to the level of understanding of the children. The childminder is proactive in using her local toy library to fill any gaps in resources and children learn about their local community as they accompany their childminder to schools, shops, parks and local social groups. The childminder has no real previous experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, she is unreservedly confident to judge how well individual children's needs can be met within existing routines. All children are included in planned activities and have free access to a vast assortment of toys.

Children behave exceptionally well in response to the clear boundaries set by the childminder. The children play well together and learn to share toys. Where appropriate to their age, children are encouraged to contribute towards keeping the house tidy, safe and hygienic by putting away toys that they have finished playing with, and by helping to clear up any spills they make. They are rewarded with substantial praise and encouragement. The childminder has attended protective behaviour training and ensures that all experiences are positive and increase children's self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is outstanding. Children are fully supported through a genuine partnership with parents and carers and they receive excellent information about their child's progress towards the early learning goals. The childminder implements her 'Working with Parents' policy, taking the time to chat to the parents when they drop off and collect their children. Through discussion, she informs them of any observations she has made about their children. The childminder instigates a daily diary for younger children, in which she details care needs, food and activities that have been done each day. Parents are invited to make their own comments in the diary. The childminder actively seeks out the views of parents and carers about her child care practices and has received many highly complimentary testimonials which she proudly shares with other parents and interested parties. The childminder has devised a complaints record in line with new requirements and meets the needs of the children through the daily routine as discussed with their parents.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's needs clearly take priority in this setting. They learn to respect themselves and others. They know that they can express their feelings. This childminder has been instrumental in keeping up-to-date with current child care trends and is a very active member of the local childminding network group. The childminder receives excellent support from the network co-ordinator and the superb organisation effectively supports the outstanding quality of nursery education. The childminder plans well ahead and is equally able to use unexpected opportunities for children's learning that arise from everyday events and routines. For example, parents compliment her ability to respond to seasonal weather changes, such as sudden snowfall or hot summer sunshine. The childminder always respects the wishes of parents and works in partnership with them.

The childminder adopts a common sense approach to her childminding and is extremely confident in her childcare practice. She thinks about her service in a reflective and thoughtful manner to promote exceptionally positive outcomes for children. The childminder has made highly effective use of her self-assessment forms to evaluate the quality of care and extend her practice further. Children feel very much at home and are comfortable in the well-organised, suitably prepared and inviting environment where the childminder is able to enrich their care, learning and play through her constant interaction and inventiveness. Children confidently choose activities and the childminder encourages them to extend their own play and learning in an imaginative way. Children's welfare, care and learning is effectively supported through the childminder's clear use of written policies, procedures and routines which cover all aspects of the National Standards. All written parental permissions are in place. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder was asked to ensure hazards to children on the premises are minimised. This issue referred to a trailing wire in the playroom. The recommendation was immediately addressed to ensure the safety of children and this has substantially improved the provision for children.

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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The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

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