

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY344293
Inspection date 04 May 2007
Inspector Sarah Fletcher

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 applied to be registered in 2006. She lives with her husband and adult child in a village close to Milton Keynes. The childminder uses the whole of the ground floor for childminding, plus one bedroom for children sleeping in a cot 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 this is increased to nine children when working with another childminder on the same premises. She is currently minding four children under five part time and one child over five before and after school. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and attends the local parent/toddler group. The family has a cat and tropical fish.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because the childminder follows current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines. The childminder ensures she keeps up-to-date with information and follows recommended practice. Children are beginning to follow and understand simple good health and hygiene practices, for example, older children routinely wash their hands

before eating and after using the toilet, while the childminder cleans babies and toddlers hands and faces to establish hygiene routines from an early age. The childminder protects children from the spread of infection by following a clear sickness policy and using anti-bacterial sprays or wipes to clean surfaces and changing mats. Children use individual toiletries, such as towels, flannels and toothbrushes, together with separate cups, plates and cutlery to prevent cross infection. Nappy changing takes place in accordance with each individual child's needs, with the childminder following clear hygiene routines and disposing of nappies appropriately.

Children have their health and dietary needs met because the childminder works well with parents. The childminder ensures she meets parents' wishes and children's preferences, together with any religious or dietary requirements to nourish children in her care. For example, a comprehensive list of foods is given to parents and they are asked which items their child likes or has tried at home, with updates provided as children grow. Food given to babies and young children is carefully recorded to share with parents in individual daily diaries. Children receive a variety of freshly prepared meals and snacks with regular drinks of water, milk or juice throughout the day and on request. Snacks and meals contain fresh fruit or vegetables to improve children's diet and introduce new tastes. Most meals are eaten as social occasions at the dining table, although cold lunches are sometimes eaten as picnics in the garden. Babies receive cuddles while feeding from bottles and good interaction from the childminder when eating in high chairs.

Children learn about healthy living, through regular physical play and activity. They go to the park, play in the garden and take walks to and from school. Visits to Mead Open Farm, Willen Lake and the library, together with fruit picking, ensure children have a variety of experiences in the local area. Children rest and sleep according to their needs and parents' wishes on comfortable sofas or in travel cots in upstairs bedrooms.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming home, where they can relax and feel at ease. The childminder provides a secure and safe indoor and outside environment, which is clean, tidy and well maintained. She ensures children remain secure by keeping doors and windows locked during minding hours. Children safely access a fully enclosed rear garden, with any potential hazards securely monitored. Indoors, they access child friendly rooms, where they can move around and play freely. Children use a wide range of suitable and safe equipment, toys and resources, which are easily accessible and carefully checked for wear and tear by the childminder. For example, children choose from a selection of puzzles, books and games; with construction, dressing up clothes and art and craft activities. The childminder rotates her resources to support the needs of the children she cares for and ensures she meets their individual needs by speaking to parents and observing children at play. Toys and equipment are appropriate for children's age and stage, with babies and toddlers unable to access toys or other articles that may cause them harm. For example, older children's toys and resources are stored in boxes or cupboards out of young children's reach.

Children are safe and secure in the childminder's care, as she reduces risks and hazards and minimises dangers within the home and outdoors. For example, any dangerous liquids and knives are stored out of children's reach; and finger guards, smoke detectors and appropriate stairgates are in place. Children are secure and receive close supervision by being within sight or hearing of the childminder at all times. Access to the kitchen when cooking is under supervision and the childminder ensures children are safe when the cooker is in use, as one

childminder cares for the children, the other childminder is cooks meals. Older children learn about fire safety and evacuating in case of a fire, because the childminder has a clear plan in place, which she shares with them and helps them to understand with regular practice, recording details of each event.

Children learn to keep themselves safe and avoid accidental injury by following the childminders' guidance on stranger danger and road safety when outdoors and by not running around inside the home in case they slip, trip or fall. Appropriate documentation is in place for taking children out in the car and is stored in individual files. Sleeping babies are frequently checked with a baby monitor in regular use. Children are protected because the childminder clearly understands her role in child protection and is able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. She is able to demonstrate how she protects children by recalling her knowledge and having access to documentation for contacting the appropriate authorities. The childminder has good awareness of her responsibilities and knows the importance of recording information confidentially; she is able to describe how and what she will record. Parents are aware of the childminder's role and her responsibilities to protect children because this is detailed in her policy. The childminder is clear on the procedures to follow if allegations of abuse are made against her or her family and ensures all adults in her household are correctly vetted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well in the childminder's home, enjoying each other's company with all aspects of their care, learning and play benefiting from the high levels of interaction from the childminder. Children also gain increasing confidence in building their skills through various activities inside and outside the home. For example, children visit the fruit farm and pick their own fruit, before preparing and cooking it at the childminder's home.

Children receive good support from the childminder in their personal, social and emotional development. She finds out what children know and can do when they first attend by talking to parents and observing children when they are playing. Children settle into the childminders care gradually, over a period of several days or weeks, ensuring they are confident in her care and parents start to build trusting relationships. Children enjoy listening to stories with the childminder and learn from the many opportunities for art and craft activities, moving to music and playing with musical toys or exploring their imagination with role-play.

Children play happily with the childminder and each other, using resources such as puzzles, games, books, small world toys and outdoor equipment, suitable for their age and stage of development. Exploration with paint, playdough and water helps children represent their experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. Weekly themes help promote children's learning, for example, children find out about healthy eating and foods that are good for them, through tasting different foods and learning to recognise a variety of fruit and vegetables.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children become aware of our wider society and are beginning to understand the world through the wide range of toys and resources that reflect positive images of culture, gender and disability. For example, the childminder provides play figures and small world toys, with many appropriate posters, to help children learn about the world. Regular food tasting and celebrating festivals such as Easter, Halloween, Christmas and Mother's Day builds children's understanding, although

the childminder has yet to introduce children to festivals from differing cultures. Children learn about their local community through walking around the neighbourhood and visiting local groups, such as the library and the parent/toddler group. Children feel a sense of belonging in the relaxed family atmosphere. For example, young children show their contentment and confidence in their play, by giggling with the childminder and smiling to each other while playing with a wide selection of appropriate floor toys. The childminder treats children as individuals but with equal concern, meeting their individual needs. She gets to know the children well and offers high levels of interaction on their own level. Children are encouraged to play and co-operate with each other and to treat others with respect and kindness, learning to share and take turns through their play.

Children receive appropriate support and all children are valued as individuals. They are aware of their own needs and the needs of others, as the childminder encourages children to respect each other's differences. Children enjoy helping to care for younger children and talk to the childminder about their individual needs. The childminder works with parents to meet individual children's needs and ensure they are fully included, inviting all children to play games and activities to help children learn to value others. Children are beginning to understand responsible behaviour, knowing and understanding the house rules decided by the childminder. Behaviour is generally good and children respond well to the reminders of the rules and the childminder's use of positive praise and encouragement. Appropriate behaviour management strategies are verbally agreed with parents and in the childminder's policy, which includes time out with the childminder, diversion or distraction with explanation appropriate to the age and stage of the child.

Children benefit from the excellent two-way communication and relationships between parents and the childminder. For example, parents give the childminder information on their child's previous evening or weekend on arrival and the childminder makes time to talk at the end of the day. Daily diaries for younger children inform parents of sleep and feeding patterns and invite parents to make written comments. Children are cared for according to their parents' wishes, ensuring continuity to meet the child's needs. The childminder is currently assessing her practice through parental questionnaires, receiving a range of positive responses. The childminder tries to follow parent's routines to meet their individual requirements and documentation on individual children is up-to-date, with records shared appropriately.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder has a high regard for the welfare and well-being of all children. For example, she ensures all adults living or working in the household have been correctly vetted and when visitors are in the home and minded children are present, she is always careful to keep children in her sight. The adult-to-child ratio positively supports children's care, learning and play because the childminder ensures she cares appropriately for children in small groups. For example, the childminder works with a co/childminder on a daily basis, with small children cared for together during parts of the day, and older children cared for after school.

Children benefit from good organisation of space and accommodation, with all toys, resources and equipment stored in labelled containers when not in use. They are able to easily access suitable toys appropriate to their age and stage of development. The childminder organises her minding practice by providing an informative welcome pack, with clear details of her minding practice and by sharing information with parents at induction. Up-to-date documentation on

individual children, together with daily information exchanges ensures children receive continuity of care.

Policies and procedures are comprehensive and shared with parents at induction. Questionnaires for parents help the childminder to analyse her practice. Documentation is up-to-date and stored securely, with regular reviews to ensure appropriate care for all children. Contact details for Ofsted in case of complaint are available for parents, although not all information regarding complaints is recorded.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of the children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 good. 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

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop a complaints record to share with parents
- develop the activities to include celebrations of differing cultures

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