

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 505366 |
| Inspection date | 14 June 2007 |
| Inspector | Susan Marriott |

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| 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 1987. She lives with her husband and one adult son in a house in Leighton Buzzard. Local amenities, shops and schools are nearby. The ground floor is used for childminding, and an upstairs bedroom is available for children requiring undisturbed sleep. There is a securely enclosed rear garden for outside play. The childminder is registered to care for six children under eight years old and is currently minding six children on a flexible, part-time basis. The family has a pet cat, a pet rabbit and a guinea pig. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminder ensures that children have daily access to fresh air whenever practicable so that they enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities that contribute to their good health. Each day she will take the babies out for a walk in their buggy and older children walk to and from school and can play in the garden. Children sometimes walk to the Tuesday Market with the childminder and eat in the church coffee shop or visit the local library to enjoy 'Rhyme Time'.

They visit the local parks and love to play on the fixed equipment. Children are happy to walk to the Tiddenfoot Waterside to watch the wildlife and walk alongside the canal. These activities regularly contribute towards the development and improvement of children's physical skills and agility.

Children are cared for in a clean home where the childminder follows good hygiene rules in order to prevent the spread of infection. For example, the childminder wears gloves to change nappies. Older children learn why they must wash their hands after using the toilet. Children stay healthy because the childminder controls infection by excluding children who become sick or unwell, implementing her clear, written policy. Appropriate documentation is available to record accidents and any medication in accordance with requirements. The childminder holds an appropriate first aid certificate and has obtained permission to seek medical advice or treatment so that children receive prompt emergency treatment. Children are able to sleep according to their needs in a suitable cot, monitored constantly by the childminder to ensure their safety and comfort.

Children receive a varied and balanced diet. The parents supply their children's meals to avoid any issues with allergies and dietary requirements and the childminder respects the parental preferences. The childminder is happy to cook the meal supplied. Children do not become thirsty because they have access to regular drinks throughout the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are very safe and well-cared for because the childminder gives excellent priority to safety within her clean and tidy home. Children are able to move around and play freely and independently because the vigilant childminder has thoughtfully identified and minimised all risks. Proper domestic safety measures such as stair gates, door slam guards and fire safety equipment are in place. The childminder has recently had a fire safety visit from the local fire service and the photographs show the excited children sitting in the fire engine and trying on a fireman's helmet. The childminder has a robust written evacuation plan and she records her regular practice of the drill, ensuring that all children have had an opportunity to become familiar with the routine. Sleeping children are monitored via a baby monitor. Children 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 must hold onto the buggy or hold their childminder's hand when they are out walking.

Children feel at ease in this child-centred and homely environment. Space is used well to ensure that children may play safely under direct supervision at all times. Toys are in a good state of repair and are age-appropriate. Children independently select books, toys and activities from a wide choice piled around the living room and stored in drawstring sacks. The childminder positively safeguards children's welfare and has a highly competent understanding of child protection in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The childminder is a very experienced practitioner. She provides a home-from-home environment, where children receive lots of affection and cuddles. Minded children form trusting relationships with this childminder who joins in play, and actively promotes learning through play. For example, they enjoy emptying a cloth sack of items on the floor. The childminder sits on the

floor at the children's level, encouraging the children to explore the contents of the bag. They talk about the plastic horse and compare it to 'Berkeley', a life-size model calf who occupies a corner of the living room. Children are happy, settled and content to play in a relaxed family home where there is always something going on. They make independent choices in their play and are able to choose from a suitable variety of toys and equipment, which are all stored within easy reach. The childminder is able to devote her time and attention to the children, ensuring that she is able to accommodate their individual needs and preferences. For example, the childminder ensures that children can continue to attend a church-based toddler group, in accordance with parental wishes. Children benefit from social contact with others and enjoy a wide range of messy play, crafts and physical exercise. The childminder is familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and intuitively uses this to guide her practice with children under three years old.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about their community as they walk in the neighbourhood and visit local parks. The childminder has collected a good range of resources in order to actively promote children's awareness of diversity and positive attitudes towards disability. The childminder has valuable experience of providing care for children having identified learning difficulties or disabilities. Consequently, she feels able to approach parents if she is worried about children's progress and obtain appropriate support to address the concern. The childminder meets their needs through the daily routine as discussed with their parents.

Children behave very well in response to the childminder's clear boundaries for acceptable behaviour and consistent expectations. She uses facial expression and tone of voice to remind children about positive behaviour, including good manners and courtesy. Depending upon the age and stage of development of the children, any issues which arise are talked through and if the circumstances warrant, a clap of the hands or a stern 'No' is used. Practice is underpinned by clear written statements which emphasise the positive techniques in use. Parents and carers receive a copy of a 'Welcome pack' which sets out what parents can expect from her service. The childminder is affectionately known as 'Auntie'. The childminder ensures that thorough daily dialogue is used effectively to keep parents extremely well informed about their child's activities. She maintains a written daily diary exchange for all under fives and this system is adapted into a 'Praises and concerns book' for children over five years old. The childminder has a suitable complaints procedure and all required parental permissions are in place.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder is confident in her childcare practice, based upon many years of experience and a professionally qualified background. She operates with a mixture of clear verbal and written policies and procedures. A suitable attendance register is in place and all members of the household are suitable vetted. She attends training courses to update her knowledge. The childminder is beginning to develop ways to monitor, evaluate and develop her childminding practice in order to raise the quality of provision for children across all outcomes. She uses her warm personality and her life experience as a mother of two, to actively promote positive outcomes for children. The childminder is able to enrich children's care, learning and play through her constant interaction and interest. All of the children receive individual attention at some time during the day and benefit from social interaction with children of varying ages

and backgrounds. Children confidently choose activities and the childminder encourages them to extend their experiences. Children's welfare and education is effectively supported through the childminder's clear use of thoughtful routines which cover the National Standards. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, eight recommendations were raised to improve the standards of childcare provided. The childminder was asked to ensure all persons over 16 years have updated their vetting checks and clearances, and address some issues regarding confidentiality. She was asked to confirm that business insurance is in place on the family car and to ensure the safety of the children from accessing the loose water butt lid and the toilet block. Documentary and observational evidence supports the completion of these tasks. The childminder now obtains written parental permission for the seeking of emergency treatment or advice by asking parents and carers to sign the correct section in the accident book. The childminder has renewed her first aid qualification and this ensures children's welfare in case of medical emergency. The steps taken have substantially improved the quality of the childcare practice.

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 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):

- consider ways in which records, policies and procedures can be further enhanced to ensure the continuing welfare, care and learning of children.

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