

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 204911 |
| Inspection date | 25 April 2007 |
| Inspector | Christine Lynn Williams |

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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 outstanding. 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 1995. She lives with her husband and two teenage children aged 16 and 15 in a suburb of Redditch. The whole ground floor of the childminder's 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 and is currently minding four children who all attend part-time.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and attends several local toddler groups.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is exceptionally well protected because the childminder places a very high priority on ensuring they learn the importance of good personal hygiene, eat healthily and get plenty of fresh air and exercise. Substantial daily cleaning routines prevent the spread of

infection. For example, toilets are cleaned before children arrive and equipment such as high chairs and changing mats are thoroughly cleaned after each use. Gentle reminders are used to help toddlers understand about how to keeping themselves healthy. For example, they learn the importance of cleaning their hands regularly throughout the day and know not to put things in their mouths. Clear and effective records are kept and maintained about children's health and medication needs and the childminder uses her first aid knowledge to best effect to ensure that any minor bumps and bruises are handled in a timely and efficient manner.

Physical play is an integral part of children's daily routine and this helps them to develop positive attitudes to the importance of being active as part of a healthy lifestyle. The childminder has given an exceptional level of thought to meeting the physical needs of the youngest children being cared for and provides plenty of space for toddlers to learn how to control their bodies as they crawl, push and pull toys, sing and dance. They are kept active indoors as they learn to scramble through tunnels or use bikes and toy cars. New skills are constantly introduced such as learning to hop. Children make wide use of the garden during the summer months, where a climbing frame, swing, sand and water play provide further challenges. A wide variety of different resources are provided to help children to learn to use their hands and fingers effectively, and there are also daily walks to the park.

Children's understanding of the importance of healthy eating is effectively supported because the childminder has an excellent knowledge of good nutrition and how to meet children's dietary needs. Although parents provide most food, the childminder has gone to considerable lengths to work closely with parents to ensure healthy foods are provided and that children's poor eating habits are handled positively and with patience and understanding. Toddlers are encouraged to feed themselves through finger food and training cutlery, with the childminder using simple games to sensitively support young children who show signs of tiring or being distracted during meal times. Children are able to help themselves to drinks throughout the day and the childminder monitors their intake to ensure they always drink enough.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy a comfortable, homely atmosphere where they can explore safely and independently. The home is extremely well-organised and this provides children with plenty of space to play. A wealth of stimulating toys and playthings are provided to keep them active and learning and they are given a high level of choice in what they would like to do as the childminder suggests, negotiates and ensures children's favourite toys are always available.

There are excellent systems for ensuring the safety of children at all times. Carefully considered safety precautions such as soft surfaces placed under large outside play equipment, the use of safety gates and a fixed fire guard ensure that all potential risks are minimised. The childminder regularly reviews safety arrangements, adapting them to meet the age and stage of the children being cared for, and is always attentive and vigilant to any risks. For example, she gently supports and monitors children when they are climbing and prompts them to be careful not to bump into each other as they play. The fire evacuation procedure was developed using advice from a fire officer and this has been practised to make sure that children can leave the home quickly. Lost and uncollected child policies have also been developed to enable the childminder to respond effectively should either incident occur.

Children's overall well-being is protected because the childminder understands child protection procedures and how to implement these when necessary. She has an excellent understanding

of how to protect children, recognises this is her main priority and has arranged to update her knowledge and skills through top-up training. There is an excellent written statement about child protection and she makes sure that this is read and discussed with parents so that they know what action she will take if she has any concerns about a child in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young children are happy, well stimulated and enjoy a wealth of exceptionally well planned and spontaneous activities which fully support their development and makes them feel special. There are obvious strong attachments and real affection shown by both the childminder and children, with lots of cuddles and playful interactions reflecting the outstanding level of care offered. Children are involved in their own learning, encouraged to try out new skills and are given time to experiment at their own pace. For example, they explored with different musical instruments, excitedly discovering different sounds, while the childminder sang their favourite nursery rhymes. This helps young children to flourish as individuals, become independent, self-assured and confident to try new things. The childminder is dedicated to meeting young children's individual needs and goes to great lengths to ensure they make the most of all their experiences. She talks to them constantly, gives them choices, negotiates with them and carefully considers what each child might learn from their play.

Children benefit significantly from the childminder's experience and extraordinary level of enthusiasm for providing rich, stimulating experiences. Under threes are particularly well cared for because the childminder specialises in caring for this age group. She is attentive to what they say and do and guides their learning through careful consideration of their developmental needs and the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Constant observation and assessments of what they like, dislike and their individual personalities helps her to get to know children exceptionally well, while a wealth of carefully considered fun activities mean that children can follow their own interests, make their own decisions and chat happily as they play. Photographs are used creatively to chart children's progress and achievements and these are then shared with parents so that they know what their children have been doing.

Children are confident, creative and become fully absorbed in what they are doing. A wealth of hands-on experiences are offered which are fun, stimulating, and further enhanced by the childminder's clear understanding of how to help children develop their play. For example, a toddler became fascinated and absorbed when playing with a shape sorter because the childminder encouraged his interest through laughter and being playful with him. Many everyday routines are turned into fun ways of learning, such as walking to post a letter, then talking about where it is going and how it will get there. Children's creativity is widely valued and they are often encouraged to get messy, sing and dance. They use their imaginations extensively when using the play kitchen or when dressing up and pretending to be someone else, and they learn to be sociable with others during weekly trips to toddler groups.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are welcomed and enjoy a vibrant and caring atmosphere where they develop a strong sense of self-worth because they are made to feel that they matter. They are given lots of attention and detailed information about their likes, dislikes, favourite toys and what they can do is used to plan ahead to meet their individual needs, interests and personalities. The

childminder is attentive, joins-in with their play and uses simple games, negotiation and distraction to encourage positive behaviour. For example, a simple game and plenty of laughter was used to encourage a toddler to finish her breakfast. Children are continually praised and this results in lots of positive behaviour where children learn to share, take turns and play together harmoniously. They know when they have done well because the childminder tells them and this makes them feel special. Behaviour management issues are agreed with parents before the placement starts and the childminder cares for children according to parent's own values and practices. There are plenty of opportunities for children to be cuddled and comforted and young children's comfort objects are valued and kept close by at all times to show them that the childminder understands their emotional needs. As a result, children are confident, have good self-esteem and make close relationships with the childminder and each other.

Children enjoy a wealth of resources and activities to help them become aware of the diversity of our society. Positive role models are seen as children play with their toys, dress up or enjoy story times at the local multi-cultural resource centre. They thoroughly enjoy looking at pictures of themselves and constantly talk about their homes and families as they relish each other's company. Good arrangements are made to ensure that all children are included and the childminder has a very strong commitment to working closely with parents and other relevant parties when necessary. She is aware that some children have learning difficulties or disabilities and has carried out a significant amount of training as part of her firm commitment to planning ahead to meet the needs of all children.

A strong and positive relationship with parents is developed which is based on respect and mutual trust. The childminder works collaboratively with parents, keeping them exceptionally well informed and sharing detailed information about children on a daily basis. Talks at arrival and departure time are sensitive and extensive, ensuring that both the childminder and parents are well informed about how children feel, how they have slept and eaten and what they have been doing. As a result, parents make extremely positive comments about the childminding service offered and how their children are cared for. Written policy statements on such things as behaviour and child protection help them to understand the childminder's roles and responsibilities and they value the efforts she makes to understand their own values, preferences and attitudes and to respect their family customs and beliefs. Parents' views and concerns are always respected and acknowledged and they are given clear details of how to raise a complaint or concern on behalf of their children if they wish to.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is significantly enhanced by the childminder's dedication to ensuring all aspects of her practice are exceptional. She has carefully considered the organisation of her childminding service and uses her home, time and daily routine to optimum effect to support the children in her care. There is a commitment to being reflective and highly professional, while working collaboratively with parents. There has been a significant investment in personal development through training and she is pro-active in sharing good practice and keeping up-to-date with current early childhood thinking through a local childminding support group.

A high standard of records, policies and documentation are maintained and these include detailed information about children's needs, their development and health. These are stored in individual files to aid confidentiality and ensure they can quickly be updated or amended when necessary. All significant information is recorded and used to best effect in ensuring an outstanding level of care is offered. Overall the children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to obtain written permission from parents before administering medication.

Good improvements have been made since the last inspection. Each minded child's records are now kept in individual folders that allow parents to review them quickly and regularly and also ensures that the childminder can see at a glance that children's records are fully up-to-date. She has also developed a child medication recording sheet which identifies children's short term and long term medication needs. Parents now sign these twice, firstly to give their permission to administer medication and secondly to acknowledge that they know the time and level of dosage that has been administered. This significantly protects children's health by preventing the possible risks of an accidental overdose.

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

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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.

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