

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY336550
Inspection date	20 June 2007
Inspector	Sarah Catherine Jex

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 2007. She lives with her husband and two children aged eight months and four years, in a village near Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire.

The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed rear garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for two children at any one time and is currently minding four children, all of whom attend on various days throughout the week. The childminder walks to school to take and collect children, visits the local library and takes children to the local park.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene from an early age, through well-organised routines and practice. They know to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating meals snacks and cooking activities. They enjoy helping around the home. For example, after making shortbread animal biscuits the children enjoy helping to wash up. The children are protected from infection because the childminder is well informed about their health and employs suitable methods to prevent infections spreading, such as working with parents when implementing her sick child policy and ensuring the cleanliness of the home, toys and equipment. She has developed procedures and records to protect the children and safeguard their welfare. Information is shared with parents relating to any aspect of their child's health. Written consent has been obtained from parents to administer medication and to seek emergency treatment or advice. This impacts positively on the children's health and well-being. The childminder's first aid certificate is up to date and enables her to administer appropriate care when required to protect the children and prevent them from becoming distressed.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy home cooked meals, which the childminder prepares. Meals include all the food groups and are healthy and nutritious for children. These include pasta, roast dinners, fish and a variety of vegetables and fruit. Children take part in some cooking activities which help develop their awareness of different types of food, healthy eating and encourages them to try new tastes such as helping to make their own sandwiches for lunch. Children's needs are met in a capable manner through the childminder's experience and with the information provided by parents regarding any child's dietary needs. A sample menu is in place for parents to enable them to see what food is on offer for the children. Children have drinks available at all times and they remain hydrated because they know they can ask for a drink.

Children enjoy an appropriate range of physical activities which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Each day there are opportunities to play outside or engage in indoor activities which improves their all-round physical skills. They walk to and from school each day as part of their routine and access other areas of interest such as walking in the lanes, along the canal and visiting the local parks and activity centres. Here, children can be adventurous using different equipment whilst extending their physical development and skills. The children's fine muscle control is developed as they use small toys and equipment such as painting, gluing, building with construction and managing jigsaws. They have fun as they put together the interlocking puzzle pieces for the dinosaur and space rocket to race around with growing dexterity. The childminder has an understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and applies this when planning activities. Children have access to highly varied activities and excellent levels of support which give them confidence to try new skills, set their own limits and know when to ask for help. The childminder supports the children and is on hand to guide their play. Children are able to rest and sleep in accordance with their own needs and the wishes of their parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment. They have space to move around as they explore and experiment with the large range of resources. These are stored in the under stairs cupboard where the children can help themselves to toys

they wish to play with. Children are safeguarded as the childminder carries out an informal risk assessment on the premises, toys and activities to ensure potential risks are identified and minimised. Children are supervised at all times and the childminder is involved in their play and learning. She encourages the children to help tidy the toys away to keep things safe for all children. She helps them to check the toys for any damage which builds their understanding of responsible behaviour. Children use appropriate toys, resources and equipment. Well thought out activities ensure the children's safety at all times. Children are able to play and take risks in a safe and controlled environment with suitable adjustments made to meet all of their needs.

Children benefit as the childminder practises her emergency evacuation procedures regularly. This safeguards their well-being. Children follow simple procedures when away from the childminder's home. They follow sensible guidelines and precautions as they access parks and feed the ducks. They understand that they must stay within sight of the childminder and to hold hands or the buggy when out walking or playing in the park. This helps the children to learn to keep themselves safe from accidental injury. They learn about road safety and sitting in appropriate car seats when going in the car. This ensures children's safety both in and out of the home.

The childminder has a secure understanding relating to child protection. She has a sound knowledge of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and understands the procedures to follow should she have any concerns. Supporting documents are in place for the childminder to refer to should she have any concerns about a child. However, at present she has not yet obtained the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures to ensure her current practice can fully protect the children. Parents are aware of her responsibility to protect the children in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very well settled and happy at the childminder's home. They are secure and confident with themselves and the childminder. They are sociable and relate well to others. When children are together they are encouraged to share and take turns with the toys. Children are supported well by the childminder. A good balance of adult and child-initiated play is in place. For example, children participate in a cooking activity making biscuits. They are encouraged to roll the mixture and choose which animal shapes to cut out. The childminder sits back to allow the children to do things for themselves but supports them by giving verbal encouragement and instructions. There is lots of lovely language between the childminder and children about the different shapes and sizes of the cutters. The childminder reflects back to the children whilst encouraging their thinking and language skills by asking open ended questions and allowing them time to think before making a response. During this activity the childminder is able to adapt her language to meet children's individual needs.

The childminder is skilled in listening to the children and introducing new language which they imitate in role play experiences such as playing doctors and 'Pirates of the Caribbean'. Suitably challenging and fun activities are available for all children and with the childminder's knowledge she is able to adapt these to suit children's individual needs. Children show an interest in the activities available and photographic evidence is put into a scrap book so all of the children can see and talk about what they have done. Regular trips to the park, library and canal walks teaches the children about the wider world and enables them to get fresh air and interact with others.

Children have warm relationships with the childminder. Children approach her for physical comfort and reassurance which contributes to their sense of belonging and well-being. They have opportunities to think for themselves, express their ideas and interact with others. Children's learning and development is extended by the childminder's constant awareness and knowledge of how children learn through play. She clearly knows the children well as she deciphers gestures and language, thus avoiding any child becoming frustrated or despondent. Children respond happily to the childminder, gaining confidence to let her leave the room and continue their play. The childminder has an excellent knowledge of them as individuals and demonstrates genuine pleasure in their company.

The childminder is aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. She is adept at understanding the children's needs in order to help them grow and extend their development. Through discussion it was identified and the childminder agreed to extend her current practice by demonstrating that play opportunities are planned and evaluated. This would enhance her practice and the children would benefit from having access to a wider and more challenging variety of activities. Children's self-esteem and confidence is growing through the consistent support and meaningful praise offered by the childminder.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are becoming aware of the local community as they play in the park, walk along the canal and visit the library to borrow books. They are cared for by the childminder who works with their parents to meet individual children's needs. All children can access the resources which suitable for their age and stage of development. Children develop a positive view of the world around them as they look at books and play with the growing assortment of resources that show positive images of other cultures, gender roles and disabilities. This develops children's understanding of diversity and helps them learn to respect themselves and those around them. Children accept each other as individuals with the childminder setting a lovely example by valuing and respecting each child. Their needs are met in a sympathetic manner through her open, honest and effective communication with parents and children. Activities can be adapted to meet the needs of all children and a sensitive approach ensures children can play without fear of discrimination. The childminder's happy and respectful attitude encourages children to feel good about themselves and show respect for others.

The children are beginning to know and accept the realistic boundaries in place and this impacts positively on their behaviour. She continually offers an abundance of praise and encouragement and is consistent with her behaviour management. Therefore children learn to be kind to each other and to share and take turns. Their confidence and self-esteem are enriched by the support and praise provided. Dramas are mostly avoided through well-managed strategies and because the childminder is able to instil a sense of fun and purpose to the children's play and learning. Children are occupied throughout the day which reduces any challenging behaviour issues because they are fully involved in their play.

The childminder has developed information for parents detailing all aspects of her practice. A portfolio is in place which provides them with useful and clear information about activities, consent forms, contracts and many other items of useful information. Policies and procedures are in place to support her practice and provide parents with additional information to enable them to gain a further insight into the care provided for their child. Daily information is shared verbally to enable parents to gain information about their child's day and the progress and achievements they have made. This supports parents and helps them play an active and important

role in their child's care. Children's care and development is fostered due to the childminder's commitment to working closely with parents and to the value she places on this partnership. Written agreements are in place between the childminder and the parents outlining the level of care provided and the contracts between both parties. This further develops the trust of parents which impacts on the children's sense of security and confidence with the childminder.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and secure as they play in this well-organised environment. The childminder organises her routine to allow the children the freedom to choose the activities as well as providing structured activities throughout the day. Children benefit as the childminder offers them the time, space and opportunities to explore and experiment during their play. This ensures the children are positively supported in her care, learning and play in most areas. Children are confident when initiating their own activities in this secure and safe setting.

The childminder's organisational skills are good and benefit both children and parents. The majority of her documentation and records are maintained in line with the National Standards and are used effectively to promote the care, welfare and learning of each child. The childminder has developed purposeful policies and procedures which are clearly reflected in her practice. Records are shared with parents and communication is excellent. This contributes to the trusting relationships developed between them and impacts on the children's feelings of security. Ratios are met at all times and the childminder has an good awareness of the impact these have on the children's health, safety, socialisation and learning.

The childminder has a professional yet caring and sensitive approach to her practice which is clearly shown in her childminding. These ensure each child's potential is recognised and activities support and challenge each child. Overall children's needs are met.

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

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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 information regarding the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) procedures
- develop planning and the provision of activities which will enhance children's developmental progress.

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