

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 100851  
**Inspection date** 06 August 2007  
**Inspector** Linda Janet Witts

**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](http://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 lives in a three-bedroom, semi-detached house in the Quedgeley area of Gloucester. She shares her home with her husband and their two children aged seven and eleven years. The whole house is used for minding and there is an enclosed garden for outside play. The family has pet cats. Local amenities include shops, a library, playgroup and a school.

The childminder has been registered since 2000 and may provide care for six children under eight years, at any one time. She currently cares for seven children during the week. She offers full and part-time care, including before and after-school care.

The childminder has completed Introduction to Childminding Practice (ICP), Developing Childminding Practice (DCP), and Extending Childminding Practice (ECP), first aid, food hygiene and child protection training. She also regularly attends training workshops and is a member of the local Children Come First Childminding Network.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is actively promoted by the childminder's practice with regards to maintaining a hygienic play environment, promotion of good personal hygiene and how to care for children who require first aid or medication. The childminder is trained in first aid, maintains a fully stocked first aid kit, records details of any accidents and has a system to record medication administered, accurately. A clear sick child policy ensures that children are not exposed to infectious illnesses. Children learn about personal hygiene through routine hand-washing and seeing how the childminder keeps the home clean. The childminder, who is trained in food hygiene, leads by example. The children are reminded of the importance of washing their hands to get rid of germs. Young children use a 'step-up' to encourage independent personal hygiene and the childminder is on hand to offer help to younger children, as required. Each younger child has an individual flannel and hand towel, and paper towels are used by older children and during school holidays, when more children are present. This helps to minimise the risk of cross-infection. Toddler's comfort is ensured as the childminder changes nappies promptly and hygienically.

The children's emotional and physical needs are met well. The young children have developed warm, mutual, affirmative relationships with the childminder. The young toddlers learn to do things for themselves and gain confidence, knowing that the childminder is close by, ready to support and help if needed. The childminder recognises the signs of tiredness in the young children she cares for and responds appropriately. Suitable arrangements are in place for children to enjoy restful sleep and regular checks are made on sleeping children to keep them safe. These checks are recorded and available for parents' inspection.

Children eat very well. They enjoy a variety of healthy, well-balanced snacks and bring their own packed lunches. They are offered drinks regularly. Children have plenty of opportunities to undertake cooking activities. For example, they decorate biscuits and make cakes. They also prepare what they want to eat ready for a picnic lunch. They choose from a range of tortilla wraps, rolls or bread, and make their own healthy creations, full of ham, cheese and salad of their choice. They choose fruit, sweet and savoury items to complete their planned meal and arrange it on their individual plates. Even the toddlers and younger children are able to join in. During the activity children also try new foods such as, plantain chips and dried apricots. Children also have the benefit of being able to visit the family's allotment and to be involved in planting activities.

Children are confident in their physical skills. During term-time the children routinely walk to and from the local school. The route home after school often incorporates a visit to the local play park. This is also a regular destination during school holidays and is popular for their picnics, under the shade of a large oak tree. In the childminder's garden, the latex surface provides an all-weather pitch for football, cricket and basketball games. There are also plenty of physical play resources. Indoors, toddlers gain confidence in their walking skills, using furniture and the childminder for support. Older children negotiate the space successfully, avoiding obstacles and showing consideration for those less able than themselves.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children's safety is effectively promoted within the home and on outings. The home is secure and the childminder has taken action to minimise potential risks. For example, electrical sockets are covered, stairs are guarded, safety seats are used at the dining table for toddlers and the garden surface is constructed of astro-turf. Daily safety checks are also carried out and recorded before children arrive. The space inside and out in the garden is organised effectively, creating a child-friendly environment which enables children to explore and take risks while being appropriately supervised. Children learn to keep themselves safe, because the childminder reminds them of safety risks, such as, climbing on furniture. They also learn the procedures that will be followed in the event of a fire or other emergency, because fire drills are undertaken regularly. Children are kept safe on outings. When they travel in a vehicle or pushchair they are suitably restrained. Sleeping children are monitored frequently to keep them safe.

Children can help themselves to toys and resources stored at their level. The toys and equipment available provide a wide range of play activities and are of good quality. Children are encouraged to play a part in maintaining a safe play environment. They happily help to tidy away toys after use and know where items are stored. The storage units and toy boxes are clearly labelled with photographs of the contents, to help the young children to select resources and return them, safely.

Children's welfare is further safeguarded by the childminder who demonstrates a sound knowledge of child protection issues. She has completed training in child protection and is aware of possible signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. She knows the correct procedure to follow should she have any concerns. A safe-caring policy is used to demonstrate to parents how children within the setting are protected.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are very happy in the childminder's care. They are motivated in their play and excitedly participate in the broad range of activities offered. The children's day is structured to provide interesting activities, both indoors and outdoors. There are plenty of resources and activities for children of all ages, differing interests and abilities to choose from. Children and their parents can see attractive photographic displays of past activities undertaken. These provide a regular talking point for children, as they recall their experiences and point out people they recognise. There are also posters of interest and numerals for children to see.

The children engage in activities that the childminder plans for their enjoyment. Plans incorporate themes, such as shape and colour recognition, nursery rhymes and festivals. The childminder is familiar with developmental frameworks for children under five years and is keen to become more familiar with the proposed Early Years Foundation Stage. As children engage in their activities, they are supported well by the childminder who knows instinctively when to play an active part in children's play and when to stand back and let them play freely. Activities enjoyed by children of all ages include water play, dressing-up, construction and creative activities. They have regular opportunities to paint and draw, combine different materials and make models.

Toddlers' natural curiosity and desire to explore and investigate objects and materials is embraced. They happily help themselves to books, which they look at on their own or snuggle-up

with the childminder to share the story. They investigate the many activity toys, pressing buttons and manipulating the various aspects of each toy. They can also explore a variety of natural materials and household objects, in the treasure basket.

Older children also embrace opportunities to explore and investigate objects. For example, they show fascination of a large collection of shells. Outdoor play opportunities and excursions also offer children of all ages the chance to explore the natural environment. They talk about a frog found in the childminder's garden and the family's pet gerbil that they used to handle before it died. They feed ducks and other wildfowl when they visit Stratford Park and Slimbridge Wild Fowl Trust. They explore leaves in Autumn and don their 'wellies' to splash in puddles. Children also benefit from visits to the local toddler group and will link up with other childminders and their children to enjoy joint activities.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and confident. They are settled, familiar with the daily routine and confidently make choices and communicate with the childminder. Children of different ages play happily together or alongside one another. The younger children also have plenty of opportunities to mix with different children when they go to toddler group and meet up with other minded children.

Individual children are supported well because the childminder has a good knowledge of their particular needs. All children are valued highly and welcomed into the childminder's home. Children relate well to the childminder, her family and their peers. Older children offer support to younger children. There are currently no children attending who have learning difficulties or disabilities. The childminder has completed 'Count me in', a training course on inclusion, to help her to support children with special educational needs.

Children benefit from being able to use a good range of resources which reflect diversity. They see positive images of gender, disability and ethnicity in books, on their place mats and small world resources. Planned activities introduce children to their own and other cultures. For example, children make Diwali candle holders and they celebrate religious festivals. Children's birthdays are also celebrated.

The children are well behaved and the atmosphere within the home is happy. Children are valued and the childminder helps children to feel good about themselves by frequently providing positive support, praise and encouragement, while managing behaviour well. This helps build children's self-esteem.

Parents are warmly welcomed into the childminder's home, along with their children. Two-way communication is promoted from the first contact. Parents receive well presented, written information about the childminder's services, family, activities and policies. This includes a complaints procedure. The partnership with parents continues through regular sharing of information. The childminder gives time to talk with parents when they deliver or collect their children. Daily diaries detail what younger children have eaten, sleeps, nappy changes and what they have enjoyed doing. The childminder uses a photographic record of time spent with her, for some children. Feedback is regularly sought from parents. One method used is evaluation forms. Parents' feedback shows that they are happy with all aspects of the care their children receive.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The childminder is enthusiastic in her role and works hard to ensure that she meets the National standards well and promotes the outcomes for children successfully. She shows commitment towards her own personal development and improves her knowledge by attending relevant courses and workshops. The childminder is beginning to reflect on her own practice, to identify areas for improvement. She is keen to become familiar with The Early Years Foundation Stage. She is already familiar with the Birth to three matters framework and Foundation Stage curriculum and hopes to become an accredited childminder in the near future. She is a member of a local childminding network and has achieved the Children Come First Quality Assurance award.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides. She has a good knowledge of children's individual needs and plans a flexible, appropriate day for children, that follows their routines. She acts as a good role model for children and promotes good behaviour. As a result, children learn to be kind to one another, to share and take-turns. The childminder plans a wide range of enjoyable activities. Sometimes these are planned to aid individual children's developmental progress and to reflect particular interests. Good use is made of both indoor and outdoor play spaces and outings are used to extend children's play and learning opportunities. The childminder relates well to the children in her care and the toddlers and children of different ages enjoy their time with her. Children of all ages are helped to become healthy, happy, enthusiastic individuals. They are supervised well, within the safe, welcoming environment. Children have healthy meals and snacks, get plenty of fresh air and exercise, sleep according to their needs and learn simple good hygiene practices.

The childminder has established a very good partnership with parents. She keeps them well informed and values their contributions to their children's care. The childminder understands the value of taking children out into the wider community and does this regularly. She takes the young children in her care to a toddler group and regularly links up with other local childminders, to further promote children's social development.

The childminder is very organised and maintains her records and other documentation extremely well. All legally required documentation is clear and up to date. The childminder has also developed written policies and procedures, to share with parents.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection a recommendation was made. This was to ensure the regulator's address and phone number is made available to parents to use, if they wish to report a complaint. The childminder has extended her complaints policy to include this.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the childminder or Ofsted to take action in order to meet the National Standards.

The childminder 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):

- continue to develop practice and become familiar with the Early Years Foundation Stage

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)