

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	208099
Inspection date	18 February 2008
Inspector	Yvonne Layton
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 2000 and she lives with her family. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding. Toilet facilities are on the first floor and only the main bedroom is not accessible to children. There is a secure, enclosed rear garden available for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding two children under five and two children under eight. The childminder also cares for children over eight years. Placements are varied and include part-time and after school care. The childminder walks to local schools and amenities and she undertakes outings.

The childminder holds relevant childcare qualifications and the family have two dogs, a cat and a hamster.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children stay healthy and thrive because the childminder follows highly effective procedures and practices which meet children's, nutritional, physical and health needs. The very strong adult support and guidance helps them gain an excellent understanding of hygiene and a real desire to become increasingly independent. The children are well used to and respond naturally to the established routine of washing their hands prior to and after meals, snack and activities. This is further supported through personal care pictorial reminders throughout the home, including in the bathroom, on the meal table and on the door from outside. Each child's health is well protected and their self-esteem is promoted as they each have their own character flannel. They are encouraged to assist in appropriate jobs such as setting the table and selecting cutlery from a covered tray. Each child has made their own placemat and drink coaster and they routinely help to clear away after meals. The childminder is proactive in hygiene procedures. She actively practices what she has learned from the basic food hygiene training, including using different colour-coded chopping boards and checking the temperature of food. Detailed records are maintained for parents about the care and what their child has eaten. Older children visit the toilet independently with the childminder providing appropriate, unobtrusive supervision.

The needs of children are met effectively if they have an accident, require medication or are sick. The childminder holds an appropriate first aid certificate and first aid boxes are readily accessible. Accident and medication records are well maintained and shared with parents. To ensure children's welfare is fully supported she has devised an accident and incidents recording system for situations that occur when the children are not in her direct care such as attending school and pre-schools. To protect children there are detailed records of allergies and include a record of any allergies within the family.

Balanced and nutritious meals and snacks ensure children are well nourished. All meals and snacks are recorded on a menu for parents to see. Individual health and dietary needs are well met because the childminder, children and parents work together. Children are actively involved in planning the menu. Meals are homemade from fresh food and healthy eating snacks are provided. Children also learn about healthy eating and living through planned themes. They often make their own meals such as pitta bread where they select their own healthy fillings. Children's learning about food is soundly supported by the opportunity to select their own recipes from a wide range of cards. They discuss the ingredients together and consider healthy eating. A trip is made to the shop where children select the ingredients and they then pay for them. On return they bake or cook the recipe. Children are actively learning about where food is from as they grow their own fruit and vegetables. They have planted and tend fruit trees and vegetables in the garden. They also visit a local farm and learn about the produce.

Children explore, test and develop physical control in stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences. They are able to undertake physical challenges as they are involved in activities in the home using a very well-resourced outside play area. Varied, exciting outings enhance children's physical well-being with visits to the park, woods, local children's groups and walks in the local area. Children also have the opportunity to horse ride.

Children actively learn about themselves and their bodies through planned themes and activities. Discussions and topics relating to the body, healthy eating and self-care are part of the planning.

For example, the children are involved in visits to the dentist and observe inoculations being given. The childminder talks about the reasons for inoculations and why they should care for their bodies. They learn about the environment through themes. Consequently children are able to develop a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from an extremely welcoming, stimulating and well-maintained environment. The rooms are very full of toys and resources, however the childminder clearly knows where everything is and children's safety is not compromised. The provision is decorated with posters, photographs and children's own creative work. They have access to a superb range of resources, toys and equipment that meet their developmental needs very well. The childminder monitors and maintains play materials, equipment and resources very well to ensure they are safe and clean for the children to use.

Children are cared for in a setting where risks are proactively identified and minimised and all reasonable steps are taken to ensure they are cared for in a secure environment. They are protected by the effective security of the premises. Extremely detailed and comprehensive safety policies and procedures that consider many scenarios ensure children remain safe. For example, due to recent flooding, the childminder has developed an emergency situation procedure and she has procedures and written consents for children to access large equipment, to have contact with animals and undertake specific outings and activities. To further promote children's safety the childminder undertakes written risk assessments of potentially difficult areas, for example, the porch. She is extremely vigilant to ensure the setting is safe, she undertakes a daily, visual risk assessment and consistently reminds family members to put away items that present a potential risk to the children such as hairdryers. She maintains a high standard of safety and security for equipment and within routines. For example, each winter the climbing frame is taken down and the fastenings are replaced by bolts from the manufacturers. Children are well-used to the childminder's routine for collecting them from school; she has an established procedure she and her assistant always follow such as always standing in the same place. If her assistant is collecting the children she always rings the school to inform them and ensure the child knows exactly who is collecting them. There are established safety procedures to ensure children are kept safe on outings; the childminder has very firm expectations of behaviour to promote road safety. The children easily recall the rules and remind each other to follow them. She talks to the children about keeping safe and undertakes safety topics. For example, the childminder borrows road safety resources including, traffic lights and crossings, to promote children awareness. She ensures she has emergency contact numbers and information with her at all times. Robust fire evacuation procedures, fire drill practices and subsequent evaluations ensure children develop a sound understanding of the need for fire safety and are kept safe.

Children's welfare is fully protected as the childminder has strong knowledge and clear understanding of her role and responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children procedures. This is supported by comprehensive procedures and additional information all of which are made available for parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

All of the children are extremely settled in the setting and have a very friendly relationship with the childminder. They are treated with warmth and care. The children are confident and keen to access the extensive range of play activities. This includes well-considered, quality homemade resources, including board games. The children develop strong socialisation skills as they look out for each other, support and assist each other.

The childminder is focused on developing the whole child; individual learning and growth is extensively well supported. She is very enthusiastic and activities are undertaken with a sense of fun. The mix of focussed planned activities, for example themed craft and outings and free-choice play ensures children develop independence as well as becoming used to routines and working together. During activities the children readily join in and are eager to try new experiences. They are animated when suggesting their own ideas for play or relating experiences. They interact very well with their peers, the childminder and visitors, demonstrating confident personalities.

Children become independent as they choose to access the activities themselves. They are appropriately encouraged to participate and supported to succeed in activities. The childminder promotes learning well through supporting children when required and her expert practice of knowing when to stand back and let children develop their own ideas such as with creative and role play. They are stimulated and appropriately challenged by the childminder who encourages them to think and work things out for themselves.

Children are making superb progress in their early learning. The childminder has a solid understanding of the 'Foundation Stage' and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. She undertakes flexible, workable planning which is based on children's interests. Within the planning she includes areas she wishes to address to aid children's socialisation. The childminder has boxes, files and computer programmes for children to select; including crosswords, battleship, 'spot the difference', word searches, colour, number and reading games. She maintains extensive details of different creative activities and projects. Assessments are undertaken using observation and relating to the relevant framework. Alongside this, for all ages she integrates key stages into routine play activities including, board games, projects, art and crafts. For example, children practise spelling in fun group games. All this ensures the children are very purposefully occupied.

Children are challenged by the childminder who uses open ended questions to develop potential effectively during such activities. For example, the childminder asked why a white pen cannot be used on a white tile; the child responded, 'Can't see white on white'. They readily question and challenge. Children are able to reason. This demonstrates children have a positive approach to new experiences and can use thought processes as they explore and investigate. They have access to an extensive range of mark-making resources, including a wide range of different pens such as ceramic paint sticks. Children are supported to practise letter writing and learn about text as throughout the home there is written text, such as for household objects and equipment.

Children are developing an extensive love of books as they have lots of opportunity to enjoy them both individually and within small groups. The setting has an extensive range of books, including reference books. Spontaneous story-telling by the childminder with the children encourages them to relax and enjoy the stories.

Children are developing an awareness of creatures of the natural world as they enjoy the varied topics and activities presented by the childminder. For example, the children visit a local farm to see the lambs, they feed and ride horses and undertake animal themes. Their technology skills are extended as they have access to a computer both independently and supported by the childminder. They undertake research for projects and select activities. Children also have access to a games console and microphones which they use for a weekly karaoke session. During a visit to a farm the children take their own photographs and make individual montages. Children learn about their local area, family life and what celebrations occur in other cultures.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop their creative experiences as they have access to a very wide range of craft, role play and activities on a free choice and planned basis, including an extensive selection of craft projects. For example, children make hand-drawn tile coasters and their own placemat. For celebrations they create their own designs on plates, pots and wooden flowers. Whilst the childminder is there to support them, free expression is positively encouraged. Children readily make their own decisions regarding the design and the content of their work. They have access to a very extensive range of imaginative play activities such as dressing-up and small world.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very strongly valued. Activities and play opportunities stimulate, excite and support them to develop their potential. All children have access to all activities. The childminder uses discussion with parents and outside agencies, when necessary, to ensure specific individual requirements are met. Comprehensive and detailed documents and records produced by the childminder ensure a profile of the child is provided to assist in meeting their needs.

There are no children currently attending the setting who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The childminder demonstrates a clear understanding of providing care which includes them in the life of the setting through discussing their needs with parents. This is supported by a detailed written policy. The thorough levels of support ensure that all children are included and receive individual attention so that their needs are soundly met.

Children develop an excellent understanding of how everyone positively contributes in society. Rich resources which promote and represent the wider community are extensively available including, through books, imaginative and small world resources, themes and craft work. Also, homemade resources very effectively enhance the children's awareness. This includes board games which represent people with learning disabilities and/or difficulties and different gender roles. Children's awareness of the wider world is superbly enhanced by the celebration of individual events, national festivals and festivals from other faiths and by discussion with the childminder. She has very detailed plans and ideas for creative activities for festivals and celebrations. She has devised her own calendar. There are planned activities and themes, including cultural celebrations, beliefs and learning about different areas of the world. For example, for Chinese New Year the children enjoy dressing-up, they write Chinese letters and numbers. Each child identifies their own birth sign, the meaning of each sign is discussed and they complete relevant craft projects. Family and extended family celebrations are celebrated with permission from parents.

Children develop a very strong sense of independence and self-worth as they are encouraged to share, take turns and follow boundaries. The children are fully involved in devising the house rules with support of the childminder. The children and childminder investigate why they need

rules, what the childminder expects and why. The children wrote the rules and they are on display. These include, 'Remember manners', 'Be nice to animals' and 'If we have a problem we talk to S or parents'. To develop children's positive social skills within the planning social topics are included. For example, the childminder identifies working on promoting children's awareness of good manners and not getting their own way all of the time. Children are well behaved as they are purposefully occupied. They are very happy and confident in the setting. The use of praise, encouragement and positive reinforcement contributes extremely effectively to the children developing good social skills and a sense of belonging to a wider family group.

Partnership with parents and carers is superb. All parents and carers receive extremely detailed information about the services provided and how their child will be cared for. They receive very comprehensive information about the setting's policies and procedures. Each child has an individual communication book and file. Parent's opinions are sought through opportunity to make comments in the communication book and by the childminder seeking written evaluation of her services. Information and support to parents and carers is offered by informative notice boards in the porch. The ongoing sharing of information fully promotes parents' confidence and children's well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides. This is a dynamic, strong provision. It is successful at making sure that the outcomes for children are very positive. The childcare practice is extremely effective. Children are in the care of a childminder who strongly support them to ensure they are happy and settled in the child-focussed setting. They positively benefit from the childminder who is proactive in developing her own skills by gaining childcare qualifications, accessing training and subscribing to childcare publications to keep her knowledge up-to-date. She evaluates her own practice, including seeking parent's opinions, and has a clear focus on areas she wishes to develop.

The welfare, care and learning of the children are extremely well promoted through the very efficient maintenance of records, policies and procedures both required and additional for the efficient and safe management of the provision. Documents are stored securely and safely in order to ensure children's privacy.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to ensure a risk assessment of the rooms used by the children is carried out and good hygiene practices are in place regarding the clearing of dog excrement from the patio area.

Children's safety, health and well-being is protected. The childminder completes written risk assessments for specific areas and undertakes daily visual checks and discussions with family members to ensure children are not put at risk. The dogs only have access to an allocated area of the garden, of which children do not access and the childminder is vigilant to ensure this area is clean.

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 outstanding. 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

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