

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 109878
Inspection date 31 January 2008
Inspector Sandra Daniels

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 has been registered since 1997. She lives in the upper part of a house in Plumstead with her two children aged 16 and 14 years. The childminder uses her sitting room, kitchen/diner and bedroom which are all on the first floor of her home for the minded children. This allows space to play, eat, rest and sleep. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of three children under eight years at any one time and is currently caring for five children under eight years, all on a part-time basis. She takes the children on outings to the park and local groups as she does not have immediate access to a garden. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA) and also belongs to the local childminding network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive and their good health is extremely well supported because of the childminder's meticulous approach. All the necessary documentation such as accident, incident and medication

records and consents, as well as information provided by parents, are carefully and clearly maintained.

The childminder minimises the spread of infection and further promotes the health of children through very high standards of hygiene, evident in the home. For example, the provision of liquid soap and children's individual towels encourages regular and thorough hand washing. There are picture instructions in the bathroom for children to follow, helping them learn to protect themselves from infection when toileting. Children are carefully protected from the elements as parents are encouraged to ensure that suitable clothing is provided at all times. For example, in the summer, children wear hats and are protected from the sun by careful use of sun screen. In the colder months, children wear weatherproof clothing such as Wellington boots, hats, scarves and gloves.

The childminder gives extremely high priority to ensuring that children's individual needs are met. For example, the childminder has an excellent understanding of food nutrition, and she uses this knowledge to help children to enjoy their food. She regularly introduces them to new tastes through meals and snacks and ensures that babies receive food in the appropriate texture for their particular stage of development. The childminder supports and encourages parents to follow this lead and her advice is received in an extremely positive manner. Drinking water is always available and babies are offered drinks at regular intervals. Children benefit as the childminder has undertaken training in food hygiene and has attended a food and nutrition course.

Children get plenty of exercise through daily walks to school, trips to the parks, playgrounds, soft-play centres and through regular use of outside play areas at the many play-groups the childminder takes them to. Children also enjoy quiet times when they can rest or sleep comfortably according to their individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children use an excellent variety of good quality equipment, appropriate to their age. The childminder ensures that toys and equipment meet safety standards when they are obtained and they are checked regularly to ensure that they are in good repair. Children are able to select toys themselves from well-stocked containers at an appropriate height for their age.

Children are cared for in an extremely safe environment where risks are effectively minimised. The childminder has completed a thorough risk assessment to reduce potential hazards. Rigorous safety measures are in place such as safety gates across the stairs and the kitchen entrance. As an added safety measure, the childminder has placed a musical alligator mat in the hallway so that if children are in the lounge and the childminder goes to the kitchen to get something, she can hear if a child leaves the lounge as music plays in response to impact on the mat. Children can, therefore, move safely around the rooms used for play, helping to develop their independence. Children learn to keep themselves safe; they take part in regular fire drills, and follow stringent road safety measures when walking outdoors.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by the childminder, who has an excellent understanding of child protection policies and procedures, and maintains details of who to contact if she has concerns. She has attended training in this area and a carefully written policy is shared with parents. The childminder ensures that the children are not left alone with anyone who has not been appropriately vetted, and has appropriate arrangements in place if children are going to

be collected by someone new. There is an emergency plan in place which means that children would be cared for by another registered childminder who is known to them and their parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the childminder's home. They achieve extremely well because the childminder is highly skilled and uses her thorough understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework guidance to provide high quality care and education to the children in her care. The childminder does not prepare a structured plan for the children as she allows for their individual differences such as whether they are feeling active or tired. However, she is highly skilful in recognising and utilising children's individual interests to introduce challenges to them. For example, a child has a particular interest in car badges and this has been extended by the childminder into a whole topic on transport. Children observed the different types of vehicles using roads in the neighbourhood and even went for a ride on the ferry as a new experience. In the autumn, a leaf collecting outing resulted in children developing an interest in bugs. The childminder provided binoculars and magnifying glasses which the children delighted in experimenting with as they went on bug hunts.

Children choose from a range of items which the childminder has selected to provide variety. The childminder has made two excellent 'what shall we do today' books which help children to lead the decision making process for what activities they would like to do. There are large, brightly coloured photographs of children doing various things, for example, drawing, playing in the park, cooking and making things, to name but a few. Younger children enjoy investigating the treasure basket which the childminder has made for them. They experiment with the natural objects they find; feeling, shaking and looking with great interest. Older children have great fun with colours, letters and numbers when they visit the supermarket with the childminder.

Children enjoy and learn through the childminder's complete commitment to working very closely with them and stimulating their desire to explore. A young child watches with great interest as the childminder introduces him to a sensory activity which she has carefully prepared earlier. Following her lead the child begins to feel the shaving foam through the cling-film. He realises that he can change the pattern made by the blobs of paint if he presses harder and it is not long before he has also worked out how to put his finger through the film and actually touch the foam and paint.

Children's time with the childminder is complemented by outings to carefully selected places; a children's centre provides many opportunities for messy-play and a music therapy group. Children learn to mix with other children at childminding groups. Children attending after school choose from a range of appropriate activities, including craft, reading and imaginative play using real things from the dressing-up box.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children demonstrate a clear sense of belonging in this child friendly environment. Bright posters, photographs and children's creative work are displayed and this successfully promotes their self-esteem. Children benefit from the childminder's secure knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of the children she cares for. The childminder spends time with parents discussing their children's home routines, likes and dislikes to ensure she can follow the home

routine closely. This ensures the children have consistent care and promotes their security and well being.

Children's knowledge and understanding of society and the wider world is effectively supported by the broad range of high quality resources that provide positive images of cultural diversity and disability. The childminder demonstrates a very positive attitude to caring for children with special needs and has completed training in this area.

Children's behaviour is very good. They are given an abundance of praise and encouragement by the childminder to reward good behaviour. They are secure due to the familiar and consistent boundaries and expectations. Children are polite and respectful when talking to each other. The childminder acts as a good role model. When boundaries are challenged, the childminder remains calm and firm, using positive and constructive negotiating skills.

A particular strength in this setting is the open, trusting and professional relationships the childminder has established with parents. There is evidence that parents, past and present, highly value the care their children receive and are confident in leaving them in the childminder's care. Parents are provided with well written and comprehensive information about the setting-docs. Childminder has a clear understanding of confidentiality, and values and respects parental wishes. Parents are provided with a daily diary of their child's daily routine to keep them fully informed of their child's day.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Overall, children's needs are met. The children are protected because the childminder and her family have undergone the appropriate checks to ensure that they are suitable to look after or be in contact with children. The childminder has a very clear understanding of her responsibilities with regard to the requirements and conditions of her registration. For example, she displays her registration certificate to reassure parents and carers that she is registered.

The childminder has attended the required training courses and demonstrates a strong commitment to ongoing improvement in her working practice and knowledge of childcare. For example, recent courses undertaken, include 'building warm and respectful relationships', 'signs and symbols' and 'terrific two's'. The childminder is also embarking on a training programme to achieve a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level Three in childcare. The childminder keeps up to date with childcare issues through extensive reading and researching on the internet. She is a member of the local childminding network and uses ideas collected from many different experiences to provide varied and valuable opportunities for the children she cares for. The childminder has a very professional approach to her work and regularly reflects on her own practice to ensure she is providing the best quality care she can.

All of the required documentation to promote the children's well-being and safety is in place and maintained in very good order. All verbal and written policies and procedures work very effectively in practice to provide excellent outcomes for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to extend her knowledge and understanding of working with children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The childminder has attended many training sessions in this area and regularly attends Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

(SENCO) meetings. She has developed an excellent understanding of inclusion and is competent and confident in her ability to ensure this within the setting at all times.

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