

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221345
Inspection date	01 August 2007
Inspector	Jan Burnet
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since 2000. She lives with her partner and eight-year-old daughter in a village location in Northamptonshire. The ground floor of the home is used for play activities and there is an enclosed side and rear garden for outdoor play. The family has no pets.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time and is currently minding 14 children, all on a part-time basis. Of these, six are aged under five years and three receive funding for nursery education, and two are aged over eight years. The childminder takes and collects children to and from the local school. She attends local parent and toddler groups.

The childminder holds an early years qualification and is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is assured due to the childminder's thorough hygiene routines. Children are learning how to keep themselves healthy and are aware of good practice with regard to hand washing. The childminder protects children's health by providing anti-bacterial liquid soap and paper towels. A high priority is given to the nutritional value of children's food and food hygiene practices are generally good, although food safety for children is not fully addressed as the temperature of the fridge is not known. The risk of cross-infection is minimal because parents are aware that their child should not attend if he or she has a contagious illness or sickness and diarrhoea and that they will be contacted if the child becomes ill. Children's best interests are served in case of accident or illness because the childminder holds an in date first aid certificate having completed training in November 2004 and June 2007.

Children learn about healthy and nutritious food. The childminder provides three healthy meals daily and teaches children about the benefits of eating good food. Lunch is a light meal and a cooked tea includes a good variety of protein foods, carbohydrates and vegetables. Fruit is provided for snacks and deserts are milk or fruit based. Children's emotional well-being is fully addressed and begins with a gradual settling-in period agreed with parents according to children's different needs. Children are secure and happy. They develop an awareness of their own growth and development in relation to other living things as they plant and take care of sunflowers, tomatoes and cress. Children are developing skills and confidence during physical play activities when playing ball games and when using large equipment at the park and soft play centres.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are able to move around the ground floor of the childminder's home freely and safely as all potential hazards have been identified and comprehensively addressed. Their different needs are met extremely well as one room is a designated children's room, a conservatory has high and low tables and chairs for use by children of different ages as they play with graphics resources and craft activities, and a dining room is also used for play as well as meals. The excellent organisation of storage encourages children's independence as they are able to choose and select resources, they can choose to play inside or outside where activities are organised equally and they have easy access to the bathroom, and so address their personal hygiene needs independently. Children use an outstanding range of stage appropriate, safe, high quality resources and equipment.

Risks to children are minimal because, as a result of the childminder's robust procedures, they play in a very safe environment and learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, when out walking children learn how to cross the road safely, they develop an awareness of 'stranger

danger' and learn to be careful and ask permission from the owner before approaching a dog. The childminder is alert to her responsibilities with regard to supervision, even though children are encouraged to move freely around the play space available. She has identified and comprehensively addressed potential hazards inside the home and in the garden, and security is given a very high priority. The children are fully aware of procedures in case evacuation is necessary because the childminder ensures that they practise the fire drill regularly. The childminder keeps a record of the drill and has completed a written risk assessment of the environment.

Children's welfare is excellently safeguarded because the childminder has a working knowledge of the signs of abuse and neglect. She is fully aware of her responsibilities with regard to local referral procedures and has drawn up a policy for parents to explain her responsibilities with regard to protecting children. Information on child protection is displayed in the playroom.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy, interact and learn from an extensive range of activities. The childminder constantly offers excellent support and encourages children to think and extend their vocabulary as she skilfully asks open-ended questions to extend their learning. Children are happy, settled and confident and the childminder is proactive in enabling children to become independent learners. Children benefit enormously from the childminder's knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They are learning and developing, as a result of, consistently stimulating and challenging experiences. Routines include regular activities outside the home. Children visit the library and take part in story, rhyme and music sessions. They enjoy walks around the village, develop physical skills at soft play centres and use challenging large equipment at parks. Recently the children chose, weighed and purchased fruit and vegetables from the supermarket. Their learning is being extended by the childminder as role play resources now encourage the children to re-enact this and develop their language and awareness of mathematical concepts, for example, size and weight, counting and numeral recognition. The childminder works closely with parents to ensure that children's learning is extended by providing activities according to their interests. Children explore, investigate and experience a range of activities that encourage the development of their senses, for example, they talk about the smell, taste and colour of foods that they are choosing as toppings for their pizzas.

All children choose from a plentiful amount of high quality resources that are suitable for different stages of development. In order to create maximum floor space, the childminder stores some resources on high shelving, but these are kept in see-through boxes and children confidently request the ones that they would like to play with. Children attending before and after school and during school holidays have free choice of books, games, puzzles, construction and craft toys that fully meet their needs, but are not suitable for young children. They are aware of this and so ensure that they play with selected toys on a high level table. Older children offer support to younger children, for example, setting a good example with regard to sharing, and children of all ages play alongside each other with role play and small world toys and

graphics resources. Manipulative skills develop well with daily practice and children experience a full range of art and craft activities.

Children's self-esteem is given an extremely high priority and they are confident, eager, happy and sociable. The childminder supports, encourages and also inspires children to become independent. She plans effectively for children under three years with the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and her knowledge of children's physical, intellectual, social, emotional and cultural development. To ensure that children make progress, she records observations and on evaluation of activity sheets makes notes on 'Follow-on activity' and 'Goal for future planning'.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The childminder plans effectively for three and four-year-old children and ensures that they are able to access a range of resources, which support their learning across all of the six areas of learning. The childminder continually records observations and these are kept in individual books along with examples of each child's paintings, drawings and art and craft activities. Assessment systems explained above identify some future planning for all children when the planned activities are evaluated, however, systems do not clearly track individual children's progress along the stepping stones, so that observations and assessment inform planning for the next steps towards the early learning goals. Children are sociable and confident and show independence in selecting and carrying out activities, sometimes alone or with other children. Children are aware of behaviour boundaries and show consideration for others.

The childminder challenges children effectively by questioning and supporting them. For example, an extension to previous learning is planned as children recently attended an open day organised by the local authority to promote outdoor experiences, specifically planting, growing and eating. Children are naming the fresh foods that they have bought from the shop for the pizzas that they are making. They talk about the seeds that they can see inside the green pepper, the smell and texture of the spring onions and whether they like the taste of mushrooms. Children develop skills as they cut food into small pieces, spread their own tomato puree and sprinkle cheese through their fingers. A three-year-old confidently tells the childminder, 'I don't want to use cheese'.

Children count, learn to recognise numerals and calculate. For example, in the sand tray there are small toy soldiers and children are supported in counting them initially in to equal groups of five and then taking away and adding to the groups, for example, the childminder takes two away and helps children to identify how many more are needed to make five. At the supermarket children are encouraged to recognise familiar numbers on price labels and they discuss size and weigh fruit and vegetables. Children practise physical skills on a daily basis. They use a range of small equipment and hand and eye co-ordination is good. They practise catching and throwing, steering and pedalling wheeled toys and control of their bodies whilst moving to music. Equipment for climbing and sliding is not available at home and so the childminder ensures that children regularly develop skills at parks and soft play centres.

Pencil control is developing well and children use writing in a variety of ways, for example, in role play situations. They are encouraged to name their own pictures and name cards are available to help them to recognise and write their own name. Children have continual access to books and graphics resources including writing materials, templates, glue, sticky tape, pencil sharpeners and scissors. They are encouraged to recognise rhyming sounds and the link between sound and letter. Resources include a good variety of large and small construction toys and children are developing control of the computer mouse and other programmable toys. Children are creative and imaginative. They play happily with domestic play resources, repeating situations that they have seen, as a three-year-old takes care of the babies and skilfully hangs clothes on the washing line that the childminder has put up for her in the outdoor play area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are fully known by the childminder. They are developing a very good awareness of diversity as they are able to choose from a range of books and toys that reflect positive images. Children are learning to appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences, for example, they celebrate festivals, talk about their families and events at home and develop an awareness of other languages. The childminder has not yet been asked to care for a child with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but ensures that all children are valued, included and challenged so that they are able to reach their full potential. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The childminder has drawn up a managing behaviour policy and identifies that children are praised and encouraged and that she will never humiliate, lower self-esteem or embarrass a child. The childminder is a good role model and takes account of different levels of development.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children benefit from excellent communication that ensures consistency of care and promotes learning. Children's emotional security is addressed well and begins with a gradual introduction. Extensive information for parents is contained in a portfolio and included are policies and procedures, training, police clearance information and insurance details. Admission forms are thorough and parents are provided with written information on the service provided which includes details on the six areas of learning. Parents' attention is also drawn to displays on the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework and activity planning. Information is shared daily through discussion and daily diary sheets for very young children. The childminder makes sure that books for each child containing observations and examples of 'work' are always accessible for parents. She invites parents to record observations of achievements at home and these are added to her records. Examples of information from parents include, counting and number recognition, language development, sociability, patience and good behaviour. The childminder demonstrates a commitment to assessing and improving her service as she has developed a comprehensive complaints procedure. Parents receive copies of all policies and procedures and are asked to sign to acknowledge that they are aware of them.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder's management of her service is good and children benefit greatly from her commitment to improving her knowledge and skills. She holds an early years level three qualification and is working towards a Foundation degree. She achieved 'Children Come First' accreditation in 2004 and this is still valid. Advice from local authority development workers and mentor teachers is welcomed so that the childminder is supported in assessing and improving care and education for children. She regularly attends curriculum for the Foundation Stage cluster meetings organised by the local authority.

Thorough admission information and excellent communication with parents ensures that individual needs are very well met. The organisation of documentation is good and information for parents is extensive. The childminder provides a range of written policies including ones on equal opportunities, special needs, child protection, health and safety, illness, confidentiality, complaints and behaviour management. All required records are kept in good order and up to date. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection the childminder was asked to complete an appropriate first aid course, develop her knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and obtain public liability insurance. These recommendations have been addressed and children's welfare and safety needs are well met.

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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- extend food hygiene practices, for example, by ensuring that food is stored at a safe temperature.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop systems so that the next steps in learning along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals are more clearly planned for individual children.

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