

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	401133
Inspection date	27 November 2007
Inspector	Lesley Clarke
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 has been registered since 1998. She lives with her husband and two children aged 11 and 13. They live in a detached modern house at the end of a cul-de-sac with an enclosed front, side and rear garden separated from the driveway by secure gates. Children have access to a playroom and conservatory which are adjacent to each other and to a downstairs bathroom. The gardens are suitable for a wide range of play activities.

The family pets are two Labradors which are kept in a separate room from the children and a rabbit which lives in a hutch outside.

The childminder is registered to care for six children. At present she is caring for seven minded children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminder has a good understanding of healthy eating. Water is available at all times. Food and snacks are hygienically prepared and reflect children's preferences as well as dietary requirements. For example, children are currently eating breadsticks and lots of different types of fruit as snacks to minimise the amount of sugar they eat. Evening menus include traditional food with fresh vegetables as well as substantial snacks to fit in with children's after school requirements. Lunchtime arrangements are flexible. Some children bring their own lunches but the childminder advises as to suitability; for example, recommending 'finger foods' for toddlers to help develop independent eating habits. There is good liaison with parents to ensure children's particular dietary needs are met. The childminder has a good awareness of food allergies and accommodates the needs of all the children in her care very well.

Children follow good hygiene practice to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Each child has his or her facecloth in a named washbag which is taken home at the end of each week to be washed. There is an effective policy and procedure in place for liaison with parents in case of illness or accident. In case of accidents, the childminder is qualified to administer first aid. Accident records are effectively maintained and signed by both parent and childminder. Written permission is secured from parents for any emergency treatments. There is a clear policy adhered to for administering and storing prescribed medicine which is agreed by the childminder and the parents. Parents are required to sign their agreement at the side of each to make sure that they have read fully the terms and conditions.

Children benefit from a specially designated learning environment which promotes physical development well. There is a good range of indoor activities such as painting, jig-saws, and small construction toys which encourage the development of children's fine motor skills. Outside equipment encourages children to participate in physical activity for there is extensive space for them to pursue active and imaginative games. Frequent outings to the nearby park and castle further promote coordination and social skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are well cared for in a warm, welcoming environment in two rooms set aside for their use. A birthday poster on the wall, designed by the children, clearly shows they feel they have some ownership of the space. This means it is homely for those who come here both before and after school and indicates children feel safe and secure. The furniture is appropriate for children and there is a place for little ones to rest when they get tired. Children have ready access to a wide range of toys and equipment, suitable for boys and girls of different ages, which promotes their development and independence.

Regular checks are carried out to assess risks to children's safety. Electric sockets are secure and out of reach and smoke alarms ensure safety. Good precautions are taken to protect children from harm. For instance, doors and gates are securely fastened and child-locked gates at the foot of the stairs and at the entrance to the kitchen keep small children from straying. Outside, the garden is fenced off and gates are securely fastened. This means that children move around safely and freely. The dogs are kept in another room and children only have access to them

under supervision. Fire safety is satisfactory. There are clear procedures in case of emergency evacuation.

Expectations and routines are clear so that children are in safe hands when they go to and from school each day or visit local amenities. The childminder is mindful of safety at all times but also takes care to develop older children's independence and safety awareness.

The children are well-protected because the childminder has a good understanding of her role in child protection and safeguarding children. She has recently undertaken relevant training and knows what to do to safeguard children's welfare. However, while most phone numbers relating to the children are stored centrally and in an easily accessible form, phone numbers relating to child protection are less readily accessible.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The childminder knows the individual children she cares for very well and successfully meets their interests and needs. Routines are well established and the childminder's calm and purposeful approach gives children confidence to learn. They quickly settle into activities in the friendly, welcoming environment. They know where resources are and get themselves organised. Relationships are excellent. Children are happy and confident because they feel at home. For example, a five and seven year old took turns on a computer game they had started, helping each other to win. Children enjoy learning and gain a great sense of satisfaction from their achievements because these are valued. Activities books record children's developmental progress through words and photographs which are then shared with parents.

The childminder is skilled at developing children's communication skills. Her questioning is good and develops children's speech and language. For example, she chatted to a two-year-old, accurately interpreting what she was saying and at the same time extended what was said so as to teach new words and to promote talking in sentences. She is good at seeing when to move children's learning on, taking opportunities to encourage mathematical development, for instance, so that young children begin to recognise colours and to count objects accurately. A game started by the child to link different sized toy camels together became instructive as she began to notice differences between size, shape and colour because of the childminder's good questioning and discussion. In these ways, children's learning is promoted effectively.

There is a good balance between activities children choose and those led by the childminder. This helps children to make good progress in most areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder cares for the children in her care equally well to ensure their needs are met. Play areas are organised to accommodate the needs of the different ages and stages of children so that all have equal opportunities to play, learn or relax without tumbling over each other.

The partnership with parents is good. The childminder consults parents so she can care for individual needs according to the parents' wishes. She keeps a detailed daily record of activities the child has done, including records of food and nappy changing, so parents have full information about their child's day. Similarly parents keep the childminder informed of anything significant that happens when the child is at home. This ensures that children's needs are met

at all times. The childminder cares effectively for children who have learning difficulties with the result that they flourish in her care.

The childminder has a good range of toys and games, but those which reflect the multi-cultural diversity in society are more limited. Children's knowledge of the wider world is gained through visits to the library, castle and park. Activities and play is organised well to include all children. Children have good access to toys and games, which are stored within easy reach.

Children respond well to the childminder's expectations because she gives them very clear guidelines which make them feel safe and secure. This leads to children speaking confidently and voicing their opinions in a pleasant way. Sanctions are clearly explained and accepted by parents but rarely used. Children behave well because the childminder spends a lot of time talking to them and discreetly managing their behaviour both by example and by reinforcing good ways to behave with each other. As a result, older children happily take turns in games.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder is suitably qualified, has a clear understanding of the legally required documentation and is well organised. There is a good range of written policies and procedures, which set out the childminder's expectations for parents. This enables them to understand exactly the quality of the service provided.

The childminder shows a high level of commitment to her role and clearly loves being with children. She ensures that her knowledge and skills are up to date to ensure that she takes good quality care of children. Space, time and resources are managed well so that children have access to a good range of activities and resources which meet their needs. Children have a lot of choice and the childminder is always ready with alternative activities to keep up their interest. As a result, children enjoy their time with her, warming to her good humoured, well-organised approach. This was evident when a two-year-old instantly involved the childminder in her imaginative games. Play space is effectively organised so that children are properly supervised and play safely. The photographic records kept with examples of children's work and development in their activities books are beautifully presented and give a clear picture of their progress. Both parents and children value these. Clear routines are set for eating, sleeping and meal times.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

It was recommended at the last inspection that regular fire practices should take place. At the time of the inspection the childminder had only been in her new house for three weeks and a fire evacuation practice has not yet taken place. However, she has already made it very clear to children how to exit from the building in an emergency. All older children have been made aware of where the keys are kept in relation to doors. The front and back of the building are equally suitable and accessible for rapid exits and the childminder is vigilant.

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 actions 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 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):

- improve access to child protection helpline contact details
- widen the range of multi-cultural resources so as to extend further children's awareness of cultural diversity.

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