

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221336
Inspection date	06 November 2007
Inspector	Sarah Catherine Munn

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 was registered 1994. She lives with her husband and their six year old child in a village south of Northampton.

The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for five children at any one time and is currently minding three children, all of whom attend on various days throughout the week. The childminder walks to the local school to take and collect children, attends a local toddler group and takes children to the local park.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are able to learn the importance of good personal hygiene from an early age, because of well-organised routines, practice, through discussion and good examples that the childminder

sets. For example, she encourages children to wash their hands after using the toilet, playing outside and before meals. The children are protected from infection because the childminder is well informed about their health and employs suitable methods to prevent infections spreading, such as working with parents when instigating her sick child policy, having good nappy changing procedures and ensuring the cleanliness of the home, toys and equipment. Information is shared with parents relating to any aspect of their child's health. Written permission has been obtained from parents to seek emergency treatment or advice and sound procedures are in place for documenting children's accidents and administration of medication, parents countersign each entry. This impacts positively on the children's health and well-being. A first aid certificate is in place and enables the childminder to act in the children's best interest at all times.

Children's meals are supplied by their parents. The childminder stores food correctly in the fridge to ensure their meals stay fresh. They enjoy occasional snacks provided by the childminder who ensures that individual dietary requirements are respected following discussion with their parents. Children sit together at the table to eat which promotes meal times as social occasions and younger children's independence skills are encouraged as they try to feed themselves. Children do not become thirsty because they have access to drinks at all times.

Children enjoy an appropriate range of physical activities which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Their health and development is promoted through their participation in a variety of physical activities, such as walking to drop off and pick up other children from the school, visits to the park, visiting friends along with playing outside with a variety of toys. The childminder ensures children get fresh air each day through these daily outdoor experiences. Children's hand and eye coordination and dexterity is developing as they are introduced to cause and effect toys, small world figures, jigsaws and creative activities. Children have access to varied activities and excellent levels of support which give them confidence to try out new skills. The childminder supports the children and is on hand to guide their play and giving them opportunities to develop their own skills and confidence. Children are able to fully participate in the activities because the childminder uses her experience and knowledge of child development to adapt these to a suitable level.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder safeguards children's welfare and has an excellent awareness of safety. The childminder uses the space appropriately providing play areas for children to move, explore and play freely in a safe, controlled environment. The child present is very much at home and relaxed within this environment. Children have access to a variety of toys and equipment which are in a good state of repair and are age-appropriate. The childminder carefully monitors and supervises children's choice of toys to ensure they are suitable and provide stimulation for their age and stage of development to ensure they gain maximum benefit from them.

Children benefit from a secure range of safety measures within the home. For example, locked outer doors and gates and socket covers. An informal visual risk assessment is carried out daily to identify any risks and to take action to minimise them. Fire safety equipment is in place and evacuation plans are regularly practised with the children. This enables the childminder to ensure the children's welfare is protected in the event of a fire. Children are kept safe due to the childminder's vigilance to safety when in and out of the home. For example, when going for a walk children know they must hold hands, and stay together. They practise the 'Green Cross Code' when crossing roads. Children are very well supervised as they play, giving them opportunity to gain an understanding of the boundaries that are there to protect them.

The childminder has rigorous procedures in place for the safe collection of children. Parents inform her if the arrangements change at anytime. Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. The childminder is attentive to her responsibility to protect the children in her care and has a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms to look for along with the procedures to follow if she had any concerns. Most supporting documents are in place for the childminder to refer to should she have any concerns about a child. However, she has not obtained the updated version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' - summary to keep her informed of the procedures. Parents are aware of her responsibility to protect the children in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very settled and happy at the childminder's home. They are secure and confident with themselves and the childminder. When children are together they are encouraged to share and take turns with the toys. They are given good quality attention and they respond to the childminder positively. Younger children's language development is encouraged as they listen and respond to sounds, use body language and facial expressions to indicate their needs and feelings. For example, whilst being held in an upright position allowing her to feel weight on her feet, facing the childminder the child's face lights up with a smile and interacts with the childminder taking turns making sounds. The childminder encourages this by making sounds and smiling back at the child. Children are stimulated and able to choose from a wide variety of toys and equipment. These include music, creative work, outings, stories and imaginative play, such as imitate in role play. The childminder is skilled in listening to the children and introducing new language within these situations.

Suitably challenging and fun activities are available for all children and with the childminder's experience she is able to adapt these to suit children's individual needs. They are able to make independent choices in their play and are able to choose from a variety of toys and equipment, which are stored within easy reach. The childminder is aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework but has not yet started to use it to further promote children's overall development. She is adept at understanding the children's needs in order to help them grow and extend their development. Children's self-esteem and confidence is growing through the consistent support and meaningful praise offered by the childminder.

The childminder develops the children's knowledge and understanding through discussions and play as she introduces them to simple language and mathematical skills through singing songs and rhymes. Reading and sharing books are encouraged even for the youngest children. For example, a sensory picture book was introduced and the child was actively encouraged to feel it whilst the childminder described the pictures in simple language. Children are encouraged to join in with basic mathematical concepts of adding and subtraction along with matching and counting in the form of playing games.

Children have warm relationships with the childminder. They approach her for physical comfort and reassurance which contributes to their sense of belonging and well-being. She clearly knows the children well as she is able to decipher gestures and sounds, thus avoiding any child becoming frustrated or despondent. Children respond happily to the childminder, gaining confidence to let her leave the room and continue their play. The childminder has an excellent knowledge of them as individuals and demonstrates genuine pleasure in their company.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are accepted and valued and activities can be adapted to meet the needs of all children. The childminder demonstrates a genuine concern for children and is a happy role model. This contributes to children's feelings of security within her care. Ample information is gained from parents at the onset of the arrangement to ensure she follows their wishes. Information is shared regularly with parents to ensure any children's needs can be identified and appropriate care provided. A range of resources are available and discussions take place to promote a balanced view of the world and an understanding of diversity as children reach this stage in their development. The childminder has previous experience of caring for children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and would consider caring for any child dependent on the level of care required and her other commitments at that time. She is able to approach parents if she is concerned about children's progress and obtain appropriate support to ensure that they can make progress. Activities are adapted to meet the needs of all children and a sensitive approach ensures children can play without fear of discrimination and that they can be fully involved.

Expectations and realistic boundaries are in place and this impacts positively on the children's behaviour. By using positive language and age-appropriate strategies she enables children to develop self-control and an understanding of what is acceptable behaviour. They learn to be considerate, share, take turns and are encouraged to remember to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Children respond well to the childminder whilst the high levels of support and consistent strategies help them understand what is acceptable. Children are happy and confident. Their confidence and self-esteem is developed by the praise and encouragement received from the childminder who knows the children extremely well. This enables her to have realistic expectations to promote the children's sense of belonging. Children are absorbed and enthusiastic when playing and there are smiles, cuddles and other unspoken communication which confirms the happy and relaxed environment they have created between them.

Children benefit from a strong partnership between the childminder and their parents this impacts on the children's feelings of belonging and security. The childminder takes time to exchange information regularly to make sure the children receive consistency in their care and learning verbally. This helps keep parents well informed of how their child's needs are being met and their developmental progress. A variety of written procedures are in place to underpin her practice, parents have a copy to refer to if needed and they are reviewed regularly. Parents understand the childminder's procedures if they wish to make any comments or have any concerns about her practice and there is a system in place to record these if any parent wishes to make a complaint. Contracts are in place and information is gained about each child to help support the care provided by the childminder. Children's care and development is promoted due to the childminder's commitment to working closely with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are relaxed and at ease in the organised environment provided. Space, resources and routine impact on the children's play and learning because it is flexible yet planned around the children's needs. They are able to play, eat, sleep and rest as they need to. Children are able to explore within this environment knowing they are supported and cared for. They can access resources easily and independently this enables them to self-select their activities and play safely.

Documentation is stored securely and information shared appropriately with parents this contributes to the trusting relationships developed between them and impacts on the children's feelings of security. Some written policies and procedures are in place to help keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. Parents are aware of how to make a complaint and a suitable system is in place for recording these. Ratios are met at all times and the childminder has a good awareness of the impact these have on the children's health, safety, socialisation and learning. The childminder has a professional yet caring and sensitive approach to her practice which is clearly demonstrated in her practice. She ensures each child's potential is recognised and activities support and challenge them. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to complete the following actions; complete an appropriate first aid course that includes training in first aid for infants and young children.

An updated first aid course has been completed. This ensures children's well-being is safeguarded.

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

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

- obtain an updated version of the Department of Health leaflet 'What to do if you're worried a Child is being abused' - summary (2006)
- improve outcomes for children from birth to three by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework

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