

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	130283
Inspection date	20 November 2007
Inspector	Jane Mount
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 June 1992. She lives with her husband and two adult sons in a four bedroom, semi-detached house in Croxley Green. It is within easy walking distance of shops, schools and parks. All areas of the property are included in the registration. The ground floor is mainly used for childminding purposes except for use of the toilet facilities which are situated on the first floor. Children who require a sleep during the day are provided with appropriate facilities on the ground floor. There is a fully enclosed and secure garden for outdoor play. Overnight care is not provided and the family have a dog.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, of which, three may be under five years. She currently has six children on roll who are aged between one year and seven years. All attend on a part-time basis. The childminder is a member of a local childminding group and part of her daily routine includes regular outings to toddler groups, the library and other suitable play venues.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning the importance of good hygiene and personal care through effective support and guidance from the childminder. For example, younger children have their noses wiped and tissues are disposed of appropriately by the childminder. Older children are reminded to flush the toilet after use and are aware they must wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating. They discuss the reasons why they must wash their hands and older children know it is to wash away the germs so they don't become unwell.

Children stay healthy as the childminder has clear health and hygiene procedures she follows. For example, highly effective nappy changing procedures are implemented which reduces the risk of cross contamination. Tables and highchairs are thoroughly cleaned with anti-bacterial wipes after each use. Also, a clear and generally informative medication and illness policy is shared with parents and informs them of the childminder's procedures if a child becomes unwell or requires medication. Consequently, children's health is safeguarded. The risk of cross-infection is minimised as each child has their own hand towel in the bathroom which is changed daily. Children know which is their towel as they each have a different colour.

Children participate in a varied range of activities which positively contributes to their physical health and fitness on a daily basis. For example, they are able to spend time outside in the fresh air such as when they walk to and from school and nursery each day. They enjoy visiting the local children's park where they are able to run, climb and play on the swings and the slide. They practise and develop their physical skills through regular attendance at toddler groups where they enjoy riding on small bikes and scooters. When at the childminder's home physical activity is brought into children's play. For example, the childminder has introduced the children to yoga and children delight in regular yoga sessions. Children are becoming aware of how physical activity can affect their body. For example, after running they discuss how they are hot and may need a drink of water.

Children's dietary needs are met through parents providing their children's main meals and the childminder provides snacks and drinks. The childminder works closely with parents to ensure any special dietary needs a child may have are appropriately met. This ensures children's health is protected and individual dietary needs are effectively met. For example, the childminder has been proactive in increasing her knowledge of dealing with severe food allergies including obtaining some training in how to administer an EpiPen in an emergency. Healthy eating is positively encouraged and children have a varied selection of healthy options at snack time such as fruit, raisins or health bars. Drinks are always available and children are encouraged to drink water. They have their own cups or beakers which they are able to recognise and confidently find their drink when thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder is conscious of safety and keeping children safe and potential risks or hazards are visually identified and minimised. Currently no records are maintained to show how children are safeguarded. However, the childminder has plans to maintain a written risk assessment to reflect how children's safety is managed and they are fully protected. Some effective measures are taken to maintain children's safety. For example, a stairgate is used to prevent children

climbing on the stairs unsupervised and hurting themselves. Cupboard locks are fitted in the kitchen so children cannot access cleaning materials and smoke detectors are fitted and regularly checked to ensure they are working. Children are beginning to learn about how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, the childminder has a written emergency evacuation plan and this is regularly practised with the children. They talk about calling '999' in an emergency and enjoy reading stories about fire engines and delight in making the siren sounds. When out walking children learn about road safety and how to stay safe. They know they must hold onto the buggy or the childminder's hand and enjoy waiting for the green man before crossing the road.

Children benefit from a child-friendly environment where they are welcomed and feel secure. Space has been organised so they can move around independently yet safely and they can access a varied range of resources. Children are interested and motivated by the available resources and are supervised and supported by the childminder to ensure they receive the support they need. Children are confident in choosing what they want to play with and resources are developmentally appropriate and promote children's learning and development. Children's welfare is safeguarded. The childminder has a secure knowledge and understanding of child protection through regularly updating her knowledge through attending appropriate training. She has high regard for children's well-being and has all the required child protection documentation in place. She is fully aware of the correct recording and reporting procedures if she had a concern. Consequently, children remain safe and are not at risk.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's confidence and self-esteem are developed by the childminder in a supportive and caring environment. They receive consistent levels of support and the childminder regularly praises and encourages children in their play. She allows children sufficient space to explore but supports them when needed. Children enjoy a warm and secure relationship with the childminder and this ensures they are happy and settled in their environment and develops a strong sense of belonging.

Children's learning is promoted through the childminder's secure knowledge of child development and her growing familiarity with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children respond positively to the varied play opportunities provided. Activities are planned on an informal basis to fit flexibly in with the children's daily routine such as mealtimes, sleeps, nursery and school. Children learn through their play and what interests them and the childminder verbally shares children's achievements and progress with parents. Children are able to spend their time exploring a varied range of resources and play experiences both within the home and outside such as when attending a toddler group.

Children's creative skills are encouraged as they have regular opportunities to experience a variety of art and craft activities such as playdough, painting, drawing and sticking. Children's work is valued as finished items are praised by the childminder and some art work is displayed. Children use their imaginations and particularly enjoy dressing up as pirates or princesses. They delight in making lunch in the home corner and 'feeding' their babies before taking them for a walk. Children are learning about the natural environment and have recently planted and grown some carrots, tomatoes and small potatoes. They enjoyed picking the tomatoes from the vines and then tasting them. Children's communication skills are effectively supported by the childminder as she asks open-ended questions to extend and develop children's language through their play. All of the children love books and enjoy reading or listening to stories.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Behaviour is dealt with in a positive manner with clear boundaries set which are consistent and appropriate for the child's level of understanding. Consequently, children know what is expected of them and they feel secure in their surroundings and are confident in their play. Younger children are supported effectively by the childminder and are encouraged to take turns and to share. Older children are learning to negotiate with others and are beginning to understand how their behaviour can affect others. Children are encouraged to help others in their play and are praised by the childminder when they spontaneously do so. For example, when an older child helped a younger child to ride on a scooter, this was acknowledged by the childminder. Children delight in receiving stickers if they have been kind or helpful which they proudly wear and this also promotes their confidence and self-esteem.

Children have regular opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them. A range of resources is available to increase children's awareness of diversity. For example, through looking at books which reflect the wider world such as 'People of the world' children develop a positive attitude to others. Children learn about the local community through routine outings such as walking to and from school and nursery, visits to the park and nature walks. They also enjoy visits to the library and regularly attend local toddler groups. Children are valued and treated as individuals. Activities are organised to ensure all children are fully included and to meet their individual needs. All children have equal access to all that is on offer and any specific needs a child may have are effectively addressed by the childminder in full consultation with parents.

The childminder works in close partnership with parents to ensure children's individual needs are effectively met. Children benefit from a two-way sharing of information between the childminder and parents. Daily diaries are used as a way of exchanging information when children are very young and parents of older children are verbally informed each day of their child's day, progress and achievements. Children have a strong sense of belonging because long term relationships have developed between the childminder and some of the parents and children in her care. For example, several children have been cared for by the childminder for many years. A flexible settling-in programme ensures children settle well and are happy and feel secure in the childminder's care. Parents are well informed as the childminder is proactive in ensuring information is regularly shared. For example, new parents receive a welcome pack which includes copies of all the childminder's policies and procedures and an informative portfolio is also available. A notice board in the hall also displays information for parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care, learning and play are positively supported by a childminder who has good organisational skills. The individual needs of children are met through the childminder organising her time and resources effectively. Children benefit from a child friendly environment where they are welcomed and feel at ease. The childminder has high regard for the well-being of all children in her care and she adjusts her routine according to their needs such as sleeps or mealtimes.

Children's development is supported by a childminder who has a secure knowledge of child development and a growing familiarity of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children benefit because she is prepared to develop her skills and is keen to keep up-to-date with child

care issues. For example, she is proactive at updating her knowledge through training and discussions with other childminders.

Appropriate steps are taken to protect children and the childminder is fully aware of the importance of confidentiality. Since the last inspection the childminder has worked hard to further develop her documentation for childminding so it is more informative and this has been successfully achieved. Consequently, all documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and well organised. Contracts are regularly reviewed and updated along with children's information records. This ensures the safe management of children and promotes continuity of care and ensures children's individual needs are met more effectively. The childminder ensures parents are fully informed of her practice and procedures and children's progress and development are regularly discussed. The childminder monitors the quality of her practice and one way this is achieved is through the completion of parental questionnaires and feedback from parents is very positive. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the childminder was asked to improve her knowledge of the National Standards to ensure that all required documentation was in place and this has been successfully completed. The childminder has a secure knowledge of the National Standards and has reorganised and reviewed her documentation to ensure all is in place. Consequently, children's care and well-being are safeguarded.

The childminder was also asked to ensure she had and understood all relevant child protection literature. Children's welfare is protected because the childminder has increased her knowledge and understanding of child protection issues through attending appropriate courses and she has obtained all relevant documentation including the most recent safeguarding children literature.

At the last care inspection the childminder was also asked to review safety procedures in relation to fire alarms, window locks and storage of family medication. All medication is stored in a locked cabinet which is inaccessible to children and windows are now locked as and when appropriate. Emergency fire procedures have been improved to include regular testing of the smoke alarms. Consequently, children are protected because positive steps are taken to promote their safety.

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 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):

- further enhance safety procedures through the completion of a written risk assessment which identifies and shows how risks and hazards are minimised and children remain safe.

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