

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	122854
Inspection date	07 February 2008
Inspector	Judith Mary Scott

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 satisfactory. 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 1991. She lives with her four adult sons. They live in a three bedroom house in Battersea, London, within walking distance of shops, schools, parks, a library and transport links. The ground floor of the property is used for childminding. This includes a through living room with a dining area, a kitchen and a downstairs toilet. The garden has been out of bounds but is now suitable for children's outside play.

The family have no pets.

The childminder is registered to care for four children at any one time. She is currently caring for

a child aged four who attends nursery part time five days a week, plus a child aged six and a child aged eight, before and after school, five days a week, with occasional holidays. Some of the care takes place in the children's own home. There is also an occasional holiday placement for two children aged six and eight.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean home that is friendly and welcoming. Children relate well to the childminder and they benefit from her good physical and emotional care. Their needs are met with plenty of positive and affectionate interaction. Children experience a structured but flexible routine and they are content, comfortable and settled. They are able to freely express their feelings. For example, they talk about how they like coming to the childminder's house, how they fell over at nursery and hurt themselves and about their favourite colour.

Children's lunch, snacks and drinks are provided by the childminder. She also serves breakfast and cooks supper at one family's house. Food supplied is homemade, nutritious and balanced and meets the children's dietary needs. Once a week, children eat supper at the childminder's home and have occasional food treats. Water is available at all times. Children's healthy eating is promoted by the childminder in conjunction with parents. Meals are discussed together and parents supply the ingredients in their own home.

Children's health is sufficiently protected by the childminder's knowledge of health and safety, first aid and general good hygiene practice. Children learn the importance of good personal care and independence through discussion and daily routines, they use anti-bacterial hand wipes regularly before meals and after using toilet as there is no wash hand basin in the downstairs toilet. Children are encouraged to use tissues to blow their noses and cover their mouths when they cough.

Children benefit from physical activity and exercise to help them develop control of their bodies. They walk to and from school and older children have swimming lessons. Children benefit from fresh air and like playing on the fixed equipment in the local parks and playgrounds. They have opportunities to walk, run, jump and climb with the childminder's support and encouragement to develop physical skills. They enjoy skipping and throwing and kicking balls. Children also enjoy action rhymes, music and movement indoors and at groups.

The children's individual needs are met and information shared adequately with parents by the childminder maintaining records regarding accidents, incidents and medication. However, systems in place lack some details.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from an organised home. They are safe and secure in this environment and can move freely around the ground floor. They can access some activities themselves or they ask the childminder for their choice. The childminder has taken appropriate measures to reduce potential hazards and understands the value of good risk assessment. For example, a safety gate is fixed at the foot of the stairs to prevent children's access to the upper floors and there is toughened glass in internal doors.

Children are made aware of the importance of using toys and play equipment safely. The childminder discusses this with them and, if necessary, explains and demonstrates, for example, having regular tidy ups to prevent accidents. Children are encouraged to build their confidence and extend their skills with the childminder's support, for instance, when doing climbing and balancing activities.

Children are given clear boundaries and the childminder ensures children are safe on outings. However, she currently only has verbal consent to take children out. Suitable systems are in place and she supervises the children closely, they hold hands or walk together. Children are encouraged to stop, listen and look both ways to increase their awareness of road safety. They are allowed to run around in enclosed spaces in sight.

Children have access to a range of childcare equipment. There is a varied selection of toys, books and play materials that are stored and presented appropriately. Children can choose activities themselves from the selection or ask and also sometimes bring toys from home. The childminder monitors and ensures the play provision is suitable for children's ages and stages of development. This includes a baby box, soft toys, musical instruments, craft materials, educational and board games, puzzles, imaginary and role play, books, construction and interactive toys.

Children's welfare is paramount and they are safe and protected as the childminder has a sound understanding of child protection issues and procedures. She has had recent training and is aware of the importance of observing children, keeping accurate records and seeking advice if necessary. She has a copy of the updated child protection information guidelines available for reference but no confidential recording system in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy being with the childminder and interact warmly and affectionately. They are friendly and confident and chat away animatedly relating home and nursery experiences. They talk about the fund raising treasure hunt they have brought from nursery and explain "It's for people who are sad and have nowhere to live, it will help them to be happy". Children are offered recognition, acceptance and comfort by the childminder and are given lots of praise and encouragement. They are settled and happy and relate well to adults, this contributes to their sense of belonging.

Children experience a regular, flexible childminding routine that includes the school and nursery run, indoor and outdoor play activities, meals and quiet times. Sometimes they also have extra curricula activities after school. Children have regular trips out to one o'clock clubs, parks, shops and visiting friends. These provide opportunities for new experiences to find out about the outside world, to socialise with others and to use different equipment and resources such as sand, water and bikes. Children have chances to explore the natural world of insects, animals and nature, they like to feed the ducks and collect leaves and conkers. Children enjoy going to the library to choose books to read with the childminder.

Children play with suitable and age appropriate toys and are interested and involved. They confidently ask for toys from available supplies. Children concentrate and persevere with a floor space explorer puzzle, both alone and together with the childminder, until it is complete. They ensure all the pieces fit correctly and this provokes much discussion about planets and astronauts. They smile when praised for their achievements. Children are absorbed with mark making and drawing with felt tips and demonstrate good pencil control when colouring. They draw adults and say "I can't do curly hair" and ask "What will I look like when I'm big?". They handle scissors well and cut out their drawings. Children look at picture books and identify and discuss things that hold their interest. They enjoy sitting comfortably with the childminder and reading stories. They ask lots of questions to which she responds, reinforcing use of new words

and positional and descriptive language. Children like to sing and do action rhymes, joining in the refrains.

Children participate in a range of stimulating play activities on a weekly basis that contribute to their enjoyment and learning. This includes creative play, craft work, books and stories, free play, music, construction, puzzles, imaginary and role play and educational and board games. Once a fortnight, children enjoy cooking activities such as making fruit salad, cakes and pizzas. They chop up ingredients, select their own toppings and older children write out menus. Children are introduced in a variety of ways to numbers, letters, shapes and sounds. Alphabet pictures are displayed and children play with a wooden letter game and an abacus. The childminder uses everyday events such as the postman's visit to extend this. Children go and pick up the mail and parcels. They examine the post, recognise letters and ask "What does it say?".

Children are encouraged to express themselves by the childminder with discussion to extend their imagination and share their ideas. Their independence, confidence and ability to make choices is well promoted by the childminder. For example, children use the toilet independently, select toys and books, put on and take off their own coats and shoes. Children experience warm, reliable care from the childminder who has a good awareness of children's needs, their development and what she can do to help them progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children gain from settling in arrangements that are arranged to suit families' specific needs with introductory sessions. Information is obtained about children's individual needs, routines, likes/dislikes, comforters and favourite toys. The childminder asks parents to put a plan together for her to follow. She gets to know children well and communicates with parents regularly regarding their care and progress. Children benefit from the positive partnerships that the childminder has formed with parents which are flexible and supportive. They indicate they are happy with the quality of care. However, written agreements with parents, setting out the expectations of both parties, are not in place for all children. Parents are not made fully aware of a complaints procedure or the regulator's details and there is no suitable system in place for recording complaints.

Children are given clear consistent boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, plus expectations in the form of house rules. For example, being nice to one another, being polite and having good manners, helping to tidy up and playing cooperatively. Children are encouraged to share and take turns. They are kept well occupied and behave well, responding positively to the childminder's requests and guidance. Children benefit from the childminder's suitable and age appropriate behaviour management strategies such as talking, explaining, anticipation and redirection, plus time out if necessary. Desired behaviour is promoted and rewarded with plenty of praise and positive language.

The importance of positive images, attitudes and role models is understood and reflected in care and play provision. Children are treated as individuals and with equal concern. They have access to the full range of activities offered. This includes resources that promote a positive view of the wider community and increases their understanding of diversity such as books, play figures, pictures and dolls. The childminder displays positive attitudes towards children with learning difficulties/disabilities.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's needs are supported so they can enjoy and achieve in a child friendly home with a variety of resources. They are comfortable and secure in this environment which helps them gain confidence and be independent.

The childminder keeps the required records that contribute to children's health, safety and wellbeing. However, the attendance register is not always completed accurately with all the necessary details on a daily basis. The childminder shares information regularly with parents to keep them well informed about the care that is provided. Verbal details are exchanged regarding children's wellbeing, food and drink intake, activities and outings. She displays positive attitudes towards implementing additional documentation and towards future training to promote further good practice. Overall, the childminder meets the range of needs of the children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the previous inspection, the childminder has ensured that all necessary checks have been completed for household members over the age of 16 years. She has completed a first aid course that includes training in first aid for infants and young children. She has improved fire safety precautions by maintaining a smoke alarm on every floor of the home and also checks them to ensure they are in working order. Cleaning agents are now kept in a storage unit in the garden. This requires a lock as the garden is now going to be used for children's play.

In terms of documentation, the childminder has obtained written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and a system is in place to record any incidents of behaviour. However, some other aspects of record keeping lack the required details. The childminder now supplies a wider range of toys and activities that provide sufficient challenge to children.

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):

- ensure that parents are made aware of the complaints procedure and suitable systems are in place for recording complaints
- ensure written agreements are in place with all parents and written parental consents are obtained to take children out
- ensure that the attendance register is completed accurately with all arrival and departure times on a daily basis
- improve systems for recording accidents and incidents and implement a confidential incident record system

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