

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	125128
Inspection date	07 March 2008
Inspector	Cilla Rachel Mullane

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 outstanding. 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 school-aged children. They live in a house in Chatham. There are local shops, parks, schools and pre-schools within walking distance. All areas of the property are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for six children aged under eight years. She is currently looking after nine children aged between one year and six years on a part-time basis.

The family has a hamster.

The childminder attends a local carer and toddler group, and a childminders group on a regular basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are protected from cross infection and illness due to the childminder's excellent routines which effectively promote and maintain their health and well-being. Daily and weekly cleaning schedules, such as cleaning handles, floors and the oven, are recorded and show that children are protected from the spread of infection. Children are beginning to learn good personal hygiene routines, for example, they are encouraged to wash their hands after toileting, before meals and after handling the hamster. They confidently help themselves to tissues and dispose of them in the bin. Careful records of accidents and medication administered promote children's good health.

Children develop an awareness of healthy eating as the childminder talks about healthy foods with the children, and displays posters depicting fruit and vegetables, contrasted with less healthy foods. Healthy choices are encouraged by the regular provision of fruit and vegetables. They are fascinated by the introduction of new fruits, for example, feeling the weight, smell and texture of a pineapple, and then enjoying eating it. The childminder uses the 'Safer food, better business' pack to guide her safe provision of food for the children, for example, she records the temperatures of cooked meals.

Children participate in and enjoy a varied range of activities which contribute to their physical well-being and good health. They develop coordination when playing with balls and skittles in the garden. They visit local play parks, where there is a variety of apparatus such as climbing frames to challenge children of different ages. They have fun in the fresh air, taking picnics on outings, even in the winter.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an extremely warm and child-friendly environment. They enjoy their well equipped playroom; the childminder's excellent organisation of resources allows them to freely and safely select their favourite toys from a wide and stimulating selection, for example, from boxes of bricks, small world toys and books. Furthermore, they point at a display of photographs of themselves playing in order to request favourite toys and equipment. Children have plenty of space to play in as they can move safely between the lounge, dining room and kitchen. The environment is arranged with thought to promoting children's independence. For example, they can use the downstairs toilet without help, as there is a step and a small toilet seat.

Children's safety is a priority. The house and garden are safe places for children to play, with precautions such as bolted gates and child locks in place. A risk assessment log is kept which details frequent health and safety checks for each room, for example, checks for the cleanliness of the carpets and the bathroom. The childminder has an emergency plan to keep children safe: she has a reciprocal arrangement with another local registered childminder to leave children in each other's care in the case of an emergency. Fire safety precautions effectively protect children: evacuation is practised with the children, on different days and at different times so that all children are included. Children have chatted to a fireman at the childminders' group. Children are kept safe on outings: small children are able to explain that they need to look left and right when crossing the road, and hold onto the pushchair.

Children's well-being is promoted because the childminder regularly updates her child protection training. She therefore has a thorough knowledge of safeguarding children issues, and a very good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. She protects children by appropriately recording accidents which occur in their own homes. Her child protection folder enables her to act promptly and correctly with concerns about children as it contains information regarding procedures and relevant telephone numbers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children experience a wonderful time with the childminder. They remember favourite activities, for example, pointing out the recently made 'stained glass' pictures on the windows. They state that they love painting and playing with playdoh. Children are happy and settled with the childminder because she is warm, caring and kind, and shows a sensitivity to children's needs. Her gentle approach ensures children are at ease and keen to take part in the broad range of activities available. The childminder listens to children carefully and responds appropriately with interest to their contributions. Children therefore feel valued, and their views are taken into account, enhancing self-esteem and their enjoyment of their time with the childminder. Children are very well supported by the childminder, who shows an active interest in their activities and home lives, and ensures that children feel secure and loved. Children play well together and enjoy one another's company. They have started to form firm friendships and ask about children who are not present, looking forward to seeing them again.

Adult led activities are planned in advance and are varied and interesting, such as carefully painting egg shells in which to plant cress, making bird feeders and pine-needle hedgehogs. Children are developing a love of books, for example, they happily recount the story of Cinderella. They are sufficiently confident to show a sense of humour, laughing and joking with the childminder's husband. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is well promoted, for example, they plant potatoes, water and care for the plants as they watch them grow, and then help to prepare them to eat, which helps them to understand nature and lifecycles. The childminder uses good questioning techniques to develop children's ability to remember events and to communicate their ideas: children remembered with pleasure mixing the playdoh, and described how they made green from blue and yellow. Planned activities outside the home include a wide range of experiences, for example, visits to the library, 'baby bounce' sessions, walks around the village, and childminders and parent and toddler groups.

The childminder uses her very good knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework to demonstrate children's achievements, and plan next steps to help them progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are treated with respect to their individuality: the childminder knows them well and can therefore respond to their personalities and unique needs, for example, in the provision of suitable and stimulating toys. Parents fill in a form called 'all about me' about their child when a childminding arrangement starts which includes their needs and likes and dislikes, such as their favourite food and family members. This helps the childminder care for children as individuals. There is a wide range of resources which reflect positive images of culture, gender and ability. These include Balamory figures, two of whom are black and one is in a wheelchair, and a female bus driver/mechanic. The childminder successfully avoids gender stereotyping,

for example, by discussing whose daddies do the ironing at home. Therefore, children are learning to value and appreciate differences. All children are enabled to join in equally and independently, for example, by the use of a high chair at the table.

Children are well behaved and play together harmoniously. Children are involved in the setting of 'golden rules' helping them to manage their own behaviour through the establishment of clear boundaries. The childminder is an excellent role model, which effectively encourages children to share, take turns and play co-operatively. Children are spoken to in a polite, positive manner and thrive on the praise and encouragement they receive, such as 'you said that beautifully' in response to a child saying thank you. Minor disagreements are dealt with calmly and quickly, for example, a quarrel over who changed the weather chart was averted by giving children a special responsibility to lay the table.

The childminder has developed strong, positive, professional and friendly relationships with parents, who are very well informed. They are told how their child is progressing both verbally and in the form of a contact book, which also contains information about food, outings and rest times. A comprehensive parents' welcome pack contains a wealth of information about the childminding service. A regular newsletter keeps parents informed of events, changes to policy, for example, regarding children's safety, and they were informed of this inspection. The childminder actively encourages parents to comment on her service, and satisfaction is reflected in their extremely positive feedback. They feel that the childminder is thoughtful and caring, approachable, flexible, firm, fair and fun, and they appreciate the variety of toys and activities. They like the homemade meals and the family environment. They enjoy the contact books and feel informed by the policies and procedures.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom care is provided.

The childminder is very professional in her approach to childminding. She fully understands her responsibility to provide a reliable and informed service for children and their carers. This is demonstrated by her commitment to training and to developing her childcare skills. She is currently undertaking a Diploma in Home Based Childcare, and has attended a briefing session to learn about the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). She keeps in touch with guidance and legislation by subscribing to childminding magazines and Ofsted News. This means that children benefit directly from her excellent knowledge and understanding of children's care and learning, and good childcare practice. The childminder is good at reflecting on her practice and has a realistic understanding of what she does well, such as her ability to relate to and play with children.

The childminder is very well organised and the space in her home is arranged effectively to promote children's care, learning and play. Her time is well organised: a diary is kept with planned activities, showing a good balance and variety. The information kept about children is relevant, detailed, informative and helps promote their welfare.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was recommended that the childminder extends the range of toys and resources promoting equality of opportunity. Children have more opportunities to learn about diversity in society because the childminder provides books and toys which show positive images

of people from other cultures, and with different abilities. It was also recommended that information given to parents be improved by reviewing and extending the service statement and policies for parents. Parents are now thoroughly informed regarding all aspects of the childminding service.

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

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

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