

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	134829
Inspection date	17 March 2008
Inspector	Melissa Cox
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 in 2000. She lives with her family, including two school aged children, in Didcot, Oxfordshire. The whole 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 a maximum of four children at any one time. She is currently minding three children, who attend a variety of sessions. The family have one dog and a tortoise.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children stay healthy because the childminder has daily cleaning routines in place to prevent the spread of germs. Children play in a warm, clean home, where they learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. The childminder encourages the children to wash their hands after playing with the dog and before eating. When changing nappies, the childminder makes sure children are kept clean and comfortable and that the risk of cross-infection is minimised.

She uses wet wipes and cleans the mat thoroughly between changes and afterwards. The childminder is committed to ensuring that children are kept healthy and safeguarded against the spread of germs.

The childminder provides healthy snacks for the children. She has completed a food hygiene course and is registered with the Environmental Health Department to provide meals. She is able to offer breakfast, lunch and tea. Parents also have the option of sending in food, which the childminder re-heats. Children are offered plenty of drinks throughout the day, which prevents them from becoming dehydrated. The childminder makes sure children's non-spill beakers are always on the table where they can reach them and she reminds them to drink throughout the day. Detailed and comprehensive information regarding allergies and health needs is gathered from parents.

Children have opportunities to develop their physical abilities and get some fresh air as they play in the garden. The childminder takes children to the park, where they increase their coordination and balancing skills on the climbing frame and slide, or run around the field next to the park. Indoors, children have opportunities to take part in a variety of physical activities. Children develop fine motor skills as they handle a range of tools and materials, such as small hama beads or construction toys. The childminder helps the children increase their dexterity by encouraging them to place the different size hoops on the stacker, roll the small ball to knock over the row of ducks or, as a special after school treat, to have a turn on the interactive games console.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children stay safe because the childminder is aware of hazards and takes steps to minimise them. There is a fire blanket in the kitchen and safety gates are in place at the top and bottom of the stairs. Dangerous substances are stored in cupboards out of children's reach. The childminder carries out safety checks and risk assessments on the house and garden. These are meticulously recorded and acted upon. A fire drill is also carried out at regular intervals and recorded in a log. Children are developing their knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe as part of their daily activities. For example, they look and listen for cars as they walk with the childminder to and from toddler group.

Children choose from a wide range of good quality toys that enable them to make good progress in all areas of development. The childminder carefully monitors and supervises their use to make sure that they are safe and appropriate for their age and stage of development. The childminder routinely cleans and checks the toys and resources. She will remove any that are broken and she makes sure that there are no small parts to the toys that can harm the youngest children. Children are able to explore freely as they have sufficient space both inside and outside the home, using the living room, the kitchen (for some baking activities) and the garden.

The childminder has all the required procedures and documentation in place. She has the necessary first aid kits and personal liability insurance, which helps to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted and means the childminder can give appropriate care if there is an accident. Children stay safe, as the childminder has a very good understanding of child protection procedures. She has attended training courses and has her own child protection policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children play cooperatively and are clearly becoming good friends. They are very happy in the childminder's care. The childminder is responsive to, sympathetic and understanding of the temperament, characteristics, interests and needs of individual children. Encouragement is freely given, enabling children to play with toys, participate in activities of their choice, and learn at their own pace. Children spend their time purposefully and the childminder supports and encourages them in their personal development. She takes time to play with each child in turn, and is always sat with the children, playing with them on their level. The childminder sits with the children at the table whilst they make 'hama' bead cats and encourages them to name the colours, follow the pattern and carefully position the beads.

Conversations, hugs, endearments and smiles are frequent, kind, warm and genuine. Children are developing a healthy self-esteem and confidence. They enjoy their play, are engaged in their activities, take great pride in their efforts and achievements and form secure friendships and attachments to others. Children's pleasure in their activities is facilitated by the childminder's knowledge and understanding of development and play, while her care and kindness ensure they feel valued and accepted.

The children are able to access the toys because they are in brightly coloured storage units and boxes at child height. The children learn to become independent through making choices in a positive environment. They are able to spend their time purposefully by exploring a wide range of activities which encourage creativity and imagination. The children have great fun having a picnic for snack time in the lounge and are fully involved in the choice of snacks and preparation as the childminder encourages them to be involved.

During the week, the children go to a variety of groups, including a toddler group, arts and crafts and baking activity groups. This gives them the opportunity to mix with other children and to access a different range of toys and activities. The childminder takes great care to plan activities which encourage the children's progress and developmental needs and is beginning to plan her activities with the Birth to three matters framework. The daily routines take into account the children's individual needs, as well as providing a mixture of free play, structured play and outings. This ensures that the children benefit from a range of stimuli and experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder responds with kindness, patience and skill to children who demand her attention at the same time, and as a result, children learn to take turns and to accept limits. Their understanding, personal circumstances and temperaments are taken into account and managed in an age-appropriate manner. For example, the childminder deftly distracts children from inappropriate behaviour with toys she knows are of particular interest to them. She interacts sensitively with the children and is aware when they are tired or upset.

Frequent praise raises children's self-confidence and helps them to feel secure and to develop empathy for others. The childminder is extremely calm and patient in her management of the children. She frequently plans and monitors the children's progress and learning, taking into account the individual age and developmental stage of each child so that they are set appropriate challenges. The childminder shows a very good awareness of the information she would need

to care for a child with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. She feels communication between the parents and herself is vital for meeting the children's needs.

The childminder has good relationships with the parents. Children's needs are discussed thoroughly before the children start to ensure their individual needs can be met. The childminder gives parents useful information and written policies about her business. Parents receive daily verbal feedback on their children's progress. The childminder also uses daily care diaries, which provide information about the day's events and children's well-being and achievements. Many parents have written very positive comments about the care the childminder offers. Cards from parents expressing their gratitude are presented in the childminder's portfolio as a testament to her ability.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are very settled and benefit from a well-organised environment. They can access toys and resources independently. They are valued, supported and encouraged to gain independence and make choices. They receive very good support from the childminder, as the organisation of the minding week allows for lots of individual attention.

All records and documents are up-to-date, comprehensive and stored in a confidential manner. The childminder has some exemplary policies and procedures, including a very comprehensive complaints procedure. She has the necessary permissions in place, for example, to take children on outings or to take photographs. She has recently updated her paperwork to include permission for children to play on the trampoline, but she only has verbal permission from the parents of current minded children. Parents are kept extremely well informed about the childminder's service and their child's activities through regular discussion and exchanges of information. Children's needs are met, as the childminder organises the environment, resources and documentation exceptionally well. The childminder has an excellent information folder, which contains her certificates, policies and procedures, detailed references to each of the National Standards, and information for parents.

The childminder understands the regulations to protect children, to promote their well-being and support their development. The childminder's knowledge and involvement contributes to children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the activities and outings offered. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to review hygiene practices in relation to sleeping arrangements. This recommendation has now been met. The childminder ensures that children who rest at her home have their own individual bedding, which is laundered on a regular basis.

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:

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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):

- further risk assess play on the trampoline to ensure appropriate permissions are obtained from parents.

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