

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY286074
Inspection date	14 March 2008
Inspector	Rachel Wyatt
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 2004. She lives with her husband and three children aged six, nine and 11 in a third floor maisonette in the Westminster area of London. Children regularly go to local parks and walk to the library.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently minding four children. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends local playgroups and drop in activities. The family have some tropical fish.

The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. She is a member of the National Childminding Association and of a local childminder support group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are looked after in a clean, comfortable home. Through daily cleaning, including regular checks on toys and equipment, the childminder ensures all areas are suitable for children's use. Children have their own cot, bed linen and towels and the childminder checks and cleans these regularly. Rooms are tidy and welcoming, and food storage and preparation areas are well organised and managed to minimise the risks of cross contamination or other hazards associated with food preparation. Children understand about the importance of good hygiene, the childminder introducing them to hand washing routines from an early age. Children's independence in seeing to their personal care is fostered, and babies' and toddler's comfort is assured as a result of relaxed well-managed nappy change routines.

Babies' and children's health are promoted well. The childminder ensures she has all relevant information about their medical history, allergies, diet or any other care needs. She works with parents to ensure children's specific care requirements are effectively met, having fully discussed and recorded these as part of the child's individual care plan. Children's routines are understood and accommodated well so that, for example, young children soon settle down for a sleep.

Should children become unwell, have an accident or need medication they are well looked after in accordance with the childminder's health procedures which are shared with parents. She ensures children have prompt appropriate treatment. The childminder has a relevant, current first aid qualification and appropriate first aid materials are ready to hand. In the event of an emergency, parents have given their consent to the childminder seeking medical advice and treatment for their child. Parents are kept well informed about any matters relating to their children's well-being, and the childminder ensures accident and medication records are fully completed and signed by them.

Children benefit from regular outside play and opportunities to be active. The childminder has some sturdy wheeled toys which toddlers and young children enjoy using, and suitable toys to encourage babies' movement and balance. All children enjoy frequent trips to nearby parks and the opportunities to use different physical play equipment there and at local playgroup sessions.

Babies and children are well nourished and have regular drinks, including fresh water. The childminder works closely with parents to ensure babies and children have well-balanced meals and suitable feeds. She makes sure feeds and meals are safely stored and prepared. Meal times are relaxed and children are encouraged to feed themselves. Children learn about healthy foods, different textures and tastes during meals, cooking activities and when taking part in enjoyable picnics and parties.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for safely. The childminder's home is well maintained and secure. She ensures hazards are minimised as a result of her careful supervision of children both on the premises and when out. Good use is made of safety equipment around her home such as corner protectors, electric socket covers and safety gates. The childminder checks that locations she takes children to are suitable and safe and that the equipment they use is appropriate.

Babies and children use a range of good quality toys and equipment. Their comfort and independence is enhanced by using well-maintained child-size furniture. Toys and books are stimulating and interesting, and well organised to encourage children's choice and self-selection. Children are encouraged to use toys and apparatus correctly and safely.

The childminder's exemplary safety procedures and emergency arrangements ensure children's well-being in difficult circumstances. Her emergency plan is displayed and discussed with parents. They have met her colleague who will care for children should she suddenly be unable to do so due to unforeseen circumstances. Emergency evacuation procedures are displayed and regularly practised. The childminder makes sure she always has parents' contact numbers with her.

Children enjoy outings. The childminder ensures locations are suitable and safe and that parents are aware of the places they visit. Parents give their written consent to their children going on outings. In most cases children and the childminder walk to different venues. Younger children travel safely in a buggy and older children walk beside the childminder. She ensures children understand about basic road safety. Occasionally children travel by public transport and most parents have given their written consent to this. However, children's safety is potentially affected where their parents' written agreement to their child travelling in a vehicle has not been obtained.

Children are safeguarded as the childminder has a generally sound understanding of child protection procedures. She keeps up to date with training and has ready access to safeguarding children guidance, including relevant contact numbers to use if she has concerns about a child's welfare. Parents understand her responsibility for safeguarding children as the childminder gives them a copy of her policy which they sign. Effective collection procedures ensure children only leave with people nominated by their parents and whom the childminder has met.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies and children benefit from the many rewarding activities and experiences provided by the childminder. These reflect their age and stage of development, and offer children choice and new challenges because she has a great selection of interesting toys and games. Toys and activities promote children's coordination, imagination, creativity and exploration. Visits to parks and local playgroups further enhance children's play and learning. During visits to local parks children use a range of physical apparatus and take part in most enjoyable picnics and parties. Attending playgroups provides children with opportunities to socialise and to access different activities and toys.

Children become competent learners because their understanding is promoted in fun practical ways. They explore the texture, shape and sound of different resources and toys. For example, children investigate the contents of treasure baskets, discover how different instruments make a range of sounds, and create models and patterns from various construction toys. Children's counting is encouraged as they put farm animal figures into a trailer or make a tower from bricks. As they play with toys and look at books the childminder encourages children's recognition of colour and shape.

Children are imaginative and creative. They make play dough, dress up, paint, create collages and draw. Children love playing with small world figures and toys, creating different scenarios.

Toddlers look after dolls and use realistic play food and kitchen utensils. Children enjoy music, songs and rhymes.

Babies' and children's speech and language are effectively promoted by the childminder. She interacts well with children, chatting to them whilst they play, gently asking questions to prompt their responses. When looking at books she encourages children's comments about the story or the pictures. She fosters children's awareness of letter sounds and shapes during games, activities and through opportunities for mark-making.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are clearly understood as a result of information obtained from parents regarding their health and care when each child starts, and through regular discussions with carers about their child's activities and routines. Children who have specific care or additional developmental needs are well looked after as the childminder works closely with parents to ensure consistent appropriate care for these children. The childminder has a sound understanding of children's development and is confident to discreetly discuss any concerns with parents. Children's differing needs, interests and abilities are effectively supported by the childminder's wide range of toys and equipment which cater for different ages and abilities.

Children develop positive self-esteem and confidence because the childminder very much promotes their individuality. Children's interests are reflected in the variety of toys and activities she provides. They can choose what they want to play with, the childminder making sure a good selection of toys and books are set out and that children can see what else is available on shelves and in storage units. All children are reassured and confident because of the childminder's caring support and encouragement. She consistently praises and acknowledges their responses and efforts.

Children thrive and families feel valued because the childminder positively reflects diversity in her provision. Children's differing family backgrounds, including their home languages, are acknowledged. The childminder ensures important events in children's lives are celebrated, for example, through special family parties and by working with parents to collate a pictorial record of a child's time with her. Children and their families welcome these and the photographic displays in her home which depict a wide range of their activities. Her toys, resources and books positively promote children's awareness of race, culture, disability and gender.

Children behave well because the childminder is receptive to their reactions and ensures they are busy and involved. Her support and involvement in their play, helps children to build positive relationships with each other. They are encouraged to share, take turns, be kind and helpful. Should children misbehave the childminder calmly ensures they understand the consequences of their actions.

Children's care and well-being is supported by the childminder's very good partnership with parents. Effective settling-in arrangements ensure children and their families get to know her. Parents are reassured about the childminder's expertise and how she organises her childminding as they see evidence of her training and examples of her policies and procedures. Her certificate of registration is part of her informative display of written information and pictures which help parents to understand how she operates. Thereafter, children's ongoing care is fully supported as a result of regular exchanges between parents and the childminder. Parents are fully aware of how their children have spent their time as they are encouraged to stay and chat to the

childminder, and their children's routines, activities and achievements are recorded in a diary. Parents are involved in special events such as picnics in the park and parties. They clearly value the childminder's nurturing and professional manner. Should parents have any concerns about the childminding provision, their children's welfare is safeguarded because they are informed about the childminder's complaints procedures and the Ofsted parents poster is prominently displayed.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are safeguarded as the childminder ensures parents are aware that she and her husband are vetted and that she has attended relevant training. Her commitment to attending courses and updating her knowledge benefits all aspects of children's care. She is currently working towards a National Vocational Qualification level 2 in childcare.

Children are very contented and settled. They thrive because of the childminder's reassuring and nurturing manner. The childminder and her family welcome children and build positive relationships with them and their families. As soon as children and families enter the childminder's home they come into a child-friendly environment. Displays of photographs and posters show the types of activities children take part in. Toys and books are invitingly presented. Sessions are rewarding for children and their interest and enjoyment is enhanced by the childminder's gentle involvement.

Children's care and welfare is supported by the childminder's well-organised record keeping. She ensures she is well informed about children's needs and has all required information about them and their parents. Apart from a minor omission, appropriate agreements with parents ensure that the childminder fully understands their wishes. Children's safety is assured as accurate up-to-date attendance records are kept. Clearly worded policies and procedures help parents to understand how the childminder organises her provision and ensures their children are well looked after. Confidentiality is maintained; records are securely stored and retained for required periods. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to one recommendation to provide resources to promote children's awareness of diversity. Children's play is enriched by the delightful toys, books and resources the childminder has collected. These reflect positive images of race, culture, disability and gender, whilst also enabling children to see images which are familiar to them. Young children love looking at books with realistic pictures of babies and toddlers who look like them. They make marks and draw using crayons which include natural skin colours. Children's imagination is enhanced by play with dolls and small figures reflecting ethnicity, gender and different abilities. The childminder ensures children's home languages are supported and she introduces them to other ways of communicating so that, for example, children use some signing.

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 all parents give permission to their child being transported in a vehicle.

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