

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY288131
Inspection date	15 February 2008
Inspector	Deborah Jaqueline Newbury
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 2004. She lives in Denham in South Buckinghamshire with her husband and three children aged 12, 11 and nine. Most rooms on the ground floor are used for childminding with toilet and sleep facilities provided in this area. A fully enclosed garden is available for outside play. The childminder lives within walking distance of local schools, parks and shops.

The childminder is registered to care for five children under eight years at any one time and is currently minding three children aged eight months, nineteen months and four years. Children attend on a part-time basis throughout the week.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association. She regularly takes children to local parks, to feed the ducks and to toddler groups.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene as part of their everyday routine. They wash their hands at appropriate times, with even the youngest children being encouraged to do this. Children are provided with their own individual towels which minimises the potential for cross infection. They benefit from the effective measures that the childminder has put in place to promote their good health. She ensures her home is clean and comfortable and she follows good nappy changing procedures. Children do not attend if they are suffering from infectious illnesses and parents are requested to come and collect their children if they are taken ill whilst they are in her care and she feels it is in their best interest to be at home.

The childminder provides food for children over one year of age whilst parents supply food for younger babies. Children enjoy a varied range of nutritious, well balanced items that promote healthy eating. Their dietary needs are met as the childminder seeks any relevant information from parents. Children drink regularly throughout the day and younger children are encouraged to develop independence in feeding themselves through the provision of finger foods and fruit which is prepared in sufficiently small pieces for little hands to manage.

Children develop their physical skills as they have plenty of opportunity to be active. They spend time outside in the fresh air when they go to feed the ducks and visit a local park. The childminder chooses one near to her home which caters for young children as there is suitable equipment that they can access. They also play in the garden and have ample space to move around indoors. Children sleep according to their individual needs and their parents' wishes. The childminder ensures children sleep in comfortable surroundings; they are checked regularly to ensure their safety.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay in a well-maintained home. The childminder assesses her home and garden for safety according to the age and stage of development of the children present. This approach ensures that she identifies and minimises most areas of potential risk. However, at the time of inspection a fence panel in the garden was broken and the fire blanket was not appropriately fitted in the kitchen. Children are carefully supervised; they learn about keeping themselves safe with the support of the childminder. For instance, she talks to younger children about not throwing toys and she explains to older children what they need to do if they hear the smoke alarm go off. The childminder's home is secure and children cannot leave unsupervised. Clear boundaries are in place to ensure children's safety when they go out.

Children are safeguarded because the childminder is secure in her understanding of child protection issues and the action she should take if she has any concerns about the children in her care. She talks to parents about any pre-existing injuries that children may arrive with although she does not keep a written record of these.

Children use a varied range of age appropriate play materials that are checked regularly for safety and cleanliness.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a day that is planned around their usual routines. They have opportunities to engage in free play and to mix with other children and begin to develop their social skills as they go to toddler groups and meet up with another local childminder and the children she cares for. The childminder offers a daily activity; this may include painting, potato printing, playing with play dough or simple activities to encourage learning about colours or numbers.

Children are very happy and at ease, both with the childminder and in the environment in which they find themselves. They enjoy exploring the different toys available, such as looking at the different animals and pushing toy cars around the room. Play materials are arranged to be easily accessible which encourages children to make decisions for themselves about what they do and supports their developing independence. The childminder treats children with lots of affection and they respond with laughter and big, beaming smiles. She sits on the floor alongside young children, so she is at their eye level, and plays with them. Children are helped to become effective communicators as the childminder spends a lot of time talking to them and encouraging their developing language skills. She acknowledges their efforts to speak. Children enjoy looking at books, both independently and with the childminder.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated as individuals and with equal concern as the childminder seeks information from their parents about their individual needs and is guided by this. This contributes to continuity of care. She is aware of children's preferences, for example, in respect of play materials and books, and tries to cater for these.

Children's self-esteem and confidence is fostered because the childminder is kind and caring. This helps them form warm, trusting relationships with her. They enjoy lots of cuddles and are praised for their efforts and achievements. Children are beginning to learn how to be helpful and to behave in acceptable ways with the childminder's support; for instance, as she encourages them to help her pick up toys and tidy them away and as she explains the need to be gentle with their playthings.

Parents are well informed about the way the childminder organises her service and how children spend their day. She has put together detailed written policies and procedures and provides parents with their own set of these for their easy reference. She makes time to talk to parents at the end of the day and supplements this informal exchange of information with a daily communication diary for the youngest children in her care. This enables parents to share more fully in their children's day, especially when they are too young to tell them what they have been doing. Letters from parents of children currently in the childminder's care, which were available for viewing at the inspection, are very positive about the childminder and speak highly about the care their children receive and the different activities they participate in.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are happy and secure in a home that is organised around their individual needs. They develop confidence in their surroundings as they are permitted to move freely around those areas used for minding and they benefit from the good levels of support they receive from

their carer. The childminder has a flexible approach to minding and works with parents; for example, in respect of the collection of children. She is willing to meet parents at an agreed location to hand over children, rather than at her home, if she is able and where this is easier for them.

Required documentation and other records that promote the health, safety and welfare of children are mostly in place. However, the childminder does not always ensure parents countersign her medication record to acknowledge when medicine has been given. Parents view her certificate of registration at the start of their children's placement although this is not displayed at all times when children are present. Paperwork is stored securely and the childminder implements good procedures to ensure confidentiality. She keeps up to date with childcare practices by speaking with other childminders and reading relevant childcare publications.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children from whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection one recommendation was made. The childminder was requested to ensure children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. She has expanded her resources to include items reflecting positive images to help children gain awareness of the wider world in which we live and offers activities that link to different traditions and festivals.

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):

- improve fire safety precautions by ensuring the fire blanket is fixed and assess the risk to children in respect of the broken fence panel and take steps to minimise this
- keep a record of pre-existing injuries and ensure greater consistency in parents signing medication records. Display the certificate of registration when minded children are present.

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