

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 125646
Inspection date 21 November 2007
Inspector Jenny Kane

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 1984. She lives with her husband and two school age children in Maidstone. The ground floor is used for childminding with access to an upstairs bedroom for sleeping. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and for overnight care for two children. She is currently minding five children aged between one and seven years. Schools, pre-schools, toddler groups, shops and parks are nearby. The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. She attends the local childminder support group and is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean, comfortable and welcoming premises. The childminder promotes the health of the children by maintaining good standards of hygiene. She takes positive steps

to prevent the spread of infection by teaching children how to wash their hands thoroughly and talking to them about how germs spread. Older children independently use the bathroom, which is accessible and near to the play area. Although children use wipes and paper towels, the communal towel will be removed to prevent cross infection. When changing nappies the childminder talks to the children during the process. She pays good attention to personal hygiene wearing gloves, disposing of the nappy outside and washing her hands. There are good measures in place when children are ill and they do not attend. The childminder maintains accurate accident and medication records, has first aid resources ready to hand and holds a current first aid certificate. She has also attended training in allergies and anaphylaxis. This ensures the childminder is able to meet individual children's health needs well.

Children bring their own food, which is stored appropriately until meal times. The childminder has a good knowledge of nutrition and encourages the older children to understand about healthy eating and partake in cooking activities. Younger children use suitable chairs during mealtimes, wear bibs and sit with the childminder to encourage their social skills. Drinks are freely available and children have their own individual mugs and cups. Younger children sleep when they need to, monitoring devices are in place and children bring a favourite toy or comforter to use at rest time. The childminder records sleep patterns, food intake and nappy changes in the contact book, which helps to inform parents and ensures good continuity of care. Children have regular opportunities to engage in physical activities, which contribute to keeping them healthy. They use the garden in good weather, partake in activities at the various toddler groups that they attend and enjoy outings and walks to local parks. This helps to promote children's physical well-being and promote a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a spacious, well-maintained and secure environment. The childminder takes positive steps to ensure children's safety by carrying out daily checks of areas used both indoors and the garden, to minimise risks and hazards. She provides good levels of supervision and monitors activities to ensure they are appropriate for the children's age and stage of development. There is no gate in place at the bottom of the stairs and this is a potential hazard. However, the childminder feels that the children are safe because they learn how to go up and come down safely and she supervises well by standing behind them and talking to them about keeping safe. Good procedures are in place to promote children's safety on outings. The childminder is well organised and plans well. For example, ensuring children have their coats on and all equipment needed before leaving the house. She carries first aid supplies, information pertaining to the children and written permissions from parents in place for transporting children.

Children have access to a very good range of toys and equipment, which promotes their all round development. Resources are in good condition and regularly checked for safety. The play space is bright and stimulating with a good amount of posters and work displayed on the walls of the play area. Children move about confidently choosing and selecting books and toys to play with. Resources are readily accessible and this helps to provide a welcoming and child-friendly environment. This helps to meet the needs of all the children and ensures they are able to make choices. The childminder has a very good knowledge of the child protection procedures approved by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. She has attended training in the subject to update her knowledge and she intends to obtain a certificate of attendance to share with the parents. Her clear written procedures and good awareness ensure that all children in her care are safe and protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy and enjoy their time with the childminder. They are sociable, outgoing and make themselves at home in the child-friendly environment. Children enjoy a very good range of stimulating activities, which support their development. The childminder has an excellent knowledge of child development and how young children learn through play. She is skilled at planning activities that are interesting, challenging and extend children's learning.

Birth to three matters is in operation within the setting. The childminder has a sound understanding of the framework and incorporates the components into the daily routine. As a result, children are competent learners and respond well to activities because the childminder is enthusiastic. For example, during lunch a bird appears on the grass in the garden. The childminder points it out to the children who then go to the window to have a look. A discussion ensues about the type it is and where it has come from. This interaction encourages children's interest in nature and the environment.

Children's mathematical development is progressing through general routines and play. For example, whilst playing with the construction toys children have the opportunity to compare shapes with one child identifying a square and a triangle. During a colour matching game they begin to understand about different colours and can pick out red and green.

Children's communication skills are effectively encouraged by the childminder as she uses open-ended questioning and encourages children to offer opinions. There is a very good supply and selection of good quality books in a wooden display case. Children select from these and enjoy looking at the pictures and identifying objects with the childminder. She puts together story sacks for interactive stories and takes children to the library at frequent intervals. This helps children to develop a love and respect of books.

The childminder has established strong relationships with the children and this ensures they are stable and secure in her care. Younger children are beginning to be independent, for example, in the toilet and choosing toys. They laugh and giggle during play and enjoy the individual attention they receive. Children benefit from meeting other children at the various toddler groups and clubs they attend with the childminder. This helps with their social and emotional well-being.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are settled and show good attachment to the childminder. She treats children with equal concern and as individuals. The childminder is fully committed to promoting equality and inclusion within her service. For example, she has cared for several children who speak English as an additional language. She has been proactive in learning some basic words in their original language to ensure they feel included and have a sense of belonging. All children receive plenty of individual attention and consistent routines for eating and sleeping ensures continuity. The childminder is very confident in her ability to cater for the needs of children with a range of abilities. She has undertaken training and has a very good awareness of the subject. The introduction of some maketon signing benefits all the children and helps them to communicate non-verbally. Children gain an understanding of diversity through a variety of activities, topics and celebrations. They have access to a very good range of play materials and visual resources,

which reflect positive images. This helps children develop an awareness of themselves and others in the wider world.

Partnerships with parents are very good. The childminder has an excellent understanding of the importance of working closely with parents. She has very good strategies in place for communicating with parents both verbally and in writing. The use of contact books and developmental records ensures parents know what their children have done during the day and what they have achieved. This means parents have a permanent record and are fully involved in their children's care and learning. The childminder discusses with parents any problems or behaviour management issues as they arise to help with continuity. She has appropriate strategies in place to manage any unwanted behaviour and deals with any incidents in a consistent way. Older children make their own decisions about play and activities. Younger children play alongside each other during the inspection happily. Consequently, because they are well occupied and engaged with activities their behaviour is good. Parents are extremely happy with the service provided for their children and their positive feedback reflects their satisfaction. Children benefit from the excellent two-way communication and sharing of information, which has developed between the childminder and their parents and this has a significant impact on their well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All mandatory records and documents are in place, kept confidently and securely. The childminder maintains children's individual records and shares them appropriately with parents. This promotes the welfare and care of the children. In addition, she has well produced clear written information for parents about her service in the form of policies and procedures. Parents read these documents at the start of any childminding agreement and they form part of the contract. However, the complaints procedure is not clear about timescales for investigating concerns and contact points. The childminder has many years experience with young children and has a very good understanding of the National Standards. She has established a very good network of support with other local childminders to cover in case of emergency. This ensures she provides professional care for the parents. She shows a good commitment to her personal development by participating in meetings and training courses. In addition, she provides support for new childminders. Children benefit from being cared for in a well-organised environment. The childminder cares for a range of ages and abilities and plans activities, which encourage the development of the individual children. Children enjoy a good mix of activities indoors, in the garden and regular outings and visits. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection in 2004 the childminder has provided a fire blanket in the kitchen.

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):

- update the complaints procedure

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