

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 510228  
**Inspection date** 09 January 2008  
**Inspector** Marie Thompson

**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](http://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 was registered in 1995. She lives with her husband and three children aged 15, 13 and nine years old in Calcot, Reading. The whole of the downstairs of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

There are currently six children on roll. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local parent and toddler group.

The family have 13 tortoises and two snakes. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

### THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

#### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an exceptionally well maintained, child friendly home where highly effective hygiene routines and procedures ensure the areas where they play are comfortable, clean and safe. They develop a very good understanding of personal hygiene as they are

encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times. The children use the downstairs toilet where they have their own little towels which are identifiable by the different colours. There are also labels on the wall with the children's names on to help them find the right towel. The childminder has an outstanding understanding of the Birth to three matters framework which she amalgamates into her daily activities and routines. She has devised a milestones assessment record for each child which contains records sheets and diagrams that help the childminder monitor their progress and development. The Birth to three matters framework poster and additional information is attractively displayed in the play room. As a result the children are making extremely good progress and learning a vast amount through their play.

Children's health is extremely well promoted as they enjoy the wide range of activities provided to develop their physical skills. These include visits to the park, garden play with the ball, the slide, a tent and ride on toys. The children get regular fresh air and exercise because they go for walks in the local area. The children have copious amounts of opportunities to develop their fine motor skills and hand eye co-ordination because the childminder provides lots of toys and resources for them to do so. They love trying to balance on the large exercise ball, dancing and have great fun rolling, cutting and squishing the play-dough through the plastic heads to make the hair grow. The childminder builds very strong relationships with the children, making them feel secure. The childminder knows the children very well and is responsive to their individual needs, which allows them to learn and develop a variety of skills.

Children enjoy a varied selection of very healthy meals and snacks which are very well prepared. Meal times are good social occasions where children enjoy discussing their families and experiences. The childminder has a detailed menu which offers the children some tasty and varied meals at breakfast, lunch and tea time. This includes pasta with vegetables and chicken, baked potatoes with grated cheese and broccoli, fried rice with vegetables. If the children are with the childminder for breakfast they can choose from cereal or toast, and snacks consist of organic fresh fruit and bread sticks. The childminder demonstrated that she clearly has a brilliant understanding of the need for children have a balanced, healthy and nutritious diet. She has devised a bright colourful chart to encourage all the children to eat five pieces of fruit and vegetables a day and when they have all done so, a bright shiny star is placed on the chart. There are also some lovely posters designed by the childminder which depict 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' foods on the walls. This serves as a good reminder for the children. The children are offered lots of drinks throughout the day and the childminder is aware that they may need extra drinks if the weather is hot or they have been running around. She makes sure each child has a non-spill beaker for their drinks which is placed on the small unit in the play room where they can easily reach it.

The childminder has a first aid certificate which means that the children are treated appropriately when they are ill or hurt themselves. All information about accidents and medication is recorded and countersigned by parents. This is supremely documented. Children are only administered medicine that has been authorised by parents. The childminder has an excellent policy in place, therefore, sick children are sensitively cared for by her and appropriate procedures followed which reassures and comforts children. She also has some very useful and relevant information, such as information about communicable diseases and a sheet which details the symptoms for common illnesses. These serve as a good reference and are shared with the parents.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder provides a warm, friendly home, where children feel safe and secure. Children benefit from this organised environment where risks have been identified and minimised so that children can play safely. The childminder carries out detailed risk assessments which are efficiently recorded and categorised by priority of risk and whether items are broken or damaged or need to be disinfected. The childminder has an outstanding fire evacuation procedure in place which has been practised with the children and recorded in her fire record folder. She has fire drills displayed in the play room in both written and pictorial form to accommodate the children that are not yet able to read. Space within the home is ample, allowing children to move around safely and freely with independence. Children can easily access toys and resources from boxes which are clearly labelled and shelves that are at child height. All areas of the play room are labelled, for example, play house, quiet area and chairs, giving the children an opportunity to see written word around them in their environment. The childminder has devised and implemented 'House Rules' which the children understand and adhere to, which reinforces safety in the home. These are written and also have diagrams for the children who cannot read yet. This gives children the opportunity to take responsibility to manage and learn about their own safety and to be aware of possible danger. The childminder uses a 'Safety First' booklet for ideas to promote safety with the children and to make learning about all aspects of safety fun. This includes word searches, stranger danger, road safety, bullying, safety in the home and a quick quiz. She has a visitor's book in place so that any additional adults in the house are accounted for and the children are not left with anyone who has not been vetted.

The childminder has an excellent understanding of her role and responsibilities regarding child protection. Children are protected and safeguarded from harm as the childminder has attended several child protection training courses and has an exemplary knowledge of procedures to follow. She has a child protection policy in place which is shared with parents and relevant reference materials, such as 'Child Protection' handbook from Berkshire Safeguarding Children Board and Her Majesty's Government leaflet 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'.

The childminder makes sure children are safe when going on outings whether they are walking or travelling in the car. Children and the childminder walk together and the children are encouraged to hold hands. The childminder makes sure the children walk on the inside of the pavement to keep them safe. If the childminder uses the buggy she makes sure the children are fastened into it safely using a five point harness and she is aware of the legislation regarding seat belts and booster seats in the car. Children learn about the Green Cross Code and using pedestrian crossings which enables them to learn how to keep themselves safe.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

The children play in a lovely child-orientated environment. The conservatory serves as a play room which is an array of beautiful posters made by the childminder, the children's work, copious amounts of toys, a Television and a comfy sofa. There are toys adorning all the shelves and corners of the room. This includes a Sylvanian house, play kitchen and food, an easel, shape sorters, a garage and cars, and many wicker drawers which are clearly labelled and store more toys. Children experience an excellent range of activities which contribute to their development, inside and outside the house. They enjoy regular outings to the Discovery Centre at Bracknell and Thatcham, Wacky Warehouse and swimming which help to develop an understanding of

the world around them and offer a range of different opportunities. The children regularly attend the parent and toddler groups with the childminder which provides them with different toys to play with and gives them the opportunity to mix with other children of a similar age. By attending parent and toddler groups the children are learning important lessons through play in fairness, caring for each other, sharing, taking turns and showing respect for one another as they form good relationships and have lots of fun.

The childminder has an excellent relationship with the children who are clearly very happy to be in her care and enjoy her company. She talks to children constantly, plays with them and is very warm and affectionate towards them which means children are effectively supported in their play and making very good progress in all areas of their development. The childminder offers lots of support, praise and encouragement which enables children to play with the toys of their choice and participate in activities at their own pace. Children move freely around the room initiating their own play from the excellent selection of toys and resources which are easily accessible. The childminder plans activities around a theme each month which are varied and exciting. For example, the seasons, going to school, animals, festivals and families, during which the children looked at different types of family and the house they live in and all about me.

The theme for this month is snow and frost which incorporates the colours white and silver, and circle shapes. The children cut out and decorated snowflakes and snowmen with cotton wool and glitter. These are mounted beautifully on the display board. The childminder talked to the children about what happens to the trees, plants and animals during the winter months. They made bird feeders to hang in the garden because it is hard for the birds to find food in winter and they learnt how important it is wrap up warm when it is cold and they talked about what sort of clothes they need to wear. The children made ice cubes to put in the freezer and waited to see how long it would take for them to freeze and recorded the results. They had great fun making snowmen with ice-cream and sprinkles and talking about what it tastes like. The childminder found the book ' Snow friends' to read to the children and they talked about all the other things to do in the snow, such as snowboarding, snowball fights and building a snowman. Unfortunately it didn't actually snow for the children to try some of these out but they had lots of fun imagining what it would be like.

Children take part in some super painting and music activities which nurture their creative development and allows them to express themselves through a different medium. Children's drawings and paintings are magnificently displayed with their name next to their pictures on the boards in the room which gives them a sense of pride and achievement in their work and encourages their conversation and memory of the things they have done. The children love playing in the play house which often becomes something other than a house, such as a hospital. It has lots of dolls, baby baths, telephones and buggies for the children to develop their imagination. The children use the laminated pictures to stick on the window which state what the weather is like, what day it is, the month and the year, and they are able to self-register when they come in. The childminder's commitment and dedication to the children in her care is evident through the happy, contented children. These exciting, challenging and stimulating activities allow children to have lots of fun and enjoy some fantastic adventures which gives them some lovely memories of their time with the childminder.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are valued and treated with respect, which helps them to feel good about themselves. Within the theme 'I am special' the children looked at all different people so that they could see that everyone is different and everyone is special. They made little people out of craft foam to put on the display board so that they were all holding hands and they talked about 'I am the one and only - special me'. This was an excellent way of helping the children acknowledge individuality and differences as positive. The childminder has an excellent understanding of equal opportunity issues. The childminder has a positive attitude towards diversity and increases children's understanding of diversity through resources and activities that enhance their awareness of their own and other cultures. The childminder has planned activities to cover a fantastic range of festivals when they occur. For example, the children enjoy Chinese New Year when they make colourful dragons and learn about the traditions of Diwali. The childminder is committed to including all children regardless of ethnic origin, background, gender or ability and makes sure all children have opportunities to access all the toys and resources available. She makes sure that she provides resources which celebrate different cultural backgrounds which children can identify with.

The childminder is not currently caring for children with learning difficulties or disabilities but she talks knowledgeably about the requirements and adaptations of activities that would enable her to meet children's individual needs. She is proactive in ensuring that children with learning difficulties or disabilities receive the appropriate care and assistance they need when in her care. The childminder understands appropriate steps that need to be taken to meet the children's needs fully through liaison with parents and associated professionals. She has provided a super range of resources, such as a wheel chair and callipers for the dolls and various dolls which represent different ethnic backgrounds so that the children accept different people who make up modern society within their daily play environment. This is an excellent way to encourage acceptance and understanding of today's diverse society without reservation. The children help the childminder collect items for the gifts boxes to support programmes, such as 'World Vision'.

Children help tidy up with the gentle guidance and encouragement from the childminder, are very well behaved and enthusiastically participate in activities. They are made aware of the house rules and abide by them. The childminder effectively supports children and the management of their behaviour. She uses effective strategies, such as distraction and explanation, which are appropriate for their age and stage of development. This helps them to learn the difference between right and wrong. The childminder frequently praises the children which raises their self-esteem and ensures children feel secure and cared for.

The childminder has a strong, long-standing relationship with the parents of the children, which is friendly and supportive. Parents are fully informed of her practice through the use of the childminder's exceptional policies and procedures, verbal feedback and care diaries which provide continual communication. Each parent receives a prospectus which is immaculately presented and contains a wealth of useful information. The childminder has diligently gathered information regarding the children. This is maintained to an exceptionally high standard and ensures the children's continued support and welfare. Parents feel welcome and value the childminder's energetic and enthusiastic approach to caring for their children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children make excellent progress as the childminder has a high regard for their well-being. She has an immense understanding of child development and provides a vast range of interesting activities. She uses effective skills to support children in all areas of their development. The home and daily routines are organised with the needs of the children in mind and they enjoy being able to choose activities and toys of most interest to them. As a result, they feel confident, secure and able to exercise their independence. The childminder is motivated and keeps up-to-date with current changes, which relate to childminding, through e-mails from the childminding network, attending forums, Ofsted publications and e-mails, and some information from the National Childminding Association. She is dedicated to maintaining a high standard and implements changes as they occur. This means that children benefit from the care provided by a skilled and committed childminder. She attends relevant courses, such as food hygiene, child protection and first aid. The childminder has a strong commitment to developing her knowledge and skills and is going to attend training courses on the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. She is a qualified instructor with the Professional Unification of Martial Arts which enables her to gain additional skills and knowledge that can be utilised within her practice. Through this professional body the childminder also accesses further child protection awareness training.

Children are extremely well 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 excellent support from the childminder and 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 which are shared with parents. This includes a very comprehensive complaints procedure. All the documents, children's record forms, risk assessments and accident books are immaculately kept and beautifully presented. The childminder has a long standing and friendly relationship with the parents. Parents are involved and informed of their child's achievements through daily diaries and discussions of their children participating in activities. Parents receive information regularly, which keeps them extremely well informed about the service and their child's activities. Children's needs are very effectively met as the childminder organises the environment, resources and documentation exceptionally well. The childminder has an excellent information folder which is meticulously kept and contains her certificates, policies and procedures, detailed references of 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 active part in activities and outings offered. The childminder has an outstanding understanding of the National Standards and Birth to three matters framework. She is meticulous in her preparation for all areas of her childminding practice and business. Childminding is clearly her vocation. 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 ensure the necessary precautions are maintained to safeguard children at all times.

The childminder has taken positive steps to promote safety within the home and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

These measures contribute to ensuring children's continued health, safety and well-being.

### **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 outstanding. 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**

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)