

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	955516
Inspection date	31 January 2008
Inspector	Christine Coram
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 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 1986. She lives with her husband and two of their adult sons in Theale, between Reading and Newbury. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a first floor bedroom where children can sleep. 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 is currently minding nine children under eight on a part time basis. Two are under five and attend all day, and seven children are over five and attend before and after school. The childminder also cares for children over eight years. The childminder walks to local schools and nurseries to take and collect children. She attends the local parent/toddler groups and library sessions. The family has two cats.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are protected extremely well through the detailed planning and procedures for medical health, and for the recording of accidents. For example, the childminder includes in her emergency procedures the name and contact details for another childminder who can care for the children should she be incapacitated. A clear policy about sick children makes sure that cross-infection is limited as far as possible. The accident record is completed in detail so that parents are able to understand exactly what happened, and follow-up observations are included to protect the children from any further consequences.

Children's hygiene is promoted meticulously and children learn to take responsibility for their own cleanliness. For example, three year olds are confident to wash their hands before meals and dry them on their individual towel. Children are clear about procedures to promote hygiene. They comment that food that falls on the floor has to be put straight in the bin.

Children benefit hugely from the thoughtful and imaginative ways in which healthy eating is promoted. For example, children routinely discuss the 'five a day' poster displayed in the dining room and identify the fruit and vegetables that they have eaten that day. Children volunteer that 'fruit is healthy'. The childminder helps them to understand nutrition so that they can make healthy choices for themselves.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in the supremely child-friendly environment created by the childminder using resources and posters. The rooms are wholly child orientated even though there are no children in the household. The premises are clean, bright, and used imaginatively to provide excellent areas for children of all ages to play. For example, the conservatory houses low-level storage units containing creative resources. The older children can select these and use them at the large table. Younger children can be excluded from the area when they are working on more intricate activities that could pose a hazard to them.

The living room is used to display a vast range of exceptionally good quality resources that support the progress and development of children of all ages. Innumerable boxes of toys, games and books are attractively presented to give children superb access for free choice. These are selected for their quality, enjoyment and educational value.

Children are kept safe because the childminder has an excellent understanding of safety and takes all the necessary precautions to make sure that the children can play in freedom without hazards. Children are also protected because the childminder has a very good understanding of signs of abuse and neglect. Clear and effective safeguarding procedures are in place and the childminder is proactive in ensuring relevant information and telephone numbers are easily available.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children flourish through the extensive range of activities offered. These are extremely appropriate for the ages of the children attending. Children's needs are met through the huge range of resources that provide exciting and educational choices throughout the day. For example, puzzles and games are carefully sourced and include very interesting games that promote learning. Children also benefit from a wide range of creative opportunities.

Children are thoroughly involved with the resources and are supremely confident to select them independently. They interact delightfully with the childminder and chatter to her as they play. There is a relaxed and very happy atmosphere as the children enjoy the excellent support that they receive from the childminder. She is careful to allow children time and space to experiment and try new skills for themselves, but is always attentive to add value to their play by encouraging the children and extending their activities. In their testimonials, parents comment that the childminder provides the 'perfect environment for children to grow and learn'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are given the highest priority and the childminder is committed to equality. Resources and activities support all the children. They include beautiful images that help children to celebrate diversity of culture, and challenge stereotypes relating to gender and disability.

Children behave extremely well and respond to the positive and effective methods used to manage their behaviour. House rules ensure that children know what is expected of them and very positive methods, such as discussions and warnings mean that they have every opportunity to choose to behave in the prescribed manner. Distraction is used very effectively. For example, when a toddler is becoming frustrated, wanting an unsuitable toy, the childminder immediately finds an exciting alternative and the issue passes. However, such incidents are few because the children are so well stimulated and supported in their activities.

The childminder uses highly successful methods of working in partnership with parents and carers. She shares information with them by giving each family a written pack of comprehensive policies, and through sharing verbal feedback. The parents are wholehearted in the praise of her activities, menu, flexibility and rapport with the children, and her enthusiasm for her work.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides. She is thoroughly professional in her attitude and supremely enthusiastic about her work. She demonstrates her commitment to increase her knowledge and skills, and to keep up-to-date with changes to the regulations through the training courses she attends.

The childcare is extremely well organised with resources effectively stored and arranged. Excellent use is made of the premises to ensure safe, varied and valuable experiences for all children. Ratios are maintained, ensuring that children have all the support that they need. The required documentation is clear and ordered, and stored in a confidential way.

Improvements since the last inspection

At her last inspection, the childminder was asked to make a written statement of her complaints procedure available to parents, and to increase her knowledge and understanding of child protection issues.

A clear policy and procedure for complaints is in place and given to all parents so that they are better informed. The childminder has attended training in child protection issues and has collated a range of information to support her in safeguarding children. She is now confident of the signs of abuse or neglect and has effective procedures to follow should she have concerns.

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