

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	126312
Inspection date	07 February 2008
Inspector	Justine Leong
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 1999. She lives with her 11 year old daughter in Bean, Dartford. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding with use of the toilet and bathroom upstairs and 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 eight children, two full time and six part time. The childminder drives to local schools to take and collect children and attends the local parent and toddler group. The family has two dogs, three rabbits, three guinea pigs, two tortoises and a horse (in a nearby field).

The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. She is a member of an approved childminding network and is currently in receipt of funding for nursery education for three and four-year-olds.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's good health is very well promoted as the childminder actively encourages them to follow stringent hygiene routines. Children wash their hands thoroughly after using the toilet, before eating and after handling animals in the garden and understand that this will help to stop germs spreading. Children are extremely well cared for if they become unwell or require medical attention while they are in the childminder's care as she has undertaken paediatric first aid training and has access to a well-stocked first aid box. Written parental permissions to seek emergency medical treatment or advice have been obtained for all children at the setting and there is a clear sickness policy to ensure cross-infection is minimised if children are unwell.

Children benefit from frequent opportunities to develop excellent physical skills such as balance and co-ordination as they play in the safe and secure garden. They have access to a broad range of developmentally-appropriate toys and equipment including bicycles, scooters, slides, hoops and bats and balls. Children also enjoy fresh air and physical activity as the childminder plans exciting outings to places of interest such as the beach and the zoo. The childminder carefully plans day trips to local parks, where children enthusiastically participate in traditional games such as rounders, cricket or football or develop co-operative skills whilst playing parachute games.

Children's individual needs with reference to food and drinks are extremely well met as the childminder has undertaken food hygiene training and offers a range of nutritious foods at snack and meal times. Children sit together to enjoy healthy snacks such as fresh fruit, fresh vegetables or breadsticks and drinks of milk or juice. A variety of healthy meals are prepared daily at the setting including pasta dishes, roast dinners and spaghetti bolognaise. During the summer months children have fantastic opportunities to grow and eat their own fruit and vegetables, such as strawberries, cucumbers and cherry tomatoes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well cared for in a warm, bright and child-friendly environment that offers all necessary facilities to promote overall development. The childminder has organised her home very effectively to provide ample space for children to move around under her constant supervision. Security is given very high priority; all external doors are secure and visitors are thoroughly vetted and have their identification checked. The childminder has carefully assessed the environment and taken precautions to minimise the risk of accidental injury, for example, using socket covers on all low-level plug sockets. There is a clear fire evacuation procedure in place and the fire drill is regularly practised with the children to ensure everyone is fully aware of what to do in the event of an emergency.

The childminder plans innovative and imaginative activities to teach children how to keep themselves safe. For instance there is a colourful height chart in place, with photographs of each child placed at the appropriate height, illustrating which children require booster seats

when travelling by car. Each child has a safety helmet to wear when riding their bicycles or scooters and the childminder ensures they all understand the importance of wearing them. Children have excellent opportunities to learn about road safety, as they practise how to cross the road safely on their way to school.

Children play with a superb range of toys and resources that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. All toys and equipment are regularly cleaned and checked for signs of damage to ensure they remain safe for children to play with. Children's welfare is exceptionally well promoted as the childminder demonstrates a thorough understanding of child protection issues. She has undertaken relevant training to ensure appropriate procedures are put into practice when necessary, according to the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children relish their time at the setting as the childminder provides a superb range of interesting and stimulating activities and toys. Flexible daily routines often enable children to follow their own interests and select what they would like to play with from the extremely wide range of resources available, helping to ensure children remain focused and engaged. The childminder has a thorough understanding of the needs of younger children and how best to support these through effective use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Independence is actively encouraged as the childminder allows children ample time to complete self-help tasks such as putting on their shoes and coats before offering assistance. Children are increasingly confident and developing excellent self-esteem as they are listened to attentively and the childminder responds appropriately, clearly demonstrating that their ideas are valued. They regularly attend social groups such as the local mother and toddler group, offering valuable opportunities for interacting with other children and developing very good social skills.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are making extremely good progress through the stepping stones as the childminder has an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn and develop. She uses her knowledge effectively to plan and provide an extensive range of activities covering all areas of learning equally. Frequent observations are carried out to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals and progress is recorded in clear developmental records.

Children interact and ask questions as they share play opportunities with the childminder. The childminder constantly gets down to the children's level and joins in with their play, consolidating and extending their understanding through effective questioning. All activities are adapted to provide support or challenge as required, to meet children's individual needs.

Children are becoming extremely confident communicators as they chat happily with the childminder and ask and answer questions. They play with a range of toys such as telephones and small world toys that encourage them to use speech to communicate ideas and feelings. The childminder has created a comfortable and well-stocked book corner, where children enjoy sharing fiction and non-fiction books with each other. Interesting mark-making resources

including pens, pencils and chalks are available to encourage development of early writing skills.

The childminder provides many interesting opportunities for children to increase their understanding of numbers and counting. Daily routines are used to practise using numbers in context as, for example, children count the number of steps they have to climb in the garden or work with the childminder to complete the clock puzzle. Children thoroughly enjoy playing with the role play resources, furthering their maths understanding as they pretend to buy and sell items with the till and shop equipment. Children also have access to a computer and programmable toys, providing valuable opportunities to develop a good understanding of information and communication technology.

The childminder plans and provides a fantastic range of imaginative craft activities. Children have regular access to activities including painting, cutting and sticking and model-making and have also had the opportunity to create their own porcelain dolls. Children enthusiastically participate in frequent cooking sessions where they use their imagination to decorate cakes and biscuits or cook simple dishes to share at meal times.

Children are developing an excellent understanding of the world around them as the childminder provides activities and resources that encourage investigation. For example, they eagerly plant seeds and bulbs to grow their own fruit and vegetables and explore a range of materials including sand and water. They have access to a broad range of natural and man-made materials and the childminder uses effective questioning to encourage them to use all their senses as appropriate to investigate them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in a stimulating and nurturing environment, created by the experienced and extremely knowledgeable childminder. The childminder spends valuable time getting to know children and their families well when they first start at the setting. This helps to develop warm and caring relationships which, along with familiar daily routines, help to foster a strong sense of belonging. Children have exceptional opportunities to learn about the wider world and a variety of beliefs and cultures as the childminder plans interesting activities based on festivals. For instance, children eagerly learn about Chinese New Year as they create colourful decorations, share information books and enjoy using chopsticks to eat Chinese foods. A wide range of resources are available which are representative of diversity, including books, posters, dolls and puzzles.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are extremely well supported as the childminder has undertaken extensive training to ensure individual needs are met. Activities are carefully planned to enable all children to participate and to ensure all are able to play a productive part in the setting and reach their full potential. The childminder is consistently calm and polite to the children, acting as a positive role model for behaviour. Positive strategies such as explanation and praise are employed to ensure children know what is expected of them and, consequently, behaviour is very good. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. The childminder provides parents and carers with a comprehensive induction pack, which contains copies of all policies and procedures, to ensure they are fully aware of her excellent childcare practices. Ongoing daily discussions ensure that parents and carers are aware of significant events and written parental permission forms are in place to enable children are cared for in line with parents' wishes. Parents and carers are welcome to visit to discuss their children's progress at any time and they receive regular newsletters informing them of the educational programme at the setting. The childminder also provides each parent or carer with a clear developmental record of progress every half term.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children receive optimum care and education from the exceptionally dedicated and knowledgeable childminder. They benefit from her substantial experience and nurturing nature, ensuring each child is settled, secure and making as much progress as possible. Children have superb opportunities to guide their play and learning as they are encouraged to take an active role in suggesting ideas for future activities and events.

The childminder has a thorough understanding of the National Standards and her responsibility to comply with these and the conditions of her registration. She is fully committed to extending her knowledge of childcare and development through training courses and seminars. The childminder is pro-active in seeking training and has attended a broad range of short courses in order to meet individual needs.

Children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to make a positive contribution are significantly enhanced by the meticulous documentation. All required policies, procedures and written parental permissions are in place, supporting the childminder's excellent practice. All documentation is regularly reviewed and stored confidentially. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was recommended that the childminder obtain parental permission for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and update her first aid training. These areas have now been addressed, helping to ensure children are extremely well cared for in the event of a medical emergency.

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.

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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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education 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