

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	134137
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Inspector	Sonjia Nicholson

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 1993. She lives with her grown-up son in a house in the Littlemore area of Oxford. The local area has shops, parks and a school within walking distance. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding and there is a large fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The childminder has a cat.

The childminder is registered to care for six children under eight years; there are currently seven children on roll who attend on a part-time basis. The childminder attends several local toddler groups on a regular basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have many opportunities to play outside in the childminder's garden with a good range of equipment to develop their physical skills such as, a swing, see-saw, small slide, scooters, prams and ride-on toys. The visit many local parks for further physical play where they have fun as they climb on large equipment, run freely and play hide and seek. Children develop good

personal hygiene habits during their time with the childminder. They independently wash their hands using liquid soap and each child has their own flannel which is used as a hand towel to prevent the spread of germs. The childminder ensures she shares her written sickness policy and information about infectious diseases with parents so they understand their role in keeping everyone in the home healthy.

The childminder has up to date first aid training which means she is able to deal with minor injuries to children using items from her fully stocked first aid box. In an emergency she would follow her 'Accident and Emergency' policy which includes using another childminder to care for children while she seeks further treatment; parent's give their written consent for her to do so. This means children receive prompt and appropriate treatment. There are good systems in place for the storage and administration of medication. Children play in a clean and tidy home as the childminder follows a thorough daily routine; most jobs are done at night after the children have gone home. Children interact with the childminder's pet cat but she is mindful not to feed it when the children are present so that cat food is not accessible to them.

The childminder prefers parents to provide all food for their children including lunch and snacks. She encourages parents to bring healthy options and ensures children eat savoury food before having anything sweet. Food is stored appropriately in the refrigerator so it does not spoil and the childminder occasionally re-heats left-over food sent from home in the microwave. She is in the process of registering as a food business with the District Council. Mealtimes are sociable events where children sit together at the table, chat freely and develop their table manners. As a treat they enjoy a snack of cereal with milk, copying what the childminder has had for her breakfast. Children independently pour their own water into a plastic beaker using a jug kept on the side at their level so they do not become thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have protection from possible abuse and neglect as the childminder has a good understanding of her role and responsibility to safeguard them. She knows the children well and feels confident she would notice changes to their behaviour. The childminder has attended relevant training and is able to describe the signs of abuse that would concern her. She has a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures which she is familiar with along with other relevant documents which she shares with parents; this means they are aware of her duties. The childminder is unsure about who to contact if an allegation of abuse was made about her or others within the home.

Children stay safe within the home as the childminder has identified potential hazards for example, there is a stair gate fitted across the access to the kitchen, covers are fitted on low level sockets and ornaments and furniture are kept to a minimum to prevent accidents. Children benefit from the fact that the childminder does not drive which means they walk to most places gaining further exercise; it is also the ideal time to talk about road safety. There are clear procedures in place regarding the dropping off and collection of children. The childminder does not release children into the care of unknown adults unless she has been fully informed by parents, even then she would expect a full description of the person. Policies are in place relating to a child becoming lost whilst in her care or a parent failing to collect their child; this does not include informing Ofsted.

Even the youngest of children are familiar with the evacuation drill and know that if the childminder rings her bell they 'must run outside'; the childminder reminds them they must

walk not run. The childminder practises the drill on a regular basis but does not record details for future reference. As a precaution fire safety equipment is available in the home; there is a fire blanket attached to the wall in the kitchen and smoke alarms are fitted on both levels of the property.

Children make their own choices about what they want to do and tell the childminder so she can bring the tubs of toys in from the porch where they are stored. The range includes jigsaw puzzles, board games, dolls, construction equipment, a train set, shop with play food, playdough and lots of arts and crafts materials. The childminder checks toys as they are used to ensure they are safe and clean and often involves children in cleaning toys as an activity so they learn how to maintain their environment. Children move and play freely in the spacious lounge and dining room where they sit at the table for their meals and some activities. They have easy access to the large fully enclosed garden weather permitting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have a busy time with the childminder who provides a wide range of planned activities and plenty of opportunities for them to play freely and make their own choices. The daily routine involves taking children to and from school and pre-school. This gives the childminder time alone with some children which means she can plan specific outings such as, going to Oxford Museum to see the dinosaurs, popping into the Drop-in Centre or visiting her family members. It also gives children time to play freely with the childminder on a one to one basis. Younger children go to several local toddler groups where they socialise and play with other children and adults.

Children eagerly take part in activities linked to the story of 'The Gingerbread Man'; for example, they draw around a gingerbread man shape with felt pens then decorate it with various colours and patterns. The childminder interacts well with the children, talking to them and helping them draw around the shape whilst making her own picture. They have great fun decorating a biscuit gingerbread man with icing and sweets and enjoy listening to the story with the childminder as they cuddle up together on the sofa. The children choose to play with play dough where they use their fine manipulative skills to use a selection of tools to make cakes and pizzas.

The childminder has recently started a scrapbook for each child containing examples of their artwork and lots of photographs; these are shared with parents so they can see what goes on within the home. Children are familiar with the daily routine for example, the childminder explains they need to wash their hands before decorating their gingerbread man and they immediately go off on their own to do so. Children have a loving relationship with the childminder and enjoy lots of cuddles and kisses from her. They appear very happy and settled in her care and relate well to her calm, kind manner.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have access to some resources to promote diversity such as, books including a world atlas, play food, play figures and dolls with differing skin tones. Older children use the computer where they can look up information to help with their homework. The childminder is aware of families' religious beliefs and works with them to ensure their wishes are met for example, discussing which activities, if any, a child who does not celebrate Christmas can take part in.

There are limited opportunities for children to celebrate other world and religious festivals so they develop an awareness of diversity. There are currently no children attending with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but the childminder is aware of the issues to consider such as, developing close parental relationships, the impact on the other minded children and whether she could meet the child's needs.

Children learn good manners as the childminder places a high emphasis on encouraging them to say 'pardon' instead of 'what' and 'please' and 'thank you'; she is consistent in her approach and gives frequent reminders when children forget. Children are very well behaved and play together harmoniously. She has devised a 'Behaviour Management' policy which includes the use of age-appropriate strategies although these are rarely used as the childminder sets clear boundaries for the children and consistently applies them so they begin to learn right from wrong. The childminder gives children lots of attention and keeps them busy so they do not have the opportunity to misbehave.

The childminder offers visits to children and parents to help them settle. She provides a range of written information for parent including written policies and procedures relating to most aspects of her service. Parents' receive daily verbal feedback about what their child has done. Parents' letters show they are very happy with the care provided; they particularly like the safe, happy environment the childminder creates for their children, the range of activities and the feedback she gives them. They describe the childminder as trustworthy, reliable and enthusiastic. Each child has a written contract and an 'Essential Information' sheet with their personal details including their doctor, emergency contacts, allergies and health problems; this enables the childminder to offer appropriate care. Parents sign to say they have seen her certificate of registration which is on display and authorise her to take children on public transport and go on outings. The childminder has created a 'Complaints Policy' to share with parents which includes Ofsted details, however some details are lacking which means parents are not fully aware of the correct procedure to follow. She keeps a complaints log as required by regulation.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Childminder has attended several training courses prior to her last inspection to extend her knowledge and understanding of childcare subjects, such as child protection, 'The Effects of Domestic Violence' and 'HIV Awareness'. She has not attended any since but shares practice issues with other childminder's at toddler groups so she keeps up to date with current thinking; she also has access to the Internet where she can browse relevant websites. Regular visitors to the home are monitored by the childminder who is very aware of her responsibility to protect children at all times. The childminder keeps accurate records of children's attendance and knows how long she must keep these records for. Space is organised well so that children can play and move freely; the childminder plans a good range of activities to enhance their learning.

The childminder keeps well-organised paperwork, using notebooks to record accidents, incidents, medication and complaints. More than one accident is recorded per page in the accident book which means details are not confidential but other records do protect children's identity. The childminder gives parents copies of some of her policies so they know what to expect from her. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection one recommendation was raised; to continue to pursue training courses in order to further develop childcare knowledge.

Since the last inspection the childminder has keenly looked for courses that interest her and has attended a briefing session about the Early Years Foundation Stage. She reads Early Years newsletters, has access to the Internet and shares practice issues with other childminders at toddler groups. As a result she is up to date with current childcare issues and is able to implement this knowledge into her daily practice.

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

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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):

- provide further opportunities for children to learn about diversity by celebrating festivals and taking part in planned activities.

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