

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY290181
Inspection date	25 February 2008
Inspector	Virginia Cooper
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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 2004. She lives with her husband and two school aged children, in Gravesend, Kent. The whole of the childminder's house, except for one bedroom, is used for childminding. 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 11 children, two are full time and the others are all on a part time basis. The childminder walks or drives to the local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local parent/toddler group. The family has a pet cat and a rabbit.

The childminder is able to support children with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities. She is a member of an approved childminding network and is currently in receipt of funding for

early education for three and four-year-olds. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a close relationship with the childminder and are very comfortable and 'at home'. Their pictures are displayed giving children a sense of belonging.

Children's good health is promoted in premises that are bright, welcoming and maintained to a good standard of hygiene and cleanliness. Effective systems are implemented within the home to help prevent the transmission of communicable diseases, for example, surfaces are regularly cleaned with anti-bacterial spray. Children learn about good hygiene practice through the daily routine; for example, they wash their hands after playing outside, visiting the toilet and before eating. The childminder teaches children how to blow their nose and to wash their hands if they have sneezed into them. She talks with children about germs in a way they will understand, explaining that they will get poorly if they do not wash their hands. The childminder has effective procedures in place to prevent cross infection when nappy changing.

Rest and sleep times are part of the daily programme. Babies sleep comfortably in a travel cot; the childminder supervises them closely while they sleep to ensure they are safe.

The childminder does not care for children who are contagious ensuring others are not at risk of cross-infection. Children who become poorly whilst with the childminder are comforted, and made comfortable, until their parents are able to collect them. The childminder does not generally administer medication; however, she understands the correct procedures and has the necessary record book for the occasions when this is necessary. She holds a current first aid qualification and has a first aid kit that she checks and replenishes as necessary. This enables her to administer first aid to children in the event of an accident or emergency. She records any accidents that occur whilst the children are in her care. This results in parents being well informed about what has happened to their child.

Children enjoy plenty of fresh air; they regularly play and go for walks outside ensuring they get plenty of exercise.

The childminder records any dietary needs with parents before the children attend to ensure they do not eat any food that is unsuitable. She understands what constitutes a healthy diet and provides cooked meals that are balanced, nutritious and include all food groups. There is a four week menu rota and this is on display for parents; the childminder informs them daily what their child has eaten. On Fridays children take turns to choose what meal they want to eat. They appreciate this and enjoy the sense of independence this gives them. Children help the childminder prepare their snacks, and this provides opportunities to talk about which foods are healthiest. A child shows great interest in the pips inside the apple, this generates an interesting conversation about what plants need to grow. The childminder extracts a pip from an apple for a child to take home and grow, seizing a spontaneous opportunity to teach. Children

sit to the table to eat and the childminder teaches them good table manners. Children are provided with regular drinks to ensure they do not become dehydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a clean and well-ordered environment enabling them to move around easily and safely. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and necessary safety equipment is in place, for example, socket covers, cupboard locks and stair gates. The childminder visually and mentally checks the premises each day to ensure the children's safety. She makes best use of the premises, for example, messy play is carried out in the kitchen where the floor is easy to clean.

Toys and resources are carefully selected to ensure they are suitable and the childminder checks these regularly to ensure they are clean and well maintained. She checks that items with small parts are not accessible to babies.

The childminder supervises the children closely; she is very attentive helping to prevent accidents. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe through the daily routine. The childminder reminds them to be careful as they are learning to walk unaided. They learn how to cross the road safely and appreciate that rules like holding hands outside is to protect them.

The childminder understands her role in the protection of children and has undertaken training to update her knowledge, helping her safeguard children from harm. She feels confident she would recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse. She has procedures in place to follow if she has concerns about a child in her care. Her role in the protection of children is documented in her service statement and she discusses this with parents when they first place a child in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are happy, settled and separate from their main carer easily. The childminder is familiar with the Birth to three matters framework and has a display that demonstrates to parents, with photographs of the children, the kind of activities they undertake. She is very kind and attentive to the babies and toddlers. She reflects what they say and encourage them to find their voice. Children sing, dance, and have some opportunities to explore natural resources, for example, playing with cooked spaghetti and corn flour goo. The childminder understands the benefits of providing the youngest children with opportunities to discover natural resources and she is collecting more natural or sensorial resources that she considers appropriate to make treasure baskets.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The childminder is familiar with the Foundation Stage and children undertake activities that cover all six areas of learning. However, she does not always record children's spontaneous learning and there is a slight over emphasis on reading

and writing in the planned activities. The childminder undertakes regular observations and understands how to use assessment records effectively to identify children's next steps in learning, and plan appropriate activities that are interesting and provide appropriate challenge. The childminder makes her own resources to help children learn, for example, she has made her own snap cards that relate letters to pictures. The children love playing with these and consequently are very familiar with the sounds different letters make. Children are well supported when they are learning a new skill and consequently their confidence to try new and unfamiliar tasks is growing.

Children are interested in their play and motivated to learn. They ask the childminder lots of questions in the knowledge that she always provides them with information. It is clear that children have forged friendships with other children including the childminder's own children; they all play together harmoniously and appreciate the need to share and take turns. They often attend toddler groups and childminder groups helping them develop their social skills.

Children have access to lots of books and love stories. They are able to re-tell a story in the correct sequence and love to dress up and play make believe, encouraging them to use their imagination. Children are making very good progress linking sounds and letters. They can recognise their own names and the different letters within it. They love to write and form their letters well.

The childminder seizes opportunities to count with the children and undertake simple calculations. She naturally refers to size, shapes and colours throughout the day, therefore children learn naturally as they play. There are lots of resources that help children match and group objects and explore patterns. Children often bake with the childminder enabling them to measure and explore weight and volume. There are lots of puzzles helping to develop children's spatial awareness.

A strength of the provision are the interesting conversations the childminder holds with the children extending their knowledge and vocabulary. They discuss the seasons and grow plants helping children appreciate nature. They play with programmable toys and are curious about how things work. The childminder subscribes to a magazine that suggests simple science activities. They recently examined closely the ice on the car window encouraging them to take notice of their environment. There is a good variety of construction toys enabling children to design and make something of their own choice. The childminder plans ahead so that children celebrate a variety of festivals from around the world teaching them to appreciate diversity.

Children move confidently with control and coordination. They often visit a large play park where they can expand their physical skills travelling around, over and through equipment, balance and climb safely. They competently use hand tools, for example scissors and tools to mould play dough. They undertake activities that teach them about healthy lifestyles and help them recognise what happens to their bodies when they take exercise.

Children love to undertake art and craft activities, for example, they make cards for their parents. Their levels of concentration whilst they undertake these activities is very good because the childminder is skilled at recognising when to stand back and when to give them assistance. They are very proud of what they make encouraging them to have good self esteem. They love

to dress up and use the clothes imaginatively. Children sing songs spontaneously, they enjoy rhymes and dance.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children receive lots of individual attention; they are exceptionally well supported when they are learning something new, ensuring their feelings of self worth are nurtured. The childminder encourages the children to be active in the community. They regularly visit parent and toddler groups, childminding groups and the childminder has negotiated with a local school to set up a childminding group of her own in their premises. The school have given over an outdoor area so that the children are able to grow flowers and vegetables. They also visit the local library and are learning how to use these services. The childminder has created a lovely family environment. She discusses and agrees with parents that children learn some basic life skills. The children are all on a rota to help at meal times. The younger children help to set the table and the older children wash up the crockery, this encourages them to work cooperatively together and is much like the tasks they might help with if they were at home. The childminder teaches the children good manners and social skills helping them become good citizens. For example, not to interrupt when someone else is talking and to eat with their mouths closed. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All children have access to resources that reflect diversity positively. Children learn about the wider world by celebrating a range of festivals. The childminder is aware that some children may experience learning difficulties; she takes an holistic approach and ensures that children's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development is taken into consideration. She works in close cooperation with parents if a child is experiencing learning difficulties to provide an appropriate service. The childminder has experience of working in a nursery as a special needs co-ordinator and is therefore able to help parents if they need to access other services to help their child.

Children's behaviour is very good, they understand what is expected of them because boundaries are consistently and kindly applied. The older children help to write the house rules giving them some ownership and understanding of how to get along harmoniously. Children learn about right and wrong because the childminder explains to children in an age appropriate manner what is desirable or unacceptable. She notices when children are kind and her appreciation of this behaviour encourages children to repeat it. The childminder's own children are a credit to her. They have a very good understanding of their mother's job and it is clear that all the children get along well. The childminder is very fair about how she divides her time and attention ensuring everyone is treated equally.

The childminder ensures parents are aware when she is due to be inspected giving them the opportunity to write open references and take an active role in the inspection process. Older children are also encouraged to participate and write a little about what they enjoy. All the letters speak very highly of the childminder and parents confirm that she offers a very flexible service and does her best to meet their requests. The children's letters state that they love to come because they go to lots of places, that she cooks good food, that they make things on special occasions and she is kind.

The partnership with parents is good. All parents are given a copy of the childminder's policies and procedures and sign to say they have read them, ensuring they understand the kind of service she offers. The childminder obtains written permission from parents when appropriate. Over the summer holidays the childminder helped children make a scrap book of all the things they did which provides parents with a lovely record of the children's memories. The children's assessment records are beautifully presented with lots of photographs and pertinent captions; the children are very proud of them. She completes a contact book and exchanges information verbally about children's progress toward the early learning goals, however, she is still developing an effective system where parents can formally share information about their child's educational progress at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All adults in the household have a Criminal Records Bureau check available for parents to see. The childminder has completed an Introducing Childcare Practice (ICP) course and holds a current paediatric first aid course certificate. She is currently working towards a Diploma in Home Based Childcare (DHC) and regularly attends other relevant training updating her knowledge. Her public liability insurance certificate is available for parents to see, providing them with peace of mind.

The organisation of the setting is good. The childminder considers the differing needs of the children who attend, for example, their ages and stages of development and personal preferences ensuring all children enjoy their time with her. There is a flexible routine to the day allowing children to choose freely what they want to play with from a variety of age appropriate toys to keep them amused. They take advantage of good weather, and opportunities to meet with other childminders, encouraging the children's social skills. The childminder chats with the children as they play encouraging their communication skills.

The childminder keeps all the documentation that relates to her childminding business together and confidentially. She keeps all the required records that relate to the children and obtains parental permission where necessary; consequently, parents are kept informed. The written policies and procedures and displayed certificate of registration enables parents to confirm details of the childminders registration. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

The leadership and management are good. The childminder regularly meets with other childminders enabling her to keep abreast of new developments in childcare. She regularly evaluates how she is meeting the five outcomes for children. She is a reflective practitioner and can identify what works well and what requires development. She is dedicated in her career as a childminder and works hard to provide a stimulating and learning environment, at the same time maintaining a homely atmosphere. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection one recommendation was made. The childminder was asked to practise the emergency evacuation procedure with the children. She practises this regularly and records the event and analyses how well they have managed. This helps to improve the safety for children in the event of an 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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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 more opportunities for babies to play with natural, tactile materials, for example, by making treasure baskets

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure you record what the children learn through their play spontaneously as well as 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