

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY359206
Inspection date	15 July 2008
Inspector	Deborah Jaqueline Newbury
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 registered in 2007. She lives with her partner and daughter aged 20 in a residential area of Frimley in Surrey. The house is within walking distance of local pre-schools, schools, parks and shops.

Childminding mostly takes place on the ground floor of the home. Toilet facilities are provided in this area. Children who need a sleep during the day do so in the main childminding area. An upstairs bedroom is used for any children who stay overnight. A fully enclosed rear garden is available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years of age at any one time. She is currently minding 13 children whose ages range from one to 11 years of age. Children's days and times of attendance vary.

The family has a cat. Children visit local parks, toddler groups and attend the childminding network's 'Play and Learn' sessions.

The childminder is an approved childminder with the Surrey Childminding Network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well protected from the risk of infection as the childminder has devised and implements very well thought out policies and procedures to promote all aspects of their good health. Her home is very clean and well-maintained. Children do not attend if they are unwell and the childminder keeps lots of information readily to hand about exclusion periods and different illnesses as a useful point of reference. She maintains a valid first aid certificate and has also attended training about what to do in the event of a flu pandemic and how this might affect childminding. First Aid boxes are available within the home, in the car and for when going out and about; these are checked regularly, thus ensuring the childminder is well prepared to deal with any accidents or minor injuries children may sustain. Babies are protected from cross infection during nappy changes as the childminder follows effective routines. Older children imitate her when they are playing with the dolls and put on gloves before they change their 'babies' nappies.' There are suitable procedures in place to ensure the family cat does not pose any health risk to children.

Children gain extremely good understanding of personal hygiene practices. Washing hands at appropriate times, such as before eating forms part of the children's usual daily routine. They manage this independently and older children can be heard chatting to younger children about what they need to do. All children are provided with their own towels for hand drying. These are named and supplied in a myriad of bright colours which appeal to children and they confidently talk about which one belongs to them. The display of relevant photographs in the bathroom acts as a useful reminder for young children of the need to wash their hands, as does the worded poster for older children. Tissues are placed where they can easily be reached and again the use of posters commenting on the effect of coughs and sneezes act as a useful aid memoir. The childminder has put together a dental hygiene policy and willingly assists children with brushing their teeth after meals if this is what parents request.

The childminder has registered with Environmental Health as a small business offering food. She has had a visit from the environmental health officer to ensure that her premises and practice are appropriate and has attended relevant food hygiene training. Effective practice is followed; such as the monitoring and recording of fridge and freezer temperatures and using a food probe to make sure hot food has reached required temperatures. These measures help to ensure any potential health risk to children is minimised. The childminder has a flexible approach to the provision of food. Currently, she provides most meals and snacks for the children in her care. Parents supply food for babies. A weekly menu is displayed for parents to see, thus ensuring they have a clear idea of the types of food their children will be eating. There is a strong focus on promoting healthy eating at this home; posters displayed in the kitchen relate to the importance of eating fruit and vegetables and a chart is completed showing which 'five a day' children will have as part of their diet. The childminder offers an element of choice; for instance children are invited to choose which fruit they would like and she seeks the views of children about the food she provides and encourages their input; for example about other items they would like to see on the menu. Children drink freely throughout the day as their drinks bottles remain within easy reach. A water dispenser is also placed strategically on the work surface in the kitchen and children are encouraged to help themselves to a drink of water from this as and when they wish.

Children benefit from activities that promote a healthy life style as they spend time outdoors in the fresh air and are encouraged to take exercise. They regularly visit the park, visit soft play centres and spend time outdoors in the garden. The childminder thinks about the places she is going to take children to ensure that they are suitable for everyone; for instance, by using parks with play equipment that caters for different ages and competencies. Babies have their individual needs met with regard to sleep as the childminder liaises with parents and abides by their usual routines. Older children relax on cushions in the comfy book corner in the playroom if they want to rest, or else snuggle up on the sofa in the lounge with the childminder for a cuddle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder provides a very welcoming, child friendly environment, where high regard is given to ensuring safety. Risk assessments are completed and daily safety checks undertaken. The childminder is very conscious that some of the children in her care are gaining new skills and that she needs to remain vigilant to the need to adjust and adapt safety features accordingly, so that the safety and well-being of children remains a priority. Suitable fire safety features are in place and the childminder ensures that these are maintained in full working order as she regularly checks them and keeps a written record of these checks. She has thought about her fire evacuation plan and displays information about this where it can be seen and read by older children. Children develop their understanding of the procedure they should follow, if it is necessary to vacate the premises as they regularly undertake this. Again, these drills are recorded; thereby ensuring the childminder monitors her practice and can be sure that all children, over time, have the opportunity to participate. Children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe is extremely well supported as the childminder uses situations that arise to guide them. Clear explanations of possible consequences of their actions; for example, when a child does not sit on a chair properly helps with this. They learn about stranger danger and how to cross roads safely. Some children have had the opportunity to participate in a road safety day at the childminder's drop-in group.

Children use an excellent range of very good quality resources, furniture and equipment. Play materials are age appropriate, safe and clean. These are organised extremely well and it is clearly evident that much thought has been given to the best way of ensuring toys are accessible to children, whilst at the same time, ensuring the safety of the situation and the fact that children of differing ages access the provision.

Children are safeguarded because the childminder is very secure in her understanding of issues relating to child protection. She has attended Safeguarding Children training to further develop her knowledge and keeps relevant information and details of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures readily to hand, to guide her in the event of it being necessary to report any concerns she may have. She maintains a record of any pre-existing injuries children may arrive with; including those sustained at school and ensures parents are informed of her responsibility about the protection of children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children feel safe, secure and have lots of fun in an extremely happy atmosphere. They enjoy warm, friendly relationships, both with their childminder and with one another. They are

encouraged to play harmoniously together and benefit from the lovely, calm manner of their carer, who is very attentive and ensures their experiences, whilst they are in her care, are positive. Children participate in a wealth of activities and play opportunities that support all areas of their development. They remain purposefully engaged; both during child-initiated play and as they take part in activities planned around the book 'The very hungry caterpillar.' For example, children delight in creating models from playdough and they proudly show off the caterpillars and butterflies they have made. They cut out pictures of the different foods the caterpillar ate to create their own pictures and listen intently as the childminder reads them the story. They relish imaginative play and make up stories as they play with the toy cooker, pretending to make meals and drinks for one another. Children are keen for the childminder to join in with their play and she does this willingly, following their lead. She asks pertinent, open-ended questions that encourage children to think and helps to extend their learning but does not take over to direct play. Lots of conversation promotes children's communication skills effectively. The childminder chats constantly to them and seeks their input.

The childminder plans for children's learning and development and keeps photographic evidence and examples of children's work to support this. She is developing assessment procedures for monitoring their progress and achievements linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Some activities that children participate in are planned around a theme that evolves over time. For instance, children started off finding out about mini-beasts. This led on to life cycles; planting seeds and watching them grow and learning about caterpillars and butterflies. This in turn, will develop into a topic about healthy eating, by using the different food items 'The very hungry caterpillar' ate as stimuli for discussion. Younger children benefit from frequent opportunities to mix with other children and adults, which supports their developing social skills.

A huge amount of thought has been given to creating a stimulating and inviting play room. It is exceptionally well presented with accessible play materials, displays of children's named artwork and posters and pictures of butterflies and caterpillars. Toys are stored in clear plastic boxes that are labelled with both words and pictures; to help children gain awareness of what is available. In fact, children are extremely well acquainted with the range of play materials available and they confidently ask the childminder for additional items to support their play, such as the play money as they pretend to go shopping. They investigate the different models of caterpillars and butterflies that have been set out for them to explore; discussing and comparing notes about those they like best.

The childminder issues feedback forms to children seeking their views about the type of things they like and dislike about her care and asking for their suggestions for improvements; for example in respect of activities and suggestions for meals. Children are quite candid in their comments. They speak highly about their favourite activities; some indicate they are extremely happy with everything whilst others have suggested things they would like to see more of. The childminder has taken children's views seriously and has looked at how she can build upon the range of activities and experiences already on offer. For example, one of the things children requested was to be taken to a restaurant. This has been done.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Parents are informed about the way the childminder organises her childminding service as they view policies and procedures when their children are first placed with her and are required to sign their acceptance of and agreement to these. Information includes details of how they can expect any complaint they make to be dealt with and in what time-scale. However, currently,

they are not issued with their own copy of her policies for their easy, future reference, which may mean that it is a little difficult to recall or check on pertinent information. The childminder prominently displays her registration certificate, Ofsted parent poster and other notices of interest on a noticeboard in the hallway of her home. The childminder is keen that parents share in their children's day and that they are encouraged to share their views about her provision. She spends time talking to parents on a daily basis and supplements this informal exchange of information with a daily journal for babies. She issues regular newsletters, illustrated with photographs, to inform them about activities the children have taken part in and includes snippets of information about other matters, for example, any training she is doing. Parents have recently been issued with feedback forms and canvassed for their views about how the childminder meets each of the outcomes for children and to suggest any areas for improvement. From the comments made on these forms, it is evident that parents are extremely happy with the quality of care and the range of activities provided by the childminder.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. The childminder treats everyone with equal concern and effortlessly makes sure she includes everyone; for example, by drawing each child into conversation and commenting on everyone's efforts. Children have access to the full range of toys available and are not restricted in their choice of play materials, provided these are appropriate for their stage of development. The childminder offers alternatives, such as the provision of Duplo bricks when a younger child comments that the Lego bricks another child is using, and which they wanted to build with, are too hard to assemble. Thus, each child is able to participate but at their own level. Children have special places to leave their belongings. Each child has their own coat peg; this is annotated with a photograph and name card. Their artwork is displayed attractively in the playroom. This approach helps children gain a strong sense of belonging and shows that their efforts are valued. The childminder provides posters and resources that reflect positive images and promote different aspects of diversity to help children appreciate and develop their awareness of the wider world in which we live. They learn about their own and other traditions and beliefs as they find out about different festivals throughout the year; for instance, when celebrating Chinese New Year, children found out which animal year they were born in.

Children are praised constantly, which fosters their self-esteem and helps them feel good about themselves. The childminder guides children towards co-operative behaviour by setting a good example and pre-empting and diffusing situations. She encourages sharing in a gentle, sensitive way; for instance, when everyone wants to play with a toy dragon, she suggests that they all have a turn, herself included, which helps them understand that the resources are for everybody. The childminder is in the process of developing house rules. She has printed off statements relating to different types of positive behaviour and has displayed these where children can see them. Her plan is to use these as a basis for discussion with older children and to then decide on the house rules together.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides. Children make themselves at home in a very well organised environment. They are very familiar with the layout of the childminder's house and move around confidently; they decide what they want to do and make their own choices from resources in the well presented and organised playroom.

Comprehensive and well-thought out written policies and procedures underpin the safe and efficient management of the provision and promote the welfare, care and learning of children.

Required documentation and other records relating to childminding activities are in place although medication records lack one minor detail. The childminder has a clear understanding of the importance of ensuring confidentiality and has organised all paperwork very effectively.

The childminder demonstrates an extremely positive attitude to professional development and strong commitment to childminding. Since registration, she has attended lots of different training courses on a variety of topics and has achieved status as a network minder with the Surrey Childminding Network. She has been working hard to ensure she is well prepared and ready for the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage this September. Practice is evaluated with areas for further improvement and development identified; all of which, are likely to benefit the children in her care and their families.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 good. 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

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

- consider ways of providing parents with easy access to written policies, including the complaints procedure, on an ongoing basis
- ask parents to countersign the medication record to formally acknowledge the information recorded therein.

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