



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 104940
Inspection date 13 October 2005
Inspector Sarah Catherine Jex

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 was registered in 1993. She lives with her husband and two children aged 14 and 16 years in the town of Luton, Bedfordshire.

The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding. The bathroom is upstairs and a bedroom is used for sleeping children. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently minding four children under the age of eight on various days and

hours of the week. The childminder walks to the local school to take and collect children and takes the children to the local library and park.

The family have a rabbit.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a friendly, warm and clean home environment, where they are able to learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care through daily routines and through good role modelling by the childminder. Children understand how and why they should wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating snacks and after touching pets. Because the childminder is well informed, she employs suitable strategies to prevent infections spreading, this impacts positively on the children's health. For example, by providing clean flannels and towels daily for each child and having a procedure in place for dealing with sick children. Sound procedures are in place for recording children's accidents or administering medication and parents countersign the entry.

Children's individual dietary needs are met by the childminder taking into account the parents' wishes. Children provide their own lunches which are appropriately stored. They play an active part in learning about healthy foods as they are encouraged to try new tastes and experiences as they participate in cooking activities, such as sandwiches, pizza, cakes, sausage rolls and the preparation of various fruit and vegetables. Children have access to drinks at all times as they have an allocated cup which is regularly refilled throughout the day.

Children's health and development are very well promoted through their participation in a variety of stimulating physical activities. They are developing control of their bodies and acquire wide range of skills through regular opportunities for outdoor activities. These include visits to the local park and library, also walking to collect and pick up other children from the local school. They enjoy playing in the garden with an assortment of toys. All children are able to fully participate in the activities because the childminder uses her experience and knowledge of child development to adapt these to a suitable level. Children are well supported by the childminder, promoting their confidence to try out new skills and experiences. Younger children are able to rest as required and are stimulated according to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment. They are able to move around freely, independently and are able to take risks and express themselves during play within a safe environment. Children develop increasing independence as they choose from a range of suitable, well-maintained toys and equipment. Children's choice of toys and activities are monitored and supervised by

the childminder to ensure they are safe and appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Children are cared for in a safe environment where risks have been identified and minimised. Children show an understanding of boundaries and respond positively to sensitive reminders, such as to pick up toys from the floor to prevent tripping over. This increases children's awareness of everyday safety in the setting. As local walks are a regular activity the children have made acquaintances of a number of people who live and work locally. They are aware of the need to take care when they are away from home. They understand and use road safety procedures and know this keeps them safe. Evacuation procedures are explained to the older children. However, they have not practised with both the younger and older children together. This would compromise their safety.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect as the childminder has a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms to look for along with the procedures to follow if she had any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and contented as they take part in a wide range of activities both in and outside the home. Children have excellent opportunities to socialise with others as they visit friends and enjoy trips in the local community. For example, the local shops and library.

Children are well supported and are provided with a range of stimulating and challenging opportunities and activities. These include imaginative play, being creative and experimenting with cooking and growing, such as cress. Books play a large part in each child's day as they enjoy shared reading and trips to the library. Free play is incorporated into each day where child-initiated play is encouraged and supported by the childminder. For example, whilst playing with the trains and track the childminder helps the children build the track, interlocking straight and curved pieces and incorporating bridges. Children have free choice of activities and are readily available and presented well to encourage children to take part. Activities are appropriate for the children's individual development, enabling them to move forward at their own pace. The childminder identified and agreed to extend her current practice by demonstrating that play opportunities are planned and evaluated. This would enhance her practice and the children would benefit from having access to a wider and more challenging variety of activities.

Children have warm relationships with the childminder. She interacts at the children's level, encouraging communication and independence skills. Children approach her for physical comfort and reassurances which contributes to their sense of belonging. They have opportunities to think for themselves, express their ideas and thoughts and interact with others by sharing and taking turns. Children's learning and development is extended by the childminder's constant awareness. They are involved in suitable, fun and challenging activities and has an excellent knowledge of them as individuals. For example, she is able to decipher gestures and language,

thus avoiding any child becoming frustrated or despondent. Children's self-esteem is developed carefully with praise for their achievements and children contribute to the scrap books with their creative work, so parents and other children can praise them. The children have written what they like most about the time they spend with her. These comments vary from what they like to play with, to going out to the park and enjoying cooking activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a sensitive awareness of diversity and an understanding of the needs of others. This is achieved through a range of activities and resources which promotes a positive outlook of the wider world. Books are readily available and children enjoy discovering the world around them through sharing stories with the childminder. Children accept and respect each other as individuals, with the childminder setting a good example by valuing and respecting each child. Children's needs are met in a sympathetic manner through her open, honest and affective communication with parents and children. Activities are adapted to meet the needs of all the children. A respectful and happy attitude from the childminder encourages the children to feel secure and good about themselves. The children are known very well to the childminder and is responsive to their needs. For example, if a child needs extra reassurance or cuddles, this is happily provided and children respond positively knowing they can climb up for a cuddle at any time.

Children know and accept the realistic boundaries in place and this impacts positively on their behaviour. They respond well to the childminder and the high level of support and consistent strategies helps them understand what is acceptable. Children are happy and confident. They are able to ask for help when needed. Praise and encouragement for their positive behaviour is readily given by the childminder. For example, when "please" and "thank-you" is used without being prompted.

Children's needs are met through the daily routine which is discussed with parents and daily achievements and progress are documented in the child's individual diary. This is an effective line of communication between parent and childminder which they are able to share and play an active role in their child's care. Parents are able to make a positive contribution towards their children's learning and development because the childminder organises an effective induction session enabling the child to feel settled, secure and have a good sense of belonging. Good relationships with the children and parents enables the childminder to provide the good individual care for each child needs, which is in line with the parents' wishes.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are relaxed and feel secure and comfortable in the well-organised environment. The space, resources and daily routine are organised appropriately and helps encourage the children's confidence and independence. This ensures their

individual needs are being met. Children are happy and confident initiating their own activities and sharing and extending this to others, they seek adult support when needed.

The childminder shares her practices, children's daily achievements and progress with the parents through verbal conversation and written daily diaries for each child. This contributes to the trusting relationships developed between them and impacts on the children's feelings of security. Ratios are met at all times and the childminder has an good awareness of the impact these have on children's health, safety, socialisation and learning. Parents are aware of how to make a complaint. However, there is not a system in place to record these complaints.

The childminder's clear use of unwritten procedures and routines which cover most aspects of the National Standards effectively promote the welfare, care and learning of all the children. However, although the childminder seeks verbal permission before taking children outside the home she does not have written parental permissions at the time of placement. Overall the childminder meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to obtain child protection procedures. This has been completed and she now has a good understanding of child protection signs and symptoms and is aware of the procedures to follow if she has any concerns. Resources and ideas of activities are in place which promote diversity and equal opportunities. The childminder now keeps a daily diary for very young children and babies detailing activities, feeding, sleep patterns etc. This has had a positive impact on her relationship with the parents and she is able to follow the children's progress and achievements in more detail.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints since the last inspection to report

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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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):

- Ensure emergency evacuation procedures are carried out with all children on a regular basis
- ensure a confidential and robust system is in place for recording complaints
- obtain written parental permissions for outings is in place.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk