



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	126803
Inspection date	28 October 2005
Inspector	Susan Jennifer Scott

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.
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WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since June 1999. She lives with her husband and four school aged sons. Their house is on the outskirts of Dartford. The downstairs of the property is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to provide care for five children under eight years; of these not more than three may be under five years, and of these, not more than one may be under a year at any one time. At present the childminder cares for four children, three who attend part-time and one attends full time.

The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. She attends the local toddler group, takes children to the local library and to the local park.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children follow consistent hygiene practices and know they need to wash their hands after visiting the toilet, before eating food and after playing in garden. Nappy changing routines are adequate but do not guarantee privacy for toddlers as this takes place by an open door.

Children use the play equipment in the garden, visit the park and enjoy varied and popular outings; they go to toddler groups and to the local library. This helps them understand the need for regular exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. They gain physical skills appropriate to their stage of development, as the childminder ensures children have access to a variety of indoor and outdoor play.

Children develop healthy eating habits as the childminder provides choices which she monitors to ensure these are healthy. For instance, children are encouraged to eat a variety of sandwiches for lunch. The children can have fresh cooked food for their meals, such as roast dinners or curries, all with vegetables. Children enjoy a healthy range of fruit for snacks and sit at the table to eat which encourages good habits and sociable conversations. They can ask for a drink whenever they need one and the childminder ensures children drink plenty, especially in warm weather to prevent dehydration. Food is carefully prepared and complies with dietary needs and children's preferences so that parent's wishes are adhered to.

Children experience appropriate and sensitive provision should they become sick or suffer injuries. The childminder stays calm and reassuring when dealing with children who are unwell and she observes them carefully while waiting for them to be collected. The children are safeguarded by consents obtained from parents which have been obtained. This protects all children and good practice prevents the spread of contagious ailments.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are made to feel welcome through the provision of toys in the rooms they access. Children enjoy playing with each other and the resources. The childminder is patient and kind to them and makes them feel at ease, for example, when she puts an arm round one child who feels unwell. Children benefit from playing in a clean, tidy and well organised environment with independent access to two large rooms and an easily accessible garden.

Children can move around freely and request any favourite toys or resources. They benefit from a range of sufficient, safe and suitable toys, resources and equipment.

Children are able to access age-appropriate resources which are suitable and which interest them, such as the crayons and picture making resources.

Toys and resources are clean and checked regularly, to ensure there are no broken parts that could harm a child. The childminder encourages children to feel well settled and secure as she supervises them constantly. Children benefit from being able to play independently or play together in a small group. They are able to access the enclosed garden for their use and the childminder is able to supervise this easily as there is good visibility from the dining area.

Children are kept safe in the home. They enjoy their play in a secure environment and the childminder has ensured that all the necessary steps have been taken to minimise risks: all dangerous substances are locked away and there are smoke detectors and a fire blanket. Socket covers are used and there are no trailing wires in the home.

Children have very good access to the garden and they are encouraged to learn about safety when on outings. Children learn about road safety and they learn why they need to stay close. Children wear reins and can travel in the double or single buggies which enables the childminder to keep them secure. They are safeguarded by the record of written permission for transportation in a car, or consent to outings.

The childminder has an understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. She has obtained information about child protection and attended some training. She is aware of the procedures to follow if she has concerns about a child in her care. This affords protection to the children in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy, relaxed and confident. They approach the childminder for support, for instance, when they want a particular activity or join in with pretend play. This indicates good relationships are built between the children and the childminder.

Children feel comfortable and happy because the childminder is warm and relaxed towards them: she constantly responds to their requests and gestures. Children's individual needs are met by the childminder who provides good support. For instance, when they express a preference for a certain activity, such as playing with the toy buggy or doll, the childminder is happy to provide support and help to do this. Children learn important social skills such as putting away the cards when these have been scattered on the floor.

Children have very good relationships with the childminder and this enables them to feel happy and secure in her care. They feel valued because the childminder listens to them and takes time to understand their ideas and helps them to put these into practice, such as looking at photos or cooking with them. Children relate well to the childminder and other minded children and are establishing good relationships with each other. They experience good social opportunities through their play as there are several children of differing ages who attend. Children enjoy the varied opportunities

to go out together and learn how to behave well in different places such as the library. They are also enabled to build their understanding of how to respond and negotiate in varied situations. For example, they decide which games they can play together.

Children enjoy and learn from a range of activities. They access a range of equipment which develops their abilities such as dressing-up and role-play with pretend food and crockery. They enjoy a regular range of outings such as going to local toddler groups and the library for story times. They also participate in organised outings during the holidays which offer exciting activities such as Thorpe Park or Chessington.

The childminder encourages children to do things for themselves and gives support to them when they are learning new skills. This enables children to develop their independence; for instance, when a child asks for some attention, the childminder presents him with various choices so that he does as much as possible for himself. Children benefit from the childminder's experience of caring for children of varied ages and the support she offers for their play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder has a positive attitude towards diversity. Children are encouraged to talk about things that are important to them, such as their home and family events because the childminder acknowledges them as important. Each child's abilities and interests are recognised and encouraged through conversations and the activities they enjoy. The childminder has varied resources so that children develop a balanced view of society.

Children have access to and enjoy a range of resources and activities which allow them to explore their individual interests, providing them with positive experiences. Children's individual needs are discussed with parents and this promotes consistency of care for the child.

The childminder has limited experience of caring for children with special needs, although she is aware of how to obtain information and she would ensure that the special needs of any child she agreed to mind would be provided for.

Children are learning about right and wrong as the childminder uses appropriate strategies, according to the age and stage of development, to help the children. She gives them reminders about appropriate behaviour and encourages them to behave appropriately. The children receive support to suit their individual needs, as the childminder discusses and agrees how to provide consistent care for children.

The childminder develops a very successful partnership with parents that promotes the welfare of the children. She gathers relevant information when children are placed in her care to ensure they can be cared for appropriately. For example, children benefit from the childminder's knowledge of their likes and dislikes and knowledge of their family. Parents are kept informed of the childminder's practice

through the use of an informative contact book for young children. Parents are welcomed into the home and praise the care that the childminder gives their children, saying she is 'kind, loving and patient' and has plenty of experience. Parents have access to a file of information about the service provided. For instance, they can see the documents about the car and have access to a complaints policy. All the information provided about the children is treated as confidential.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the good organisation of the childminding service. Children have frequent access to outings and outdoor play. Children access a variety of safe, clean, and varied resources, as well as appropriate activities which are well supported. The environment is carefully managed to ensure the safety and effective supervision of the children.

The documentation is well organised, secure and used well so that parents are kept informed, and children are protected. For example, there is a valid insurance policy to cover any liabilities that could result from unforeseen accidents. Children's welfare is promoted by the childminder's good understanding of the procedures and experience of working with children.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides

Improvements since the last inspection

The childminder has improved her knowledge and understanding of child protection issues to a limited extent. She attended part of a course but has reasonable knowledge of the issues and knows how to access a consultation should she need advice.

The individual records for each child are kept in separate files with copies of medical records and accidents in each one. This ensures confidentiality.

Records which are shared with all parents include a copy of the current MOT.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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):

- obtain a copy of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice to extend knowledge of special educational needs
- review nappy changing procedures to ensure privacy and appropriate hygiene for children

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