



Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 505399 |
| Inspection date | 09 January 2006 |
| Inspector | Susan Marriott |

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| 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 1999 and is currently studying for an NVQ3 in childcare. She lives with her husband and 2 children aged 8 years and 6 years in their house in the village of Maulden, Bedfordshire. She is registered to care for 4 children under 8 years and is currently caring for a 3-year-old and an 18-month-old on 2 days per week, an 18-month-old on a full time basis and a 2-year-old for 3 days per week. The childminder also provides respite care for a 10-year-old. The playroom and the kitchen are used for childminding with access to the ground floor cloakroom. There is a safely enclosed rear garden for outside play. The first floor of the premises is only used to provide a sleep area for a child in a travel cot in the main bedroom.

The childminder has a rabbit which is kept in a hutch in the garden and a 'Lurcher' dog which has controlled contact with the minded children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy a regular, wide range of activities in the fresh air that contribute to their good health. Every day, children walk to and from the local school when the childminder meets her own children. Minded children enjoy lively garden games and regular visits to local parks and playgrounds. The daily programme includes planned activities to support the development and improvement of children's physical skills. For example, there are soft balls in the playroom to kick, throw and catch. The childminder encourages the children to follow video exercise routines and actively participate in action songs and rhymes, where children need to bend and stretch. Outings to places such as adventure playgrounds further extend children's physical competence and co-ordination.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean home where they learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. Their clear understanding of why they must wash their hands after using the toilet and before handling food, reduces the risk of cross contamination. Children use tissues appropriately and dispose of them in the bin. Sound written procedures are in place for children who are unwell and the childminder maintains an accident book in accordance with requirements. Children receive appropriate first aid because the childminder holds a suitable first aid qualification. Clear procedures for hygienic nappy changing include the use of disposable gloves and the childminder uses them when dealing with bodily fluids. The childminder always washes hands before and after nappy changing to prevent the spread of infection. The family dog is managed well in the presence of minded children and the house is maintained as a strictly non-smoking environment. Young children are able to sleep according to their needs in a suitable quiet area of the house.

The childminder actively works with parents to encourage healthy eating habits. Children acquire positive attitudes to food eaten from their own individual plates, cups and cutlery. The children sit in age-appropriate seats and high chairs and eat together as a social occasion. Fresh fruit and vegetable snacks are always available for children and they have access to regular drinks throughout the day. Water, milk or juice is available in a suitable cup according to the age of the child.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for within a safe and secure home environment. The childminder uses her experiences of family life together with her expanding childcare knowledge to provide a gentle and nurturing environment for children. She

thoughtfully prepares her home before the children arrive, for example, by conducting a risk assessment and by ensuring that a range of planned activities are available. Children independently select activities from a wide range of easily accessible resources, which are in a good state of repair and are age appropriate. The childminder carefully monitors and supervises children's choice of toys, to ensure they are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Children are able to move around and play safely, freely and independently because the childminder has identified and minimised all risks. For example, she ensures that hot drinks remain in the kitchen and that the correct insurance and socket covers are in place. Children regularly practice their fire evacuation drill. Children learn to keep themselves safe because the childminder has clear rules and sets age appropriate, safe limits in order to maintain their safety inside and outside the home. For example, children understand that they must pull up their trousers in case they trip up and fall over. The children are encouraged to put some toys away so they don't trip over them and hurt themselves. The childminder safeguards children's welfare and has all the required documents in place. She attends specific training courses about child protection issues and shares her procedure with parents. Children are safe with the childminder, who has a secure understanding of child protection in line with the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy and make good progress in learning, leisure and personal development because they enjoy the childminder's enthusiastic interaction. She consistently engages with children at their chosen level of play, explaining and extending learning through child-initiated activities. For example, the childminder explains that this is a click clack track in a zig-zag shape which makes a track for cars to run down. The children chose their colour car and take turns to run them down the track, playing harmoniously and demonstrating good concentration and focus.

Children readily acquire new knowledge and skills and respond to suitable levels of challenge as the childminder asks questions about relative sizes to make children think. For example, 'Is this ball too big or too small to fit through the hole?' A child chooses a story about a train and the childminder asks whether the one in the picture is an electric train or a steam train. She points out the significant features in the pictures, including all children and varies her questioning to suit all ages. She asks more detailed questions of the three-year-old, praising responses of all children. The childminder asks them if they remember going to the train station last week to see electric trains and diesel trains and whether they recall the trains making different noises. Children learn new vocabulary as the childminder extends their language, asking questions and repeating the answers. For example, a child shows interest in a toy fish. The childminder asks if the child likes Nemo and points out that Nemo is an orange fish who lives in the sea. During a song and rhyme session, the children become totally engrossed in song, dance and mime and they squeal with delight as the childminder suggests singing the 'Sleeping bunnies' song. Children develop

confidence and self-esteem. For example, the childminder constantly praises and encourages the children as they do 'good shaking' in the Scarecrow song and the children respond with enthusiasm as they actively contribute their ideas to the repertoire of songs and action rhymes.

Children learn to distinguish between right and wrong through being directed to think about the consequences of particular actions. For example, a child throws toys all over the floor and is encouraged to help to pick them up by being reminded that the toys might get lost and may not then be available to play with. The childminder is highly attentive to the needs of the children and ensures they have a balanced and purposeful programme of activities throughout the day. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is effectively used by the childminder to promote highly positive outcomes for children under three-years-old. The daily planner sets out a rough outline of activities offered throughout the week, although a great deal depends upon the children and how they are feeling. Children benefit from being able to socialise with others at local toddler groups and enjoy messy activities with paint, dough, foam and water. Children relish the opportunity to use the musical instruments. The children are able to have free choice, guided by the childminder who makes additional suggestions from well-thought out alternative activities. Each child is able to have some individual attention because the childminder organises her minding numbers to accommodate this. Children spend some time outside each day, either in the garden, the park, or whilst walking to school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others is increased because the childminder provides a suitable range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world. For example, dolls which represent different cultures and books about other cultures and countries. During the inspection, a child selects a toy dog and comments that something is wrong with the dog. The childminder explains that the dog has only got one eye and cannot see out of the other. She relates her explanation to the child's earlier experience of seeing a blind man with a white stick and a dog and reminds the child that the special dog helps to look after the man to make sure he does not fall over. Children learn about their local community as they travel to and from school, visit the shops and local parks. Children with special needs receive very good support as the childminder has attended relevant training and has experience of managing children with particular needs.

Children behave exceptionally well in response to the clear boundaries set by the childminder. She keeps the children busy with purposeful and stimulating activities and uses effective distraction techniques to manage any tantrums or challenging behaviour. For example, a child is persuaded to use a tissue independently and is rewarded with lots of praise and encouragement as it is deposited in the kitchen bin. Children are valued and respected as individuals. Parents speak very highly of the service they receive, although the childminder has not yet devised a complaints record in line with new requirements. The childminder meets the needs of the

children through the daily routine as discussed with their parents. The childminder relies upon verbal daily discussion about the service provided to share information about their child's activities. She provides a useful notice board for parents but does not presently have a complaints record in line with new requirements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are genuinely happy in the well-organised care of this enthusiastic and energetic childminder. She shows firm commitment to furthering her skills through on-going training courses relevant to child care. She combines a professional approach with her maternal experience to promote very good outcomes for children. Children are well-protected and cared for by this childminder with a keen knowledge and understanding of child development. Children feel part of an extended family and are gently nurtured in the interesting and stimulating environment. Children confidently choose activities and extend their own play and learning in an imaginative way. The childminder is highly professional in delivering all aspects of her service and uses her mixture of verbal and written procedures and routines to effectively promote the welfare, care and learning of all the children. The childminder meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, three recommendations were made to improve practice further. The childminder was asked to ensure that all existing injuries are recorded in the accident book and parents signatures are obtained to confirm recording; that all hazardous sprays are inaccessible to minded children in the ground floor toilet and that knowledge of the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) guidance and procedures is up to date. The childminder has taken appropriate action to improve the outcomes for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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:

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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. |
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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):

- improve further, ways of sharing information with parents, about the childminding service on offer. Devise a complaints record in line with new requirements.

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