

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	147083
Inspection date	18 June 2007
Inspector	Lynne Kathleen Talbot
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 July 1997. She holds a childcare qualification as a Nursery Nurse (N.N.E.B.) The childminder lives with her husband and three children aged five, nine and 13 years. Their house is in the town of Biggleswade.

The whole ground floor of the house is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed rear garden for outside play. There are shops, schools and pre-schools within an accessible distance.

The childminder walks to local schools to collect and take minded children. She attends toddler and activity groups with minded children.

The childminder is registered to care for four children at any one time. There are currently eight children on role attending varying hours. The childminder has experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and is able to support children for whom English is an additional language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean home which is well-organised, offering appropriate space for play and arranged to meet the needs of all children attending. Children are encouraged to understand about their own physical needs and learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. This is because the childminder acts as a good role model and offers clear explanations. They have access to personal items, which prevents any cross-infection, and are encouraged to understand the needs of the younger children, developing a caring attitude towards them and being aware of safety issues which may arise. Children discuss hygiene routines with the childminder learning that they need to wash their hands before preparing foods. They take part in the preparation of snacks and carry out cooking activities which helps them to follow those hygiene routines and maintain good habits.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. Each day there are indoor and outdoor large physical activities to help them develop control of their bodies, for example, as they attend activity groups in the community and access facilities in the garden. They take part in the 'Adventure Walk'; the schools initiative which encourages children to walk to school each day. Children's nutritional needs are very well met with clear agreements between the childminder and parents supported by sample menus devised by the childminder. The children are involved in the 'Healthy Eating' award scheme which is followed by the childminder. This includes gardening and planting a range of foods such as salad items which the children care for and harvest to enjoy with their meals. They take part in visits to local farms where they purchase fresh locally grown or farmed foods. This supports children's development and knowledge of a broad and well balanced intake of foods throughout the day.

Children's immediate health and safety is successfully protected because the childminder is informed of current health guidelines and requirements of the National Standards, for example, through information on infectious disease and clear sickness procedures. Children's medical needs are effectively supported and protected due to good attention to maintaining information, seeking training for individual needs, and reviewing the care of children with parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children access an environment within which they may be independent and self-motivated learners because the childminder completes risk assessments to assess the hygiene of the premises and safety of all areas. Children access materials and learn about appropriate storage and care for materials in the ground floor rooms. They are learning to keep themselves safe due to frequent reminders about safety in the home and the clear example which is shown to them. However, the trampoline within the garden area does present a risk to children as it is unprotected; this needs to be addressed to minimise risk to children. There were also unprotected sockets accessible to children which present a risk to children's safety.

Children take part in regular evacuation routines from the home, learning about safety within the home and any premises where they may be cared for. The planned routines have been seen to work effectively, for instance, when a paper towel caught alight the children worked well and evacuated the building promptly and safely. Children take part in local walks on a regular basis and have opportunities to learn about road safety. They discuss and review their knowledge

and are able to explain clearly that they must concentrate on the traffic on the roads when waiting to cross and not become distracted by other activities. They learn to use the controlled road crossings safely and can explain the sequence of lights which show them that the road is safe to cross. Children do take part in exciting outings with the childminder but these are not yet assessed fully for risk or planned to show that children's safety has been fully considered.

Children's welfare is protected to a high standard because the childminder has a very good understanding of her responsibilities and robust procedures to follow in the event of concern or child protection. She has sought training and updated procedures in line with regulations and ensures that children may be protected through swift action in the event of concern. Health and safety arrangements support and protect children's welfare. This includes policies as well as information sources obtained from appropriate professional bodies when training and from up to date periodicals.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy, secure and settled. They are enthusiastic about the activities and play opportunities provided, competently stating their own ideas, consistently acquiring new skills and embracing new challenges. For example, they explore both role play and kitchen implements, learning about their uses and eagerly trying new experiences. They take part in preparing snacks and cooking other items which help them to explore their physical abilities as well as measuring and mixing. They talk about whole items, half items and compare the sizes of foods they are using. Children are able to explore creativity through various media in the home; they draw and paint and have created self-portraits using close observation and mirrors. Children are becoming observant and developing their creative skills. They have closely examined nature through mounting both leaves and butterflies (found already deceased) onto sticky-back plastic.

Children have excellent relationships with each other and with the childminder, confidently participating in discussions and initiating conversations. Their personal development and self-esteem are consistently promoted through sensitive support and interaction from the experienced and caring childminder. This is seen in play when they examine items such as the fridge magnets, using increasing language to describe them, discuss their uses, compare size and colours, and begin to use number with confidence. Children have carried out some science experiments such as placing flowers into food colouring and monitoring the change in colours over a period of time. They have recorded this change in photographs and reviewed the process with interest. Activities such as these stimulate children to explore new experiences around them and enhance their development.

Children settle quickly due to the childminder's care, understanding and planning. Children's information, including their likes and dislikes, are maintained and given high regard in their daily care. All children's learning and development is thoughtfully and carefully promoted. The childminder has a clear knowledge and enthusiasm for the practical use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children are accessing activities which show them learning rapidly and developing well in all areas. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is not, however, used together with parents or carers who have limited opportunity to contribute to the children's learning. Children explore new subjects with the support of planning and detailed plans for the setting itself. Topic webs include subjects which excite them such as road maps, the woods and fairy houses, drama and story telling. This ensures that their early years are full of new and exciting experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. Their needs are very well met as they follow their normal daily routines as discussed with their parents. Relationships are positive and children are making early friendships with other children both in the childminder's home and at regular social and activity groups. Children thrive because their individual developmental stages are recognised and planned for by the childminder. Transition into the care of the childminder is well planned and completed at the pace dictated by children's needs. It is supported by extremely detailed personal routines completed by parents and carers.

Children are clearly thriving in this setting as is shown by the testimonials supplied by all the parents of children attending. Their comments, completed in June 2007, include statements such as 'flexible', 'personal interaction', 'communication', 'trust' and 'exciting development'. Children are supported by the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, but this is not explained or used together with parents and carers. This inhibits their ability to contribute to their children's learning.

Children are beginning to understand responsible behaviour and recognise the needs of others due to consistent boundaries being maintained by the childminder. Children are aware of each other's age and are supported in learning about the development of younger children. They show that they are caring and appreciative of younger children's needs. This broadens their understanding and fosters good social development. Children have a firm sense of belonging and items which promote this include having low level coat racks and individual named shoe holders within the home.

Children appreciate and understand about other cultures and ways of life because the childminder provides resources to promote conversation and interest, including topics and exploring the wider locality around them. They explore languages through nursery rhyme and song which are also displayed in various languages as posters within the play rooms. Children take part in celebrating festivals and enjoy adding to the scrapbooks which show both other countries and homes as well as cultural festivals. These methods enable them to explore broad topics which are adapted to their level of understanding. Children receive appropriate support that meets their complex needs as individuals because the childminder seeks information from parents where children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Individual children's needs are considered in all agreements to ensure that each child's development and well-being is suitably supported within any new agreement.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are secure within the surroundings where they develop a firm sense of trust in the childminder. They feel at ease in this extremely well-organised environment leading them to confidently initiate play, explore their surroundings and respond to conversations led by both the childminder and visitors. Their daily comfort and enjoyment is greatly enhanced by the quality of organisation and the attention to all details relating to their care and well-being.

Play opportunities are enhanced by the creative organisation within the home which allows freedom to access all play activities both indoors and outside. Play is effectively planned through topic themes, with practical experience given high emphasis. Reviews and assessment of activities adds to the continued forward thinking and development of the service. Children have

independent access to personal care facilities and develop good awareness of their personal space and care through example and routines. These include personal hygiene, care for surroundings, and responsibility for play materials and personal belongings. This clear organisation enables the children to feel confident in initiating their own play and learning.

Children's care, safety and welfare is promoted through the childminder's commendable practical, daily implementation of detailed policies and procedures across all areas of care. For example, by reviewing policies and written information provided to parents regarding regulations and general care for developing children. Information held ensures that the childminder is able to act appropriately at all times. The childminder has a clear knowledge and understanding of the Children Act and associated regulations ensuring that she addresses her responsibilities, and demonstrating to parents that she meets the National Standards through a detailed file and in discussion. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to review procedures relating to child protection, behaviour management, complaints procedures and obtaining permission from parents to take photographs of children. She was also asked to address identified safety issues in the outdoor area and to maintain appropriate written records of accidents to children.

Since that time the childminder has reviewed all policies and documentation to ensure that they continue to reflect her practice. She has updated them in accordance with the new procedures and prepared a complaints log to record any concern or complaint raised by parents or carers. Parental permission has been obtained for the taking of photographs and a new accident record form has been introduced. The childminder has secured the identified hazard within the garden area. These measures have improved the safety for children within the home and developed the partnership with parents and carers.

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.

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):

- minimise risks to children's safety in the setting; this refers to the trampoline in the garden and the unprotected sockets in the kitchen
- develop procedures to include assessments for outings taking into account risks and emergency plans to protect children's safety
- develop methods of sharing information with parents and carers about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and provide opportunities for them to contribute to their children's learning.

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