



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	149085
Inspection date	07 June 2006
Inspector	Christine Pettitt
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 has been registered as a childminder since 1999. She lives with her husband and two children aged 6 and 11 years. They live in a three bedroomed house in the Berkhamsted area, close to local shops, parks and schools. The childminding takes place on the ground floor of the premises in the lounge and kitchen/dining area. There are bedrooms available if children need a rest. There is an enclosed garden which includes grassed and paved areas and is accessed from the kitchen. The family have a pet rabbit and a cat.

There are currently five children attending at varying times during the week. Most of these are under 5 years. Before and after school care is provided. The childminder has a current first aid certificate and has completed the initial childminding training. She also has a diploma in 'Pre-School Practice.' The childminder attends local childminding groups, toddler groups and music groups with the children. She is a member of the National Childminding association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a hygienic, bright, child orientated environment. They are learning about healthy living through observations of the childminder's effective hygiene practice, discussion and routine personal care. They know they should wash their hands after using the toilet, nappy changes, garden play and before meals. A sickness policy ensures parents know when they should keep their child at home if they are unwell. Children have their own bedding which is washed weekly. These procedures mean the risk of infection spreading is minimised.

Children greatly enjoy the social occasion of eating together. They have a healthy balanced diet, which includes fruit and vegetables. They are learning about healthy eating through information given by the childminder and through activities. The childminder explains to a child why he should not have too many sweet things to eat or drink, as these may harm his teeth. A craft activity where children stick pictures of food onto a paper plate includes discussion about their food preferences and healthy foods. There is a sample menu for new parents to view. Dietary requirements are known to the childminder, some parents choose to provide their child's meals.

Children delight to walk to parks, toddler groups and the shops on a daily basis. They thoroughly enjoy garden play using an excellent range of play equipment. They excitedly crawl through tunnels into a tent, use a tractor with pedals or coupe car to propel with their feet and explore and experiment with sand in the sandpit. These activities encourage their physical development. They use various implements to dig, pour and build in the sand, these improve their hand-eye coordination skills. Children have opportunities to rest according to their needs, they play quietly after their lunch and have a sleep if needed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play happily in a homely environment where safety precautions are in place, such as kitchen cupboard locks, stair gates and smoke detectors. Children are conscientiously supervised as they play and both children are taken upstairs when a child's nappy needs changing so they are always in the childminder's view. Safety measures are in place in the garden to minimise the risk of accidents. A barrier is placed at the steps when children play on the grassed area. Regular risk assessments are not currently carried out. There is a fire evacuation policy and children participate in monthly fire drills, these are recorded in the daily register.

Children are learning about safety as they play and go on outings. They are learning about road safety and know they have to look both ways when crossing a road. They hold onto the buggy, stay close to the childminder and know not to walk on the side of the buggy which is next to the road. They often stop and wait for cars on a narrow pavement which is close to the childminder's home. Children are reminded of safety issues as they play, a child is asked if he can remember where a water pistol can be fired and reminded not to climb on the table.

Children's welfare is promoted through the childminder's awareness of child protection. There is a child protection policy. The policy indicates the childminder's understanding of her responsibility to record and report any concerns regarding a child. The childminder has the required child protection booklets. She has a current first aid certificate and the required resources to use in the event of an accident. This means accidents would be handled competently.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, relaxed and confident in the child focused environment. Photographs, artwork and posters are displayed in abundance on the kitchen walls and in the lounge and provide a source of discussion as children view these. An excellent range of play resources are available for indoors and outside play. These are displayed in storage containers in the play areas, for children to choose and access independently. Resources are changed regularly to provide a variety of experiences and are suitable for the different ages of the children attending. Children greatly benefit from a variety of activities including free play, music, story time, art and craft activities, garden play and daily outings. These are used to promote all aspects of their developmental progress.

Children's progress and skills are encouraged through the childminder's interaction and input during all activities. When they engage in a shopping trip they help to choose the products, sometimes weighing these and counting the products. They explore the environment and recognise numbers on doors, car plates and letters on signs. This means they have vast opportunity to improve their language and number skills. They delight to watch road or building works and watch the progress of the building each time they pass. Children are interested, inquisitive and ask questions continually. The childminder provides sensitive and well thought out answers. An example is, a child notices a van outside and asks 'what is that?'. The childminder's reply enables the child to think about what work the men in the van might be doing and suggestions are made for him to think about. This means children are encouraged to think, to make connections and solve problems. Children show sustained interest in activities and delight to explore the tunnels and tents in the garden, experiment with the sand and engage in role play with the cars and garage.

Children's emotional needs are met very well. An extremely warm, happy relationship exists between the childminder and the children. Children confidently chat constantly, ask questions, approach her for reassurance, smile and respond to her interaction warmly. They remember happy occasions and know what they were doing at the childminders on that day. An example is, a child remembers and volunteers the information that he made jam tarts with the childminder on the day his baby sister was born. Their responses indicate that children know they are valued and this promotes their self-esteem. Skills towards independence are encouraged through genuine praise for their accomplishment. A child proudly tells us he used the toilet at home, this was followed by enthusiastic praise from the childminder. Children are encouraged to care for each other, a younger child at crawling stage excitedly followed the older child through the tunnels to the tent with the encouragement of the older child and childminder.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are extremely well behaved. They delight to be helpful and show concern and help to pacify younger children when they are upset. An older child of his own volition quickly finds a younger child's cup to give him a drink when he is upset. A child is very willing to find a sunhat or pick up the tent when asked by the childminder. Children are aware of boundaries for behaviour through being made aware and reminders of these. For example, a child wanted to use the water pistol, he was asked if he could remember where he could fire the water, and answered, he should fire it at the fence. There is a behaviour management policy which promotes friendliness, care and courtesy and encourages acceptable behaviour through praise. The childminder's understanding of how behaviour can deteriorate when children are hungry, tired or unwell, means children's needs are sensitively met.

Effective partnerships with parents have been established. There is written information, in a portfolio containing policies, and information about the childminder and the childminding arrangements. This does not currently include information on all the standards. Policies and the childminding arrangements information are given to parents. In-depth discussion with parents about their child takes place before children commence. A gradual settling in process means children are introduced at their own pace and therefore settle successfully. A daily diary is provided for parents with information about activities, meals and routine events included. This promotes consistency of care for the children.

Children's individual needs, characters and preferred play are known to the childminder who seeks to meet their needs sensitively. Their preference for the routine to be consistent is respected and outings to various groups take place regularly so the child knows what will happen next. This provides security for the child. A equal opportunities policy and cultural resources provided show a willingness to encourage children to develop a sense of their own identity whilst learning and valuing differences and similarities in other cultures. An example is, a box of props has been provided to make children aware of the Chinese culture. They enjoy pretending they are eating food with chopsticks. Children with special needs are welcomed and the childminder ensures this is a positive experience for all children through explanations and engaging their help where appropriate.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a provision which is organised. The play areas and garden are arranged to promote a child focused environment and safety. There is an excellent range of play resources available appropriate to different stages of development and are provided according to this and the child's preferred play. They are easily accessible for children to help themselves. The routine is consistent and relates to their home environment which provides stability for the children.

The required documentation is in place, is completed regularly and kept securely to promote confidentiality. There is a portfolio for new parents to view including some policies, certificates and childminding information. This does not currently include information regarding all the

standards. A daily diary is provided for parents to inform them of their child's day. Information is displayed for parents at the lounge entrance. The 'Birth to three matters', information is used for reference. The childminder has a current first aid certificate. Overall the range of children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the previous inspection the following recommendations were made: to ensure that attendance records, required permissions are accurate, up to date and completed for all children; to provide parents with written information regarding sickness, diet, behaviour management, complaints; to promote equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice through a wider range of resources and activities.

The attendance records, and required consent forms are accurate, up to date and completed for each child as observed at this inspection.

The childminder has added to the portfolio, the various requested policies. There is a recommendation at this inspection to further enhance information for parents.

The current resources promoting different cultures have been extended and include puzzles, play people, black doll, role play box promoting the Chinese culture, cooking and craft activities through use of books.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report since April 1st 2004.

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):

- extend and enhance information for parents
- carry out regular risk assessments of the premises and garden

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