

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220704
Inspection date	24 May 2007
Inspector	Margaret Coyne

Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 1990. She lives with her husband and one child aged 12 years and two adult children in a village near Kettering, Northamptonshire. The whole of the ground floor and one bedroom and bathroom on the first floor of the childminder's home is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding three children under five both full time and on a part time basis. She also cares for one child over five on a part time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local toddler group and the local childminder's support group. The family have two pet dogs, two guinea pigs, one hamster, one chinchilla, and four lizards.

The childminder supports children with learning difficulties. She is a member of the National Childminding Association. The childminder holds a childcare qualification. She is a member of an approved childminding network and is currently in receipt of funding for early education for three year olds.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming home where they learn the importance of high levels of hygiene and personal care. Exemplary practices are strongly encouraged with gentle reminders, topics and a poster for children to remind them to wash their hands. The childminder helps children to gain an excellent understanding of hygiene and a real desire to become increasingly independent in their personal care. Children's clear understanding of why they must wash their hands after using the toilet, handling the guinea pigs and when examining some snails in the garden, substantially reduces the risk of cross contamination. Young children are able to sleep according to their needs in a suitable quiet area of the house, and are checked regularly by the childminder. They are able to have their comfort items such as a blanket and soft toys to reassure them as they have a nap.

The childminder works to highly effective, purposeful policies and procedures which she has devised in relation to health, hygiene, medication and illness. Extremely sound procedures are in place for children who are unwell to safeguard the good health of the other children who attend the provision. The childminder rigorously maintains an accident book in accordance with requirements and shares this information with parents. Children receive appropriate first aid because the childminder holds and regularly updates a suitable first aid qualification. The first aid box is well stocked enabling the childminder to deal immediately with any accidents to prevent children becoming distressed. Cross infection is minimized by the rigorous application of stringent methods such as hygienic nappy changing routines and separate towels and flannels for each child to use. Toys and equipment are maintained to an excellent standard and children share in some cleaning of these, as an activity, giving them added knowledge about keeping things safe and clean.

Children are positively encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle because the childminder provides healthy snacks and meals and promotes children's knowledge and understanding of nutritional issues through discussion and cooking activities. They benefit from fresh fruit and raw vegetables and their lunch was an enjoyable mix of pitta bread, cheese, lettuce and cucumber. They begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet as they enjoy home cooked food from fresh ingredients. The childminder meets specific dietary needs within the varied menu available to the children and respects parents and children's wishes and preferences. Children eat their meals with relish and great enjoyment as they sit together and take part in a happy friendly social occasion with the childminder. Children are positively encouraged to drink water which is freely and constantly available and are offered frequent drinks in order to remain hydrated. A menu is displayed to share with parents and details are recorded about children's food during the day in their home diaries.

Children enjoy an extensive range of stimulating activities that positively contribute to their good health. The childminder has a robust understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, reflected in the exceptional and regular opportunities to enhance the development of young children's large muscle movements, helping them gain control and develop their emotional capabilities. Children take part in a superb range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. Activities are based at the children's level and aimed at developing their abilities, confidence and physical well-being. They have a splendid variety of indoor and outdoor games to play and outdoor equipment to use such as cars, sit and ride toys, a climbing frame with various types of swings and a wonderful playhouse. All year round, there is a daily opportunity for children to have fresh air as they walk to school, visit the parks and other places of interest and with garden play which develops their physical competence in many areas. The garden is a wonderland for children to explore because it has been divided into different areas which makes it exciting and interesting.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Utmost priority is given to children's safety both in and out of the home. They are cared for in an exceptionally welcoming, clean, safe and secure home environment. The childminder uses space in a highly creative manner to enable children to access toys independently and safely. A source of valuable information for parents is displayed and contained in well organised folders and conveys that children's needs are paramount in this setting. For example, photographs and certificates assure parents that their children are in safe hands and a system is in place to record visitors to the house when children are present. Children have a clear understanding of the areas to which they have free access, and those which they require the childminder's agreement to access, for example the front room and kitchen. The garden is a haven for the children as they move around exploring the different areas such as a quiet area, activity area with climbing frame, decked area with hot tub, hard standing to play with sit and ride cars, a splendid wooden playhouse, a small safe pond and an area for pets. This all contributes to the rapid progress they make.

Children independently select activities from an easily accessible, wide range of stimulating resources, which are in a good state of repair and are age-appropriate. The childminder has an excellent knowledge about which toys are suitable for children of different ages and abilities and uses this knowledge to identify the potential learning opportunities which can be supported by each item of equipment in line with the 'Birth to three matters' and the Foundation Stage guidance. She carefully monitors and supervises children's choice of toys, to ensure they are appropriate for their age and stage of development. For example, younger children enjoy playing with a treasure basket filled with a multitude of interesting, tactile household items. While older children can explore playdough using a variety of equipment to cut, roll and manipulate the dough.

Children are able to move around and play safely, freely and independently because the childminder has identified and minimised all risks, expertly balancing freedom for children and setting safe limits. A valuable written risk assessment is conducted to ensure the children are kept safe at all times. Children actively learn to keep themselves safe because the childminder

has clear rules and routines in order to maintain their safety inside and outside the home. For example, the childminder reminds the children not to run in the house and to sit on the chairs at the table giving explanations for the reason why this is necessary. The childminder safeguards children's welfare and has all of the required policies and documents in place. Excellent practices actively contribute to the safety of children such as, extensive and detailed emergency evacuation procedures, frequently practised fire drills and practising road safety when out on walks. All required documents and consent forms are in place for the childminder to transport the children in her car. They have age-appropriate seats and restraints in order to keep them safe while travelling.

Children are very safe with the childminder, who has a robust knowledge and understanding of child protection in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. The childminder has updated her training and keeps all records and documents up to date to provide excellent evidence of her practice to fully protect the children in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy, content and secure in this vibrant home from home setting. They confidently access the stimulating and challenging range of activities and have formed secure relationships with the childminder and other children. The childminder has an excellent understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this has a positive effect on the younger children's enjoyment and achievements. Activities are planned in line with this framework and link into the Foundation Stage showing her secure knowledge about what children can learn. Planning for 'Birth to three' clearly reflects all areas and children's progress is well documented and shared with parents. Children exhibit wonder and excitement at activities and are eager to participate. For example, as they take part in creative play in line with the theme 'making fishes' with old compact disks, sticking coloured paper to make scales, fins and tails. This is then extended as they go into the garden with a magnifying glass to find tadpoles in the pond.

Children's dexterity and concentration is growing as they sit for long periods to complete an activity because they are interested and stimulated. Young children receive lots of cuddles and have a caring relationships with the childminder which increases their sense of well-being and contentment. They develop their language skills as they engage in conversation and respond to others around them. Excellent use of books helps children link letters to sounds and objects. Children recognise that print carries meaning and show respect for their books. They use many different resources to make marks including painting with water. Children benefit from an outstanding range of story books, story sacks and reference books. Story time is extremely successful because the childminder engages and maintains the children's interest then extends the story using props from the story sack. The children thoroughly enjoy the story about the old lady who swallowed a fly. They go on to put all the animals in the puppets mouth remembering the order she eats them in. These props really keep the children engrossed and bring the story alive for them.

Children are eager to take part in activities and join in with others. For example, they take part in role play situations. Children dress up as chefs and 'cook' food on the play cooker. Children enjoy music, they experiment with sound using self-made shakers. This is extended with

instruments from around the world. For example, a child loves the sound of the rain maker and tirelessly upends it to make 'rain'. Children learn about responsibilities and the effects of their actions. For example, when learning to share and take turns they have simple explanations based at their level of understanding to help them learn it is kind to share. Through the meaningful praise and encouragement from the childminder children are developing a sense of well-being and self-esteem. They exhibit high levels of confidence and this has been achieved by the consistent support, challenge and direction they are given. For example, young children show interest as they look at flowers, feed the Guinea pigs, search for tadpoles and examine shells with the magnifying glass.

Early Education

Children are happy, animated and confident. They settle quickly to activities and join in with enthusiasm and delight. The childminder is highly skilled at extending the range of activities which supports the children's learning and enables them to make progress across all areas of their learning. Children have a wonderful sense of belonging in this setting as they know the routine, and have formed secure happy trusting relationships. Their independence is highly developed because they are able to make their own choices and can operate independently within this safe environment. Children share and play cooperatively together. They are polite and considerate as they say please and thank you. Language skills are fully extended by the childminder as they engage in conversation. She asks open-ended questions to encourage children to think for themselves and the children are chatty and articulate. Their listening skills are enriched by the stories they share because they hold their interest and enable children to join in at appropriate times.

Children are gaining secure knowledge when counting and using numbers in play. For example, they count toys as they match them such as Compare Bears, dinosaurs and cards. Numbers are reinforced in lots of every day situations as children count cars when walking to and from school and join in with number songs and rhymes. Children have a growing concept of size, shape and simple problem solving as they take part in many activities and use many different resources such as peg boards to make patterns and number stacking boards. Children explore using a magnifying glass to look at small objects discovering patterns on snails and shells, looking for tadpoles and discovering flowers. Children discover the world around them showing interest about how other people live. The childminder has developed a photograph album showing different style houses from around the world which raises children's curiosity and questioning skills. They have access to a superb variety of resources such as dressing up clothes, musical instruments, books and dolls to promote their understanding about different cultures and ways of life. The group have a travelling puppy which goes on trips with the children and is documented with photographs about their adventures.

Children move with confidence around the room negotiating obstacles and manage equipment with ease. They are very competent as they manage self care and independent learning to put their own shoes on. Children's physical development is enhanced by the range of varied outdoor equipment available to develop their climbing and balancing skills. They have access to a worthwhile variety of equipment both in and out of the home and children are animated as they use this in the garden. They have a growing understanding about how they feel when they are tired and know that if they have a sleep they will feel 'full of beans'. Their creative

development is enriched through highly varied and exciting methods to help children develop this side of their learning. They take part in some structured topics which are extended with art and craft such as making fish mobiles, caterpillars with tubes, butterfly prints, sticking, stamping and being creative with playdough. They also have many opportunities to create spontaneously painting at the easel, chalking or painting with water. Their work is highly valued and this develops their sense of pride. They have exciting opportunities to use their imaginations and to role play with dressing up clothes and props. Children enjoy making music and listening to music from around the world. For example, they dance to Egyptian music wearing belly dancers costumes.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The childminder enriches the experiences for the children with well-planned activities and resources both in the home and in the wider community. She knows the children extremely well and this helps her assess their starting points working closely with parents. The childminder is an enthusiastic communicator which has a positive impact on the children who develop excellent social and language skills. She plans her activities to enable her to be able to give worthwhile attention to each child and her enthusiasm encourages children to join in and take part. She is skilled at letting children lead an activity and has created a masterful balance between adult-led and child-initiated play. She is successful in motivating children to capture their interest and arouse their curiosity. For example, taking them outside to search for tadpoles after making fish mobiles carrying the same theme forward. The children benefit because the childminder takes time to explain what is expected of them and she is a very positive and patient role model. She is able to inspire, praise and encourage children to try things for themselves, thus gaining the confidence to succeed. They move from dependence to independent learning as they are provided with activities that move them forward. Children are rewarded with praise and positive language for their efforts.

Planning is detailed and covers all areas of learning comprehensively. This gives a clear picture of the aims and objectives of each activity, the learning intention, the resources and the experience for the children. Activities are then evaluated to ensure they are worthwhile. The planning is produced over the long term, medium term and weekly plans which link together to identify what the childminder would like the children to learn over a given time period. The childminder uses regular observations extremely well to plan the next steps in children's learning. The assessments give clear evidence of the children's progress and achievements and any gaps can be quickly identified to inform future planning. Each child has a folder containing examples of their work and written observations linked to the stepping stones. This is complemented with examples of their work and an extensive range of photographs of the children taking part in the activities. This helps give meaning to the observations for parents.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children develop a sensitive awareness of diversity and an understanding of the needs of others. This is achieved through the extensive range of activities and resources which promotes a positive outlook of the wider world. They establish a robust understanding of their local community as they travel to and from local schools, visit parks, toddler groups and other local amenities. Children learn to accept each other as individuals because the childminder sets an

excellent example by valuing and respecting each child. This has a positive impact on the way the children value each other as they learn to share and take turns and play cooperatively together. Children's needs are met in a highly effective manner through her open, honest and effective communication with parents and children. Activities are adapted to meet individual levels of development and a sensitive approach ensures children can play without fear of discrimination. The childminder's superb attitude encourages children to feel good about themselves and show respect for others. The childminder has attended additional training to help her support children and is keen to ensure she works closely with parents offering guidance and support if required.

The children know and accept the realistic boundaries in place and this impacts positively on their behaviour. Their self-esteem is highly developed which helps them learn to respect the opinions and actions of others. The childminder consistently praises their efforts. She reaffirms their achievements, guiding their social and moral development. The children receive excellent support throughout the day according to their individual needs. They respond well to the skilfully planned routines and play an active role in managing their own behaviour because they know what is expected of them. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They show great care and concern for others, including the family pets, and share and play together in an enthusiastic and happy way. Children respond extremely well to the childminder and her effective support and consistent strategies help them understand what is acceptable behaviour. Their confidence and self-esteem is enriched by the consistent support and praise offered. When asking a child to respond the childminder always gives a reason and explanation for her request. This impacts positively helping the children feel valued and respected.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding and contributes significantly to the children's sense of belonging, security and well-being. Parents play an active role in their children's care and a two way sharing of information is encouraged with the use of a daily diary that includes information on children's care, learning, enjoyment and achievements and with discussions. This gives parents opportunities to extend activities and share information at home. Their involvement impacts greatly on the children's good health, safety, care and learning. The childminder is approachable and friendly, which ensures parents feel secure and at ease, confident with the care provided for their child. The childminder has developed extensive and worthwhile information for parents detailing all aspects of her practice. An outstanding portfolio is in place which provides them with excellent and clear information about planning her activities for both the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. An extensive range of folders ensure parents can access information about their child's progress and achievements and other purposeful information relating to all aspects of their care. An extensive range of photographs are taken of the children enjoying the activities which are included in the children's folders and in photo albums. These are also given to parents on a disk so they can enjoy looking at them at home with their child and share part of their child's day with them. Children's care and development is extensively promoted due to the childminder's commitment to working closely with parents. Parents have written glowing references and letters detailing the childminder's support and high standard of care she provides for their children. These also detail how happy the children are in her care and how much they have learnt in their time with

her. Some older children have also written glowing letters about their time with the childminder and are a testament to the outstanding care, play and learning they received with her.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are happy and secure playing in an exceptionally well-organised environment. Space and resources are extremely well planned to provide a homely environment and ensure maximum play space is available to the children. This enables them to freely select resources and activities and helps them become self-reliant and independent. Children are confident when initiating their own activities and when playing with others in this vibrant safe setting. Well-organised and innovative activities provide stimulating and challenging experiences for children of all ages within a fun and supportive environment.

The childminder has a highly professional, yet caring and sensitive approach to her practice. Her organisational skills are superb and are evident in the high level of professional records and documents she keeps which benefits both children and parents. High regard to the organisation of records and documentation impacts on each child's care, learning and play. Records are shared with parents and communication is excellent. This contributes to the trusting relationships developed between them and impacts on the children's feelings of security. The childminder has developed purposeful policies and procedures which are clearly reflected in her practice. Ratios are met at all times and the childminder has an excellent awareness of the impact these have on the children's health, safety, socialisation and learning.

The childminder is committed to extending her knowledge and has completed an extensive range of additional training courses to compliment and enhance her practice. For example she has attended courses and workshops for First aid, Equality and diversity, Creating happy babies and children, Nutrition and health, Heuristic play, Safeguarding children and Toys for inclusive play to name but a few. She has also attended training for her National Vocational Qualification level three, the 'Birth to Three Matters' framework and the Foundation Stage and is currently working towards her degree in the Foundation Stage. She is innovative, committed and enthusiastic as she introduces this knowledge and experience into her practice to extend the broad range of activities for the children. The childminder has also obtained her accreditation and provides stimulating and challenging education for children over three years.

The childminder is an active member of the local childminder's support group and works in partnership with the local authority Early Years Development Team. She has been awarded a certificate for her dedication and commitment in providing childminding services for over fifteen years and one for her services to the Northamptonshire Childminding Association. This greatly benefits the children through her extensive expertise and enables them to gain more social experiences and attend events in the community, extending their circle of friends and learning how to make relationships with others. Overall the children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to ensure that all documents are available for inspection relating to any vehicle used by the children and that the animals are safe to be in

the proximity of the children. All required records relating to the car are now in place in a folder and available for inspection. All pets are clean and extremely well cared for. All relevant documents are kept in the folder to show the pets health checks at the vets therefore ensuring children are safe to handle the animals.

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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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