

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220904
Inspection date	20 August 2007
Inspector	Susan Marriott
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 1985. She lives with her husband and twin daughters aged 16 years in a house in the village of Irchester, in Northamptonshire. The whole of the downstairs is used for childminding, and there is a downstairs cloakroom with toilet facilities. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The family has a pet cat and two rabbits. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time. She is currently caring for seven children on a part-time, flexible basis. The childminder walks to local schools and pre-schools to take and collect children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminder ensures that children have daily access to fresh air whenever practicable so that they enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities that contribute to their good health. For example, on the morning of inspection, the children walk to the post office with their childminder and walk to the end of the road to fly kites in the freshly harvested field. The childminder makes extensive use of her lovely large garden, which she divides into two areas for under fives

and over fives. Younger children enjoy daily garden play on the patio area accessed directly from the conservatory. Older children have a separate access to the climbing frames, swings and grass lawn. Children benefit from regular excursions to the local parks where they enjoy playing on the fixed equipment, and trips to the nearby Irchester Country Park. The childminder takes younger children to indoor playgrounds when the weather is inclement. These activities regularly contribute towards the development and improvement of children's physical skills and agility.

Children are cared for in a clean home where the childminder follows good hygiene rules in order to prevent the spread of infection. For example, the childminder insists on hand washing at appropriate times and washes the cloakroom down with anti-bacterial solution. Older children learn why they must wash their hands after using the toilet. Children stay healthy because the childminder controls infection by excluding children who become sick or unwell, and appropriate documentation is available to record accidents and any medication in accordance with requirements. The childminder holds an appropriate first aid certificate and is proactive in ensuring that she renews her qualification before it expires. She obtains permission to seek medical advice or treatment so that children receive prompt emergency treatment. Children sleep according to their needs in a travel cot placed in a quiet room.

Children receive a varied and balanced diet in accordance with their parents' wishes because the childminder works well with parents. She encourages positive messages about healthy foods through imaginative efforts to promote increasingly adventurous eating habits. Meal times are a social occasion and children of all ages are included because the childminder provides booster seats and high chairs as appropriate. Children do not become thirsty because they have access to drinks of water throughout the day, prompted with regular reminders from the childminder.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are very safe and well cared for because the childminder gives excellent priority to safety within her home. She ensures that all doors are secure. She carries out informal risk assessments and promotes road safety awareness to help children keep themselves safe. Children are able to move around and play freely and independently because the vigilant childminder has thoughtfully identified and minimised all risks. Proper domestic safety measures such as safety gates, socket covers and fire safety equipment are in place. The childminder has a very clear understanding of the terms of her insurance.

Children feel at ease in this friendly and homely environment. Space is used well to ensure that children may play safely under direct supervision at all times. The bright and airy conservatory is dedicated to children's play during the day and double doors give children easy access to the patio area which is cordoned off from the main garden. This enables the childminder to keep younger children under effective constant supervision. All children can enjoy craft activities at the kitchen table, and the dining room and living room are used for general toys and games. Boxes and baskets accommodate toys, equipment and resources which are brought into the rooms and conservatory to be easily accessible to the children.

The childminder positively safeguards children's welfare and has a highly competent understanding of child protection in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. She has attended a relevant training course in the past and has experience of implementing referral procedures. The childminder keeps reference literature to hand to guide her in the process of making any necessary referral.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy and settled in the care of this gentle and caring, friendly childminder, who gives excellent priority to the individual needs of the children. The childminder uses her experience to plan exciting age-appropriate activities that cover all aspects of children's development. She expertly delivers a very wide range of activities at an animated pace to retain children's interest and enthusiasm. The childminder offers plenty of choice which allows the children to have a degree of control over their day. The childminder has regard to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and intuitively includes the aspects of learning within the way she works with under threes. For example, younger children laugh and squeal with delight as they run about trying to catch the bubbles blowing in the wind from a bubble blowing machine.

Children are involved in an extensive range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which provide superb support to their development and overall learning. For example, during the inspection, children are invited to choose from a selection of animal puppet kits and complete a simple sewing exercise to join the felt shapes together. They decorate the puppet with pieces of felt and facial features. The children proudly display their finished products. Children receive the devoted attention of the childminder who asks lots of open questions and makes children think for themselves. For example, the children talk about fire safety and draw their own escape plan of the house. She is highly effective in supporting children's play and learning. For example, she makes the home corner into a holiday shop and children use old flight tickets, holiday booking forms, travel brochures in their play. She involves the children in conversation about their experiences of holidays and travel, developing and extending their language and communication skills effectively.

The childminder prepares consistently challenging ideas in advance, taking care to ensure that activities are meaningful, interesting and relevant to the young children in her care. She prepares comprehensive written records of activities which demonstrate the wide range of themes and the fantastic range of imaginative arts and crafts activities offered to the minded children. For example, plans show that the current week's activities are organised on a theme of 'textiles'. Forthcoming activities include knitting; mask making; t-shirt design with fabric markers; weaving to make an egg cosy, and papier-mache egg cup making.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about their community as they walk in the neighbourhood and visit local parks. She talks to the children about where they would like to go and what they would like to do. Children have frequent opportunities to express their likes and dislikes, interests, feelings and needs. This helps to develop their self-esteem and confidence. Children benefit from planned activities which enhance their knowledge of the wider world. For example, on a theme of 'Around the world', the childminder turned the home corner into a French shop, encouraging children to use euros in the till and to learn a few words of French. She made and tasted croissants with the children. On another occasion, children made the home corner into an Italian restaurant serving cardboard pizzas, with the children taking turns to be clients and waiters. The childminder values cooking activities with children as a good way of gaining their interest and the children have used chopsticks to sample sweet and sour chicken with rice. Other foods include spaghetti bolognaise and Indian curry.

The childminder has no direct experience of caring for children who have identified learning difficulties or disabilities. However, she is very aware of children's stages of development. Consequently, she feels able to approach parents if she is worried about children's progress and obtain appropriate support to address the concern. The childminder meets their needs through the daily routine as discussed with their parents.

Children behave very well in response to the childminder's clear boundaries for acceptable behaviour and consistent expectations. She uses facial expression and tone of voice to remind children about positive behaviour, including good manners and courtesy. Children have lots to do and activities are delivered at a good pace so that children remain interested and focussed. Parents and carers receive a thorough verbal induction which sets out what parents can expect from her service before placing a child in the care of this childminder. The childminder ensures that thorough daily dialogue is used effectively to keep parents extremely well informed about their child's activities. The childminder has a suitable complaints procedure in place and is beginning to consider how to reflect upon her practice and further develop her records.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder is quietly confident in her childcare practice. She uses her warm personality and her life experience as a mother, together with her verbal policies, to actively promote positive outcomes for children. The childminder is beginning to develop ways in which records, policies and procedures can be further enhanced in order to raise the quality of provision for children across all outcomes. A planning record is used to record particular events across each week and there is a suitable record of children's attendance. She uses the internet as a convenient way to update her knowledge. The childminder is able to enrich children's care, learning and play through her constant interaction and interest. All of the children receive individual attention at some time during the day and benefit from social interaction with children of varying ages and backgrounds. Children confidently choose activities and the childminder encourages them to extend their experiences. Children's welfare and education is effectively supported through the childminder's clear use of thoughtful routines which cover the National Standards. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to keep a written record of medicines given to children and to ensure that precautions are taken to deal with emergencies, sharing information with parents. The childminder prefers not to give medication to children whilst ensuring that any such administration is suitably recorded. She has devised a contingency plan to ensure children's safety and welfare in case of emergency. The childminder has taken appropriate action which has improved the quality of childcare.

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):

- consider how records, policies and procedures can be developed to further enhance children's welfare, learning and play.

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