



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221297
Inspection date	08 September 2006
Inspector	Ann Austen
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 outstanding. 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 1996. She lives with her two children aged 12 and 8 years in the village of Brixworth, Northamptonshire. All local amenities are within walking distance. A designated area of the house on the ground floor is used for childminding, including sleeping and toilet facilities. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding four children under five whose times vary and three children over five before and after school. The childminder walks to the local school to take and collect the children. She attends the local toddler group and takes children to the local park.

The childminder is an accredited member of the Northamptonshire Childminding Network although currently she does not have any children in receipt of funded early education. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because the childminder follows very effective procedures and practices which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. They benefit from a very clean, warm and comfortable childcare environment. Children learn the importance of good health and hygiene practices through daily routines, and become increasingly independent in their personal care skills. For example, children know that they wash their hands after using the toilet, before meals, after messy play, and outdoor activities. This is further enhanced by the childminder who ensures that the premises are clean, provides individual hand towels for the children, and has very good procedures for changing nappies. This sustains levels of hygiene and helps to prevent the spread of infection. Children's welfare is safeguarded because children's individual and personal information is discussed with parents to ensure that health and medical needs are identified and adhered to. The childminder has up-to-date first aid knowledge, and clear procedures are in place in the event of accidents, for the administration of medication and if children are unwell. For example, children are cared for sensitively while waiting to be collected by their parents.

Children's dietary requirements are well met as the childminder is proactive in encouraging parents to provide healthy and nutritious packed lunches. Children eat their packed lunch appropriately and in addition the childminder provides a very good variety of healthy snacks. For example, children enjoy daily fresh fruit, cheese and bread sticks. Children are encouraged to try new foods, and are involved in preparing their own snacks. They are helped to begin to understand why some foods are healthy and others are not. This actively promotes children's healthy growth and development. Meal times are relaxed, social occasions where children and the childminder sit together around the table to enjoy their food, each others company and develop good table manners. Younger children are encouraged to drink from accessible beakers and older children know that they are able to ask for a drink. This ensures that children remain well hydrated and comfortable.

Children thrive as they enjoy an extensive range of physical activities which contribute to their good health and have daily opportunities to get fresh air. They are able to rest and sleep according to their needs. Children explore, test and develop physical control during stimulating indoor and outdoor activities. They enjoy local walks, manoeuvre wheeled toys, balance on the beam, bounce on the trampoline, crawl through the tunnel, climb the steps of the slide and catch and throw the bean bags. This promotes children's co-ordination, balance and fitness. Children enthusiastically dance, stretch and move their bodies to taped music, developing the confidence to enjoy moving with control, using their bodies in a variety of ways. Older children enjoy more challenging robust physical activities and develop a positive attitude to physical exercise. They have opportunities to ride their cycles around the local reservoir and to run, kick footballs and fly kites in the nearby field. Children handle tools such as cooking utensils, large and small paintbrushes, build with construction resources and manipulate dough. This promotes children's hand-to-eye coordination and strengthens small muscles well.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy their exceptionally well equipped play room, where space is used creatively and children can access resources freely and safely as they play. This is enhanced by a wide selection of photographs of children participating in activities, posters depicting shapes and letters of the alphabet, and many colourful wall displays of the children's work, for example Divali hand prints and the 'deep blue sea' wall mural. Children enjoy their well equipped play room where they can access resources freely and safely as they play.

Children are kept consistently safe and secure at all times. Risks of accidental injury are substantially minimised during indoor and outdoor activities because the childminder supervises the children well and works very hard to identify potential hazards. The childminder has an excellent understanding of creating a balance between encouraging children's freedom and setting limits to maintain their safety. For example, safety equipment is used according to the ages and needs of the children attending. This enables children to explore and take risks in a safe environment. High priority is given to helping children understand the importance of keeping safe by responding to the successful guidelines set out by the childminder. Safety issues are regularly discussed and explained to the children. For example, children learn to stop, look and listen when they cross the road, not to talk to strangers and what to do in the event of a fire by regularly practicing the emergency evacuation procedures. Children are taught about the risks associated with their activities. They learn how to handle tools such as scissors, pencils and paint brushes safely, and older children know that they should avoid playing with small items when they are near babies and younger children. Children are well protected in the sun. The childminder erects parasols in the garden, avoids the midday sun, provides frequent fluids and applies sun cream in consultation with parents.

Children are very well protected because the childminder has a clear and robust understanding of all aspects of child protection. The childminder is clear of her role in appropriately monitoring children's welfare and she continually updates her knowledge regarding health and safety to enhance her practice and safe guard children.

Children use a wide range of safe, high quality resources, including everyday household items, furniture and equipment which supports their play and is appropriate for their age and stage of development. They can reach toys and resources easily and sit and lie comfortably to play and join in activities. Children are challenged, interested in and want to play with the vast selection of resources, which the childminder regularly rotates to develop new interests and skills. Outdoor space is arranged imaginatively for the children's safe play and is well resourced with toys and equipment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children flourish and thoroughly enjoy their time at the childminder's home. They are eager to learn and approach all areas of their play with enthusiasm and interest participating in activities that develop their emotional, physical, social, and intellectual capabilities. Children benefit from the childminder's constant enthusiasm, and her wealth of experience caring for

children of differing ages. Their progress is monitored, observations are recorded and individual development is significantly enhanced by the childminder's use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum for children in receipt of funded early education. A flexible and child-centred approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to explore at their own pace. Children smile and laugh with enjoyment as they sing familiar songs, play musical instruments and dance energetically to the music. They use their imaginations during role play, taking on family roles, and use an extensive range of props to support their play. For example, children enthusiastically make cups of tea and prepare meals for the childminder, they build and saw at the work station, and enjoy dressing up as an Indian, fairy and lion. Children handle construction resources, and immerse themselves in play using small world resources, such as the 'happy people' play set and the safari house.

As the children play the childminder asks questions and talks to the children about what they are doing. This encourages children to think and promotes their language development. Children are very confident in their relationship with the childminder, who meets the children's needs through sensitive and appropriate interactions that promote their confidence and self-esteem. As a result children are very happy, relaxed and totally absorbed in their play. Children learn about the wider world and their communities through a variety of exciting planned activities. They go on walks, taking photographs of local landmarks within the community, which they then use to make maps. Children then use their maps to locate the landmarks again on future walks. They buy fish from the fish mongers, and cook the fish for tea. Children show curiosity as they use magnifying glasses to view bark and explore bugs in the garden. They take part in a wide range of activities that encourage them to express themselves creatively. Children create collage pictures and enjoy painting and drawing, confidently mixing colours creating their own patterns and designs. They are very proud of their achievements. Children's manual dexterity and co-ordination is extremely well promoted as they purposely use a variety of tools such as scissors, cutters and spreaders to create their own ideas.

Older children enjoy a relaxed session before and after school and during the school holidays. They have fun, are challenged and are able to choose freely from the activities provided. Children paint stones, make 'dream catchers', use beads to make necklaces, and enthusiastically work together to create wall displays. They take turns and negotiate as they play board games, and access the computer. Children enjoy making chocolate Easter cakes and biscuits. This continues to promote children's development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are valued as individuals, feel secure and are totally at ease in the childminder's care. The childminder strives to help children reach their full potential and includes them in every aspect of the daily routines provision. Children have choices in their play, and learn to take responsibility, for example, by helping to tidy away. Activities are meaningful, stimulating and fun and adapted to meet the individual needs of each child. Consequently, children relish their time in the childminder's home, developing their confidence and self assurance. Children are very confident in their relationships with the childminder, who has a very warm, caring

relationship with the children. This increases their sense of belonging and promotes their emotional development.

Children have very good opportunities to learn about themselves and others in the wider community. Imaginatively planned activities and visits to local places of interest help children gain a very good understanding of their environment. Children have access to a broad range of resources which reflect diversity, acknowledge different cultural differences and help them become sensitive towards others. For example, children celebrate the Chinese New Year by making a large dragon, and sample new foods such as noodles and prawn crackers. Children look at books, and handle small world figures that acknowledge other cultures and help children appreciate the needs of people with disabilities.

The childminder has had previous experience of working with children with special needs and is confident to judge how well individual children's needs can be met within exciting routines. All children are included in planned activities and have free access to the resources.

Children behave well and respond very positively to the childminder's effective behaviour management strategies that take into account their age and stage of development. They learn to understand the difference between right and wrong. This is continually reinforced through daily routines and practices such as being caring, respectful and sensitive towards each other. Children take turns in games and share the resources. They are helped to learn self control and to resolve any conflict in an amicable way. Children receive frequent positive reassurance, support, praise and encouragement. This builds children's confidence and self-esteem.

An excellent partnership with parents contributes significantly to the care and development of the children. Relationships with parents are open, friendly and professional. Parents are given clear information about the provision, in the form of a 'parent pack', and a detailed portfolio with copies of the childminder's training certificates, and written policies and procedures is available to parents. Policies include a written complaints procedure which helps parents to know how to express any concerns they may have and includes details of regulatory requirements. This helps parents feel well informed and secure about the environment in which their child is cared for. Children's care, welfare and learning are promoted because the childminder shares information and liaises with parents closely to meet their children's individual and development needs. Detailed dairies, including photographs, outline children's developmental progress. Parents speak very positively about the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is greatly enhanced by the childminder's excellent organisation. Indoor and outdoor space are arranged to maximize play opportunities for children. Children benefit from a childminder who has high regard for the well-being of all children. As a result children are very happy, comfortable and settled in the caring, well-organised environment where their individual needs are met. Children spend their time purposely and can easily access many resources and toys. They participate enthusiastically in planned activities, are confident to initiate their own play, as well as receiving a high level of adult support.

Children's welfare, care and learning is promoted by a comprehensive range of well-organised records, policies and procedures which address each of the National Standards and have a positive impact on children's safety and well-being. Records are stored securely and confidentiality is maintained. Children's records and achievements are openly shared with parents and their views and contributions are highly valued and positively encouraged.

The children's care experience is greatly enhanced by the childminder's enthusiasm and commitment to developing and reviewing her practice through training, and her very caring and professional management of her childminding business. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to improve one aspect of her provision. She has developed her knowledge of current legislation when caring for children with special needs by attending relevant training. This further promotes children's welfare.

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 by 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 outstanding. 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

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