

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	300576
Inspection date	16 July 2007
Inspector	Trudy Scott
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since 1999. She lives with her husband and four children, one of whom is an adult and three aged 13, 11 and nine years. The whole of the ground floor of the house, the upstairs bathroom and basement playroom are used for childminding. A fully enclosed area is available for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years. Currently she cares for seven children at different times during the week. The childminder provides funded nursery education.

The family has a cat, a rabbit, two gerbils, two geckos and assorted fish.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and has achieved a quality assurance award at silver level.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, well maintained environment where the childminder follows effective procedures to reduce the risk of infection. For instance, she shares her policy for sick children with parents, ensuring children with infectious illnesses stay at home until they are well. The childminder teaches children good hygiene practice and encourages them to manage personal hygiene independently, as appropriate for their age and understanding.

The childminder provides nutritious foods that appeal to children, including a variety of fruits and vegetables. Meal times are pleasant, social occasions where children sit together with the childminder and participate in conversations. Even the youngest children are involved as they sit in a high chair, watching and joining in with gestures and happy sounds. Children learn about healthy eating as they talk about the different foods when helping the childminder to prepare snack. She finds out from parents about children's individual needs, such as dietary requirements and special comforters, which ensures children are content and enjoy their play.

Regular physical exercise and opportunities for outdoor play contribute to children's healthy lifestyle. They often play in the garden, weather permitting, and sometimes use umbrellas so that they can go outside in the rain. They develop confidence and control of their bodies as they practice physical skills when exploring the natural world. For example, they balance on logs and climb trees, under the watchful eye of the childminder. Toddlers are active and move freely in the environment, well supported by the close and constant presence of the childminder.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move around freely and explore their surrounding in a safe, child-friendly environment. This is due to the childminder assessing risks and taking action to minimise potential hazards. For instance, toddlers can move from room to room downstairs because of the gates restricting access to the stairs and the basement. The childminder gives children's safety high priority and has in place a detailed health and safety policy covering safety in the home, the garden, the car and on outings. Children learn to keep themselves safe because the childminder makes the most of opportunities to introduce safe practice in everyday play and planned topics. For example, in an 'All about me' topic children learn about road safety and potential dangers when they are out and about, such as dogs and strangers.

Children enjoy a wide variety of safe and suitable toys and play materials. These include games, construction kits, electronic toys, many books and a good range of materials to support creativity, such as clay and paint. Resources are well placed in low level storage where children can see and reach them easily and make choices about their play. The premises are well organised so that children of different ages participate in appropriate activities, with a separate area in the

basement just for the use of children coming after school. This allows older children some privacy, while still being within hearing distance of the childminder.

The childminder has secure understanding of child protection issues. She keeps up to date with current information by attending training and keeps parents well informed of her responsibilities for protecting children. This contributes effectively to safeguarding children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident, happy and totally at ease in the childminder's care. The childminder values what each child has to offer, showing interest in what they do and say by listening, asking questions and interacting in their play. Relationships flourish though many opportunities for children to be together, with toddlers playing contentedly alongside older children. For example, toddlers enjoy making marks with pencils, watching older children making pictures and writing their names, while the childminder engages with them all. Children's early communication skills are well supported as the childminder encourages them to communicate in their own way. All children take part in conversations, the youngest using eye contact, gestures, sounds and words, with older children also speaking in sentences.

A broad range of activities and experiences are provided, suitable for children of different age and ability. These include many outings to local places of interest, such as the animal farm in the park, walks in the woods and trips to the museum. Children are enthusiastic and motivated as they initiate their own play, using the good range of resources available. For instance, toddlers are attracted by brightly coloured beakers and spoons, exploring the sounds they can make, while older children engage in pretend play using the same materials. The childminder knows individual children well and is responsive to their individual needs, which ensures they make progress in all areas of their development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Children enjoy learning because the childminder weaves opportunities into daily routines, for example, emphasising initial letter sounds in words and identifying house numbers on the way to pre-school. Early mathematical skills are further developed by measuring and comparing their heights, counting as they play and solving simple problems when sharing foods at snack time. Children have many opportunities to engage in conversations and are confident speakers and listeners. They use language effectively for many purposes, such as initiating conversations, recalling past events, making their needs known and planning their play. They concentrate and persevere in activities of their own choosing, while the childminder closely observes, knowing when to interact to help them develop and extend their ideas.

The childminder has secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and makes good use of this to plan for children's progress in all six areas of learning. Planning is flexible enough to respond to children's spontaneous activity and is relevant to their own experience. For instance, an 'All about me' topic includes where children live, looking after themselves and their local community. The childminder uses photographs and written observations effectively

to record what children are doing and learning. She uses the information well to plan the next steps in individual children's learning, although, she does not make full use of it to plan further challenge for more able children. Assessment records and information about the children's activities and interests are shared with parents so that they have a clear picture of their children's progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have a strong sense of belonging and are completely at home in the childminder's care. The childminder finds out about children's family backgrounds and talks to them about familiar people and events, helping them feel secure and welcome. Children know they are valued when they see their photographs and art work displayed attractively around the home. For example, the door to the main play room is covered with individual photographs and captions about each child and members of the childminder's family. Children's confidence and self-esteem is increased as the childminder encourages 'I can do' attitudes, telling the children 'We can do anything, you and me'.

Behaviour is good and reflects the high expectations of the childminder. House rules are few in number and clearly identify unacceptable behaviour, such as being hurtful or offensive. These are shared with parents to promote a consistent approach to behaviour management. Children are developing a responsible attitude as they tidy away toys, save items for recycling and show consideration for each other. A wide variety of activities and experiences are provided to help children appreciate different backgrounds and lifestyles. For example, they try their hand at Aboriginal art, take a trip to the canal when looking at life in Italy and examine igloos when visiting the museum. The childminder's equal opportunities policy includes treating children as individuals and respecting diversity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The childminder provides a variety of good quality information about what the children are doing and learning so that parents can share in their children's experiences. Delightful photographs and observations, written policies and regular discussions ensure parents are well informed about the childcare and the nursery education.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time with the childminder because she has secure understanding of child development and uses this knowledge effectively to support their play and learning. All required records are in place, although records of attendance lack detail. The childminder has developed a number of policies that are personal to her setting and reflect her commitment to the children in her care. Policies are shared with parents and contribute to continuity of care for the children. However the childminder has not informed Ofsted of a member of the household reaching 16 years of age and has not secured necessary checks. This is a requirement in regulation.

The way the childminder organises her time and space in the home helps children feel secure and ensures they benefit from the varied range of activities and experiences offered. This contributes to them having the confidence to initiate their own play and learning. The childminder works well with other professionals, such as the network coordinator, to plan the continuing development of the nursery education. She is committed to her professional development and is currently working towards a relevant level three qualification. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the previous inspection, the childminder has produced a number written policies to support the childcare, including health and safety, behaviour management and equal opportunities. These are shared with parents and help keep them well informed about the childcare.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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.

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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):

- ensure Ofsted is informed of changes to members of the household and necessary checks are secured
- include arrival and departure times in records of children's attendance

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop the planning of the next steps in children's learning to increase challenge for more able children.

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