



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	505402
Inspection date	22 November 2006
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 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 2000, although she has previously minded for periods over the last 20 years. She lives with her husband and two of their five children live at home. These children are aged 12 and 13 years old. They live in a house in Leighton Buzzard. All rooms on the ground floor of the property are used for childminding. The bathroom is on the first floor. There is an enclosed garden for outdoor play. The local schools and shops are within walking distance and there are two parks nearby. The family has three cats, two dogs and two guinea pigs as pets. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association, the Bedfordshire Children Come First Childminding Network and the Leighton Buzzard Childminding Group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very clean, warm and welcoming home where they learn the importance of high levels of hygiene and personal care. Exemplary practices are strongly encouraged. The childminder helps children to gain an excellent understanding of hygiene issues and a genuine desire to become increasingly independent in their personal care. Children help themselves to clean towels and flannels in the bathroom every day. They are invited to bring their toothbrush to clean their teeth and hair brushing is also positively encouraged. Children's clear understanding of why they must wash their hands after using the toilet and before handling food substantially reduces the risk of cross contamination. The childminder works to written, detailed, 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 monitors any rare accidental injuries with due care and diligence. The childminder rigorously monitors any signs of unusual infections and keeps helpful reference literature to hand. For example, she keeps leaflets showing how to recognise early indicators of meningitis. Children receive appropriate first aid because the childminder holds and regularly updates a suitable first aid qualification. The childminder stringently implements her clear procedures for the use of disposable gloves when dealing with bodily fluids to prevent the spread of infection.

Children enjoy physical activity specifically according to their individual needs and capabilities. Children of all ages walk everywhere with their childminder because she does not drive. This ensures that children have daily access to fresh air whatever the weather. The childminder recognises that children need to burn off surplus energy after school and ensures that they visit the park on the way home. The children use the swings and slides and frequently devise their own 'assault course', with the childminder assuming the role of 'team leader'. The childminder is careful to explain that exercise is good and helps muscles to grow strong. Younger children play in the garden and regularly attend a mother and toddler club which presents further opportunities to ride and pedal, climb and balance. The childminder ensures that younger children participate in everyday tasks which they would normally enjoy with their parent or carer. For example, she takes the minded children shopping, to the library and to various activities organised by the local childminding network. The childminder organises exciting outings to places such as 'Mead Open Farm' and 'Whipsnade Zoo'.

The childminder works exceptionally hard to promote healthy, sensible eating in accordance with parental wishes and to encourage children to take a real interest in food and nutrition. Although some parents choose to provide their child's meals, the childminder offers healthy, home cooking from fresh ingredients. She provides imaginative, wholesome snacks including dried fruits, fruit and vegetable sticks and actively involves older children in the preparation process. For example, children make their own yoghurt and cucumber dip, make their own fruit smoothies and choose their own fruit from the attractive fresh fruit stand in the dining kitchen. Children are positively encouraged to drink water and genuinely understand the need to replenish their fluid levels in order to stay healthy. The childminder continues to actively extend her

knowledge and understanding of food and nutrition in order to provide accurate information and to present a good role model to the children. She has completed a Healthy Eating course on the internet and is attending a food hygiene course shortly. She displays posters about the main food groups in her kitchen and involves the children in art and craft projects to produce their own posters about healthy eating. The children have a friendly competition to see who can eat more than five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. They enjoy stimulating cookery activities during the school holidays and learn, for example, about the use of 'super foods' to counteract certain ailments.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well protected from harm and neglect because they are cared for by a truly committed childminder who is suitably vetted and has highly relevant and substantial experience, knowledge and continually increasing skills. Children are really well cared for in an exceptionally welcoming, safe and secure home environment. The childminder uses the available space in her home to provide a flexible domestic environment which serves their particular needs. Children can readily access equipment, toys and resources independently and safely. For example, there is a superbly well-stocked art and craft cupboard with a vast range of materials to support children's creative impulses. Older children know that they must play with toys with small parts at the table, so that younger children do not pick up potentially dangerous small parts on the floor. The childminder has a rigorous weekly system for sterilising toys that go into younger child's mouths and larger toys are wiped with anti-bacterial wipes at weekly intervals. This maintains extremely high standards of cleanliness and safety for children.

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 the children and setting safe limits. The childminder demonstrates how she has checked her home thoroughly for potential hazards, by giving all parents a copy of her safety checklist and a copy of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) leaflet, 'Toddling into trouble'. All domestic safety measures are in place, including regularly checked smoke alarms and safety gates to control children's access to various areas of the house. 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 to hold the buggy when out walking and initiates appropriate discussion about such issues as 'Stranger Danger'. She has prepared a topical project for the children on Road Safety, using items and information found on the internet. The childminder safeguards children's welfare and has all of the required policies and documents in place. The childminder carries comprehensive contact details on her person at all times. Excellent practices actively contribute to the safety of children such as, thorough risk assessments, extensive and detailed emergency evacuation procedures and frequently practised fire drills.

Children are very safe with the childminder, who has an exceptionally robust knowledge and understanding of child protection in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. She is currently attending an appropriate training course and keeps informative documentation to which she can refer for guidance at any time.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive here and settle quickly in the friendly, relaxed atmosphere. The childminder has an exceptionally competent understanding of child development rooted in expert knowledge of child development gained from years of childminding experience and her own maternal experience. The childminder takes professional pride in constantly developing and extending her high quality service through attending training courses and working with her local network. She is implementing the 'Birth to three matters' framework with children under three-years-old and is booked on a training course to further her knowledge and expertise in this area.

Consequently, children benefit from a wide range of well-planned activities to support their care, learning and play. For example, during the inspection, a young children laughs with delight as the childminder gently blows bubbles. They gaze with awe and wonder as the bubbles float across the room and reach out to catch them, giggling away as each bubble pops. Photographs show the older children carving a pumpkin and make soup from the contents, because the childminder wants them to learn that pumpkin is a healthy food and not just for cutting up at Halloween. Children learn about the life cycle of the cat when Dribble had her kittens. Children enjoy puzzle sheets and 'colour by numbers' sheets, not realising that the childminder is giving a boost to their early mathematical skills.

The childminder completes sensitive and extraordinarily detailed observations on the children and this supports the provision of flexible, high quality care expertly tailored to each individual child's needs. The childminder skilfully encourages children to make very rapid progress in their development. She has a clear understanding of their abilities and uses this knowledge to sensitively set further challenges in order to promote children's continued progress. For instance, the children enjoy exploring science kits with their childminder, but when one about the functions of the human heart distressed a child, it was put away. When the children recently came from school not knowing why they were buying a poppy for Remembrance Day, the childminder researched the internet and found a book in the library to support the extension of their knowledge. Beautiful poppy pictures made from tissue paper and pipe cleaners now adorn the kitchen walls as a testimony to the children's exploration of this topic. Children develop their social skills as they mix with other childminders and their children. In particular, the childminder makes excellent use of the various activities run by the local network. Children benefit from wider social contact at such activities as coffee mornings, the Christmas Tree festival at church and food tasting at a recent culture day with a Japanese theme.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder is clearly committed to inclusion and undertakes relevant training. Children enjoy an interesting and stimulating range of activities which positively promote their awareness and understanding of cultural diversity and disabilities. For example, in response to the children's questions about a disabled child at school, the childminder encourages them to colour in pictures of people with a range of disabilities. The childminder assembles these into a book which she labels 'We are all different, we are all special'. Children join in, take responsibility and play a productive part in the setting because the childminder values every child by making them feel

special. For example, she devotes her time and attention to the children during minding hours. Children develop a strong sense of belonging because their artistic creations are displayed on the kitchen walls.

Although the childminder has no experience of providing care for children having identified special educational needs, she is well informed and knowledgeable about children's developmental stages. The childminder has attended relevant and recent training courses concerning special needs. Consequently, she feels able to approach parents if she is concerned about children's progress and obtain appropriate support to ensure that they can make progress. She is unreservedly confident to judge how well individual children's needs can be met within existing routines. All children are included in planned activities and have free access to a vast assortment of toys.

Children behave exceptionally well in response to the clear boundaries set by the childminder. She keeps the children busy with purposeful and stimulating activities and uses effective distraction techniques to manage any tantrums or challenging behaviour. The childminder does not compromise her high standards and expectations of conduct and behaviour. Children learn to make choices, take decisions and develop a marked respect for their childminder and each other. They are rewarded with reward certificates and stickers, substantial praise and encouragement.

The childminder ensures that every parent receives a copy of her prospectus, which contains all her written policies and procedures. This ensures that parents are fully informed of the service she offers. She relies upon verbal daily discussion about the service provided to share information about their child's activities and older children make up their own diaries during holiday periods, as a record of what they have done. Parents receive superior support from the childminder who is proactive in seeking any information which may help with the care of the children. She produces a colourful newsletter every two or three months. They write letters of compliment, noting the safe and loving environment, the great care taken to ensure that children have a varied day. Children experience superb outings and special days. Parents value the respect given to children of an older age; appreciating the privacy provided for completing homework and the help and advice given with school work. The childminder has devised a complaints record in line with new requirements and meets the needs of the children through the daily routine as discussed with their parents.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

This highly experienced childminder strives for the best possible standards in practical childcare. She adopts a highly committed and conscientious approach to every aspect of her childminding and is now committed to gaining further qualifications through extended training and professional development. She is constantly seeking ways to improve her skills and is happy to incorporate any suggestions which might further enhance her provision for children and their parents. The childminder uses her maternal experience and her effective organisation to promote highly positive outcomes for children. Children feel very much at home and are comfortable in the well-organised, suitably prepared and inviting family environment. The childminder enriches children's care, learning and play through her constant enthusiasm, interaction and inventiveness.

Children confidently choose activities and participate with eager relish. Children extend their own play and learning in a natural and imaginative way, strongly encouraged by the childminder's expert practice. Her clear use of written procedures and routines which cover all aspects of the national standards effectively supports children's welfare, care and learning and underpins her professional practice. All written parental permissions are in place and documentation is reviewed periodically and changes implemented where appropriate to comply with current guidance. The childminder gives utmost priority to meeting the particular needs of the children in her care. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder was asked to address issues of confidentiality; provide play materials to promote an awareness of disabilities and imaginative play and resolve some outstanding household safety issues. The childminder was able to take immediate action to rectify the matters identified and this has substantially improved children's safety and welfare.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require the provider 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 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