



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY239855
Inspection date	24 July 2006
Inspector	Shami Kumar
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 2003. She lives with her husband and two children aged five and two years. The family live in a house in the village of Crick in Northamptonshire. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house and one front bedroom and bathroom on the first floor are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed rear garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently minding six children, all of whom attend on a part-time basis.

The childminder collects children from the local school and pre-school. She attends the local parents and toddler group and takes children to the local library, shops and the local park.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and hygienic home. They are protected, as the childminder has appropriate cleaning routines in place. For example, using relevant cleaning agents for cleaning and ensuring that nappies are disposed of appropriately. Children learn simple good health and hygiene routines, as they are in a good hand washing routine. For example, they wash their hands after outdoor play, after using the toilet and before eating.

Children's health is supported by the childminder having appropriate systems in place for the administration of medicines and for recording accidents. There are effective measures in place to prevent the spread of infection and the verbal and written sickness policy and procedures ensure that children do not attend when they are ill. The childminder promotes children's health as she keeps a well stocked first aid box and holds a current first aid certificate so is therefore able to take appropriate action in case of an accident. However children's well-being is affected because the childminder does not have written consent from parents for seeking emergency advice or treatment.

Children's health is significantly enhanced because the childminder gives attention to meeting their needs by being aware of their individual routines, likes and dislikes and favourite toys. For example, she ensures that a minded child is able to bring in her own sleeping bag.

Children learn about the benefits of a healthy diet. She encourages children to take regular drinks, particularly in hot weather to ensure they have sufficient fluid intake throughout the day. Children's individual dietary needs are acknowledged and met because the childminder takes account of parents' wishes as she discusses dietary requirements with them. The childminder provides healthy, nutritious meals and snacks for children consisting of fresh fruit and vegetables and taking into account their individual preferences. This helps them to develop good eating habits. Any special dietary requirements or allergies are discussed before care begins and recorded on children's records which ensures parents' wishes are respected and children's needs are met.

Children are involved in a wide range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate outdoor activities, especially during the school holidays. They benefit from being out in the fresh air as they choose from imaginative and creative activities as well as physical play activities outdoors. For example, visits to the park, water fountain park, picnics and physical play in the garden using bikes, the climbing frame and scooters help children develop their physical skills, confidence, co-ordination and body control. The childminder also takes other precautions to protect children from the harmful aspects of the sun such as, ensuring each child has their own sun cream and hat, and appropriate shade for the children to enable them to play in the fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment that is safe and secure with sufficient space to play and relax. Children are able to move around the house and garden freely because the childminder has an understanding of how to keep children safe and secure whilst they are in her care. She is able to identify and take action to minimise potential risks throughout the house and garden. For example, cupboard locks fitted and access to the front and rear of the house is kept secure. Children are always in sight or hearing of the childminder. This means they are able to move around safely and independently which increases their confidence. Children are not fully protected in the event of a fire. This is because, although the fire blanket and smoke alarms are appropriately sited, there is no devised or practised emergency escape plan.

Children play with a range of toys that are safe and appropriate to their developmental needs. There is a suitable range of equipment available to support the needs of babies and older children. Toys and equipment which the children use are checked regularly for safety and hygiene. The children are comfortable in the setting, with space used appropriately for their needs, such as the kitchen table used for meals and craft activities and the lounge for construction or quieter activities. The childminder ensures children understand safe practices when going on outings, for instance reinforcing road safety, using appropriate car seats, and holding onto the buggy.

Children are well protected as the childminder has a relevant understanding of child protection issues and referral procedures and is fully aware of her responsibilities in relation to them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy and secure with the childminder. They settle well because she is attentive and responsive to their needs. They spend their time purposefully and enjoy involvement with a variety of activities. Children initiate much of their play as resources are accessible and therefore promotes their awareness of positive choices and increases their confidence and learning. For example, observed children laughing and giggling and having plenty of fun in the garden using water play and running in and out of the sprinkler. Children learn about the natural world and develop their imagination, investigation and creative skills through activities such as making snow men, role play, baking and planting flowers and watching them grow.

Children have good relationships with each other and communicate well with adults. They respond well to the childminder who gets down to their level, and encourages them to play freely. She extends children's learning and thinking by challenging them appropriately and encouraging them to have fun. This and the childminder's good use of language raise children's levels of self-esteem, confidence and independence. For example, children talk about what they did when they went to the water fountain park, being 'Bob the Builder' and fixing things, splashing in puddles, and how high the water sprinkler is.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop their understanding as the childminder skilfully asks questions to make them think. For example, how high they wanted the sprinkler, how they were going to use the tools to mend the play house, what they were going to use to water the plants. She shows value in what they say and listens carefully and interacts appropriately to support their learning. Children of different ages relate well to each other and enjoy playing and participating in activities which the childminder has planned for them as well as when they have free choice of activities and games which include train sets, puzzles, and construction sets. Children's experiences are significantly enhanced and their social development is further encouraged as they take part in a range of activities out of the home. For example, visiting different parks, and attending pre-school groups on a regular basis.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for by the childminder who works appropriately with parents to meet individual needs and ensure they are included within the setting, so that they are able to follow their normal routines. Children feel a strong sense of belonging as the childminder understands their differing needs, such as, routines and the importance of bringing things from home, such as, a sleeping bag and their own creams and sun hats. Children benefit from being cared for as individuals with their needs being discussed carefully with parents before childminding starts. The Childminder tries to ensure through the written details provided and from her own observations that she is aware of the level of care each child requires.

Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the local community through visits to the park, library, shops and a range of resources. The children chat about what they see when they are on walks or outings in the local area and discuss issues which include visiting the water fountain park and going to the library to borrow books. Children are learning to value diversity as they look at books that are multi-cultural and use toys and resources that reflect positive images of people who are different from themselves. Therefore they develop an understanding of their society as well as the wider world. Children are encouraged to discuss their feelings which helps their confidence and understanding of others.

Children are well behaved as they feel secure and well stimulated. They are well mannered and polite and know what is expected of them. They learn to care for, and respect, each other through the childminder's good role model and effective use of praise and encouragement which develop children's self-esteem. For example, why they need to share, why they shouldn't run indoors and handling toys appropriately. The childminder provides a calm environment and rewards positive behaviour with praise. The methods used to manage unwanted behaviour are appropriate and consistent.

Daily discussions with parents as well as completing daily books of any relevant information ensure they are well informed of their child's routine and day. These exchanges provide opportunities for children to have consistent and secure arrangements and parents to be fully aware of the level of care their child receives. A gradual introduction is offered to new children which helps them settle. A well presented information pack is provided for parents, including some written policies and procedures. This provides a successful base for parents to make informed decisions about their childcare arrangements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children feel at home and at ease in the well organised environment enabling them to confidently initiate and extend their play. The childminder has thought carefully about which areas of her home to use for childminding to ensure children have the space and freedom to play and rest while maintaining privacy. Children are cared for in a homely, comfortable environment where children are able to move around freely and to make choices.

The childminder is experienced and completes relevant training, which helps her improve knowledge and support of childcare practices. Children's welfare is promoted because record keeping systems are generally well maintained.

Effective written policies and procedures are in place which contribute to a good framework being in place to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. Children have very good levels of continuity of care because the childminder regularly shares information with parents through discussion as well as written information.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The recommendations at the last inspection have been addressed. Childminder was asked to ensure that the emergency fire escape plan is practised and to make sure that records include children's date of birth. The childminder ensures that the dates of birth of all the children are recorded on all the necessary documentation which has improved the level of care for the children. The childminder checks the smoke alarms every month and keeps a written record, but as yet, has not practised an emergency escape plan which compromises the safety of the minded children, so a further recommendation has been made.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- devise and practise an emergency escape plan
- ensure that written parental permission is obtained for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

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