



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY262725
Inspection date	22 November 2006
Inspector	Paula Jane Hayhow
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 2002. She lives with two children aged seven and five years in the town of Flitwick, close to Ampthill, in Bedfordshire. The ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden and three parks available for outdoor play. The local schools and shops are within walking distance.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently minding seven children. Of these three are under five years, two of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder cares for four children over five years, of these, three are over eight years and they all attend after school. The childminder attends the local toddler groups. The family has a gold fish and a hamster.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean home. They are well nourished and their health is promoted due to the childminder's very good knowledge and understanding of healthy eating. There are posters relating to healthy eating on the play room wall and the children are encouraged at meal times, through discussions relating to the importance of vitamins and minerals in their diet. The children are offered nutritious meals and snacks which the childminder prepares using a balanced range of fresh ingredients. The childminder actively discourages food with 'E' numbers and limits the use of salt, sugar and fat. At snack time the children cut up their own fruit salad with child sized cutlery and this gives them the opportunity to learn how to peel the fruit themselves thus promoting their independence. The childminder has a photograph record of the daily meal which is displayed for parents and children to view. This enables them to discuss particular likes and dislikes enabling the childminder to provide healthy meals which can be enjoyed by all. The childminder discusses individual dietary requirements with parents and keeps an accurate record of these so that the needs of all children can be met. Children are learning about the importance of personal hygiene through daily routines such as washing their hands before eating, after being to the bathroom and putting their hands over their mouths when coughing.

Children participate in a wide range of physical activities, contributing to their good health. The childminder ensures that there are daily opportunities for outdoor activities, such as walks to school, playing in the garden or park on the slide, climbing frame, swings, trampoline and during the summer months the childminder organises picnics in the park, taking the parachute to play cooperative games such as running under it and ballooning it up into the air. On inclement days the children play indoors and have opportunities to dance and sing moving around the home confidently. These activities help children develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and spatial awareness. The children are able to fully participate in the activities because the childminder has a good knowledge of child development. The children are beginning to understand their own physical needs, for example, they know when they need a drink, snack or a rest. The childminder provides stimulating activities and supports the children well so that they have confidence to try out new skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and generally safe environment. Risks of accidental injury are minimised because the childminder is vigilant and has thought about her work in order to reduce potential hazards, for example, she carries out monthly fire drills ensuring that the older children know who to contact and what they should say thus ensuring they gain a clear understanding and knowledge of what to do in case of fire. The children have opportunity to practise road safety on their regular walks and the childminder has explained the procedure the older children should adopt regarding stranger danger. However, the children have access to the bedrooms upstairs which are not within registration and the fire blanket is not fitted in line

with manufacturer's direction. Whilst the children have never had any accidents regarding these items the childminder is to make these areas safe for children.

Children are cared for in a stimulating, welcoming and child orientated environment. The play room is set up in different activity areas which are regularly changed to add interest and variety. The children use safe resources and equipment and the childminder makes sure that these are stimulating and appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the children. Children are able to independently select activities from a range of good quality toys and equipment. The childminder sensitively supervises the children's choice of toys and activities, ensuring that they are safe and appropriate. The children's welfare is promoted because the childminder has all of the necessary documents in place. She holds a current public liability insurance certificate and has a good understanding of child protection issues and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time with the childminder. She plans stimulating activities and is skilled and knowledgeable in her work. She has an understanding of relevant guidance such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the 'Foundation Curriculum'. She uses these and her knowledge gained from further training courses to provide good quality care and promote children's learning and development in all areas.

Children are very settled. The childminder pays particular attention to all details relating to their individual needs. They are enthusiastic, interested and confident in their choice of activities and move from one activity to another independently. The childminder demonstrates her genuine enjoyment of being with the children and they relate very well to her and to each other. The children are encouraged in building good friendships and relationships with other children through regular visits to other childminders, toddler groups and organised craft sessions. They are given many stimulating opportunities and encouragement to develop their creativity and knowledge such as discussing the length of the worms, deciding on which one was the longest or shortest, recognising shapes such as stars in the play dough and matching jigsaw pieces together. They are naturally inquisitive and enjoy experiences such as exploring the world about them on their walks, discovering slugs, looking out for trains or scrunching in the leaves as they fall from the trees in autumn. Older children enjoying reading and the children are encouraged to write on their own about subjects such as pirates. These activities encourage children to use their initiative, imagination and to explore and experiment in an environment where it is safe to try out new experiences.

The children enjoy an extensive range of activities. These include craft work, books, stories, construction, games, music sessions and visits to the local parks, library, shops and toddler groups. Their understanding of how their community is made up and functions is promoted by activities such as these. They also enjoy visits further a field to places such as farms, the zoo and safari park where they learn about animals and how they are cared for through directly stroking animals like guinea pigs to regularly visiting the aquarium to see how 'Clarissa', an aged fish, is doing. Children are involved in an imaginative variety of activities, for example, topics and projects relating to seasons, collecting leaves, play scenarios such as shopping or learning how to express their feelings through songs and puppets. The childminder uses her

knowledge to bring all areas of learning into the children's play and routines and to make this fun such as singing traditional nursery rhymes and number songs ensuring that all the children can participate and that they spend their time happily and purposefully.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. The childminder ensures that she knows all of the children's individual needs and meets these well. She has a good relationship with the parents, keeping them well informed of their child's progress through daily dialogue, diaries, an informative notice board and a parents' portfolio containing the childminder's working practice and policies. Children's particular needs are discussed with parents in detail at placement time. Any special requirements or information are discussed and consistent communication and information exchange takes place. Any particular needs of children are recognised and met sensitively.

Children are well mannered and show care and affection for each other and the childminder, holding hands on walks, the older children picking up dropped toys for the younger children and through sensitive discussions with the childminder, learning about playing together, sharing and turn-taking. Their behaviour is good and they are confident within the childminder's home, happily making decisions about their play. This is further reinforced by the childminder's good understanding of the importance of setting consistent and appropriate boundaries for all children as documented within the house rules sheet.

The childminder appreciates the importance of providing a range of activities and resources to promote positive images of our society and increase children's understanding of this. The children learn about their local community on routine outings to local parks, shops, library, bank and post office. Children are encouraged to respect and appreciate other cultures and ways of life through discussion, stories and craft work. All children feel valued by the childminder as she encourages them to feel good about themselves through praise and appreciation of kind actions such as including all the children in their play and packing away the toys at the end of the session.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder organises all aspects of her work well, helping the children to feel comfortable, relaxed and at home. They are confident and can therefore initiate their own play and learning. The individual needs of the children are well met by the childminder through her procedures to ensure that she has all relevant information on the children. She regularly discusses and reviews this with the parents. The childminder improves her childminding practice through ongoing training, good use of the internet and regular drop-in visits to see other childminders and professionals in the child care field. This enables her to gain current information, new ways of working increasing her knowledge of supporting the children in her care.

The children's development is well promoted through the childminder's organisation of her day. She ensures that her plans include a balanced range of activities making sure all children are offered a wide range of stimulating activities and opportunities, and that all are able to participate. This is further promoted by the childminder's strong commitment regularly reviewing of her policies and practice. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

The childminder was asked at the previous inspection to ensure that there is a process for obtaining parent's written permission for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

The childminder has obtained parent's written permission for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and does this routinely at the placement time. This measure further improves the children's welfare and health.

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):

- ensure that children cannot access areas out of bounds such as the upstairs' bedrooms and that the fire blanket is fitted in line with the manufacturer's direction.

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