



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY263384
Inspection date	17 November 2006
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
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 is registered to work at the home of her mother who is also a registered childminder, in Dunstable, Bedfordshire. Also resident at this property are the childminder's father and one teenage sibling. The living/dining room and kitchen/breakfast room are used for childminding and there is a ground floor room available for children to have undisturbed rest. Children have access to the fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and, when working with her mother, is currently minding eight children under five during the day on a part-time basis. Journeys to school to take and collect children involve the use of a car. The childminder attends the local toddler group and a number of children's activity groups. The family has two cats as pets.

The childminder has achieved the National Childminding Association 'Quality First' award. She holds the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education 'Level Three Certificate in Childminding Practice'.

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 development is promoted because the childminder has a good understanding of healthy eating. They are offered a wide range of snacks which include fresh fruit and vegetables. This area is further supported as the childminder is currently undertaking additional work in order to achieve the 'Healthy Eating' award, enabling her to ensure that children are offered a well-balanced range of foods and to offer advice to parents on subjects such as weaning. Children's dietary requirements are discussed with parents and clearly recorded. The spread of infection is minimised as there are good hygiene practices, including the use of disposable gloves when changing nappies. Children are beginning to learn about the relevance of good personal hygiene such as why it is important to wash their hands before meals as the childminder discusses this with them. They are given gentle prompts, such as rhymes, to help reinforce their learning in this area. Their independence is generally promoted as they are often involved in setting the table and preparing snacks.

Children participate in a wide variety of physical activities, contributing to the promotion of their good health. There are regular opportunities for outdoor activities, such as using the local parks and playing in the garden with a range of equipment such as ride-on toys, balls, the climbing frame, slides and the trampoline. They also enjoy regular adult-led activities such as music and movement sessions, helping them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills including balance and co-ordination. Children's development with regard to finer skills and movements is promoted as they are encouraged through a range of activities such as craft activities where they learn to hold scissors correctly, or playing with play dough where they roll, cut and manipulate the dough. Younger children's development is promoted because the childminder has a good knowledge of child development. She provides appropriate activities and opportunities for this age group, for example, ensuring that there is space and appropriate equipment for children to develop and practise new skills such as walking.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable and safe environment. Their ongoing safety is given a high priority and the childminder is aware of potential risks and has written clear safety policies, updating these regularly to take account of ongoing building works and extensions to the property. Children are generally able to move around safely and independently, as the childminder has identified possible hazards and taken steps to remove or reduce these, carrying out informal daily safety checks before children arrive. However, their safety is affected as they

are able to access a hose pipe and fencing materials stacked in the garden and an unprotected electrical socket in the lounge.

Children have access to a wide range of toys and equipment. The childminder makes sure that these are stimulating and appropriate for their ages and developmental stages, for example, providing an imaginative range of dressing-up clothes, puzzles for all age groups and a choice of interactive activity centres and mobiles for babies and younger children. Toys and equipment are cleaned and checked regularly to ensure that they are safe and hygienic for children to use.

Children are beginning to build up their knowledge about keeping themselves safe. They talk with the childminder about road safety and regularly practise emergency evacuation procedures. The children's welfare is well promoted because the childminder has a sound knowledge of her responsibilities regarding child protection and has put together a file of useful reference materials to support this area. She also ensures that she has all relevant information and paperwork to enable her to record, report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time with the childminder. They make excellent progress in all areas of their development because the childminder is skilled, knowledgeable and experienced, consistently using these skills to enable her to provide high quality care and promote children's learning in all areas. She has a very good knowledge of relevant guidance such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework, clearly understanding the concept that children's learning and development are promoted through their positive interaction with others and through opportunities to explore the world around them.

Children are very secure and settled due to the childminder's caring attitude, her confidence and her willingness to work with parents to find out the needs of each child and ensure that these are documented and consistently met. Children are enthusiastic about their play and confident in their choice of activities and movement around the home. The childminder demonstrates her genuine enjoyment of being with them and they relate exceptionally well to her and to each other. She has an excellent understanding of child development and a great appreciation of the fact that all children develop differently. This ensures that their individuality is respected and creates a positive atmosphere in the home. All children play exceptionally well together and are very good at sharing and taking turns, enabling them to gain the maximum benefit from the activities and play opportunities and from their time with the childminder.

Children are given time to explore and determine their own play and learning but are very well supported in this because the childminder is skilled in deciding when to intervene with gentle suggestions and prompts. For example, a young child explores the play cars and garage and is joined by another child who uses the garage as a means of support in order to stand. The childminder allows both children time to play and then encourages both to put the cars down the slope. The children follow the path of the cars, copying the childminder and soon realising that the higher up the slope they put them, the faster and further they go.

The childminder has high expectations of the children and balances this well with a practical approach, ensuring that children are set realistic goals and maintaining a positive atmosphere in which they thrive and develop. Activities and daily routines are carefully planned in advance so that all children are offered a balanced range throughout the week. The use of long-term and short-term planning which is cross-referenced to the curriculum for the Foundation Stage ensures that all areas of play and learning are covered. Children's learning is creatively promoted as they follow a range of themes which are changed each month. These have enabled them to gain a greater understanding of topics such as Harvest Festival, Autumn, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas. Their learning is then reinforced through a multitude of activities linked to the themes. These include outdoor play, reading, cooking and a wide range of crafts and construction. Children's learning is further enhanced because the childminder ensures that she is aware of current themes and topics which the children are covering at school, providing linked and supporting activities for the children at home.

Children's needs are consistently met as the childminder continuously reviews her work, adapting it to suit the needs of the children currently attending. For example, the daily routine has been adjusted to ensure that babies and young children have plenty of time to play and establish their relationships. The childminder skilfully uses her knowledge to bring all areas of learning into the children's play and routines and to make this fun. For example, during car journeys children sing and participate in action rhymes. They are offered a stimulating environment in which to play and learn because the childminder pays meticulous attention to the accessibility of toys and resources and to the displaying of children's work and colourful posters. For example, a child proudly points out her collage and then goes to the number chart to point out her age.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individuality is greatly valued and they play an active part in the daily routines, for example, they are encouraged to choose their activities and to say what they would like to do. The childminder gets to know each child and clearly recognises that all develop differently but provides the appropriate resources and environment for all to thrive and achieve their full potential. This is supported by the continuous review of daily work and planning to ensure that it is suited to each child. Children are very confident and have a high self-esteem. They are proud of their achievements and are given appropriate praise and support, for example, a child proudly shows the childminder the puzzles she has completed and is praised for this. She then skips happily back to the table to try another puzzle.

Children's behaviour is excellent and they are very well supported in learning about sharing and turn-taking. They are set realistic, consistent boundaries, helping them learn about negotiating with others and taking responsibility for their behaviour. There are clear ground rules and a 'Home Policy' which is shared with both parents and children so that all are aware of the expectations. This area is further supported because the childminder reinforces positive behaviour and acts as an excellent role model, creating a positive atmosphere within the home. Although there are no children currently attending who have special needs, the childminder has previous experience of working in this area and demonstrates a very good, practical awareness of how to appropriately include all children. Activity plans are always adjusted to

suit the needs of individual children, and the childminder works exceptionally well with her co-childminder so that they are able to provide appropriate support to all children whenever needed.

Children have extensive opportunities to learn about their community and our diverse society. They regularly use local resources such as the toddler group, parks, the nature trail, and the nearby zoo. Their understanding of wider society and other ways of life is promoted through their daily access to an extensive range of resources which give them information and positive images, for example, they use the play kitchen with a range of play foods and cooking utensils from around the world. The childminder also makes excellent use of resources to reinforce children's learning and awareness whilst they play and have fun, for example, they try using chopsticks to eat with and sample different types of rice crackers. This area is further promoted because the childminder has put together a range of information to support her presentation of activities, for example, using a calendar of festivals to inform her long-term activity planning.

Children benefit from the childminder's excellent partnership with parents. New parents are given a comprehensive 'Start-up Pack' containing information about how the childminder works and her policies and procedures, enabling them to feel fully informed and involved. Parents are kept exceptionally well informed about how their children are progressing and developing. The childminder uses daily diaries for each child and records feeds, sleep and activities. Parents are also able to access a wealth of information through the displays and notice boards in the entrance area. These contain information about a broad range of subjects including the daily timetable, monthly themes, health care and nutrition and local places of interest. There is a comprehensive complaints policy which is accessible to all. Parents feedback is actively sought through the use of a readily accessible suggestions and comments book. This positive approach ensures that parents views are valued and high quality care is provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Overall, children's needs are met. Their care is greatly enhanced by the exceptional quality of organisation and the childminder's meticulous attention to detail. Children are very confident in this calm, well-organised environment. They can therefore initiate their own play and learning, assured that the childminder will always be available to play and support them whenever needed. The children's emotional and physical development are very well promoted through the childminder's attention to detail in planning and organising her daily work. This ensures that children are offered a full range of stimulating activities and opportunities and that all are able to participate at an appropriate level.

Children's individual needs are consistently and comfortably met because of the childminder's careful and thoughtful organisation of her home. The ground floor has been organised so that the varying needs of children can be met and they can be offered an extensive range of activities and play opportunities. For example, an older child plays happily with the doll's house and accessories, whilst younger children play safely in the other area with larger equipment and activity centres. Children's needs and their comfort are prioritised because the childminder organises her time exceptionally well. She meets all commitments with regard to collecting

children on time, carefully co-ordinating this with her co-childminder to ensure that children are always offered a good range of activities and play opportunities at these times.

Children's daily welfare and their learning opportunities are consistently promoted because close attention has been paid to ensuring that all details and information are recorded and reviewed regularly. The childminder ensures that all records are accessible but are also stored securely and confidentially. The daily implementation of comprehensive, practical policies and procedures covering all areas of work further enhances the care provided. Children benefit greatly from the childminder's clear vision for the future and her excellent attitude and commitment to attending further training, enabling her to continuously review and develop her practice and provide a high standard of care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At her last inspection, the childminder was asked to ensure that appropriate checks have been completed on all household members. These have now been completed and are clearly recorded, promoting children's welfare. She was asked to look at two safety issues; the water butt now has a fixed lid and the kettle lead has been shortened, improving children's daily safety. She was also asked to obtain written parental permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. This is now in place, further promoting children's health in an emergency situation.

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):

- improve children's safety by ensuring that they are not able to access hazardous items in the garden and the unprotected electrical socket in the living room.

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