

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY264814
Inspection date	19 March 2007
Inspector	Kay Roberts
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 first registered in 2003 and holds a CACHE level 3 in Playwork. She works in partnership with her husband who is also a registered childminder. They are members of the National Childminding Association. There are three children in the family aged four, seven and eight years. They live in a large six bedroom, three storey detached property in Upper Swainswick on the eastern edge of the city of Bath. Minded children have access to all the rooms in the house as appropriate and an extensive garden. The childminder specialises in after school care and organising explorer days in the local countryside where children study nature. Registration is for a maximum of four children under eight years, but when working with another childminder and an assistant the number is increased to 12 children. There are currently 10 school children on roll for after school care.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is suitably promoted. The risk of infection is minimised as parents sign to agree the childminder's policy for excluding children who are ill. Parents are also very aware

that as the childminder focuses on outdoor play, that children need to be in good health in order to participate fully. Children follow hygienic procedures and wash their hands before touching food and using the bathroom. As children are of school age they are independent in reaching the wash hand basin and paper towel dispenser. An apron is worn when children participate in cooking activities. However when children are reluctant to wear an apron, they are able to negotiate a clean t-shirt instead as a good alternative. Children's welfare is suitably promoted in the event of an accident as the childminder is appropriately qualified, has written parental consent to seek advice or treatment in the event of a medical emergency and records full details. However on one occasion a parent has not signed to say they are aware of a child's accident. Parents provide written consent to administer, but on one occasion full details were not recorded.

After school children eat healthy home made bread and jams and healthy eating is encouraged. They are independent in making their own sandwiches and do not go hungry as they are able to help themselves to as much as they can eat. It is a social occasion when all children and childminder sit together, and discuss the activities that are available that day. Fresh fruit is always available and in the summer children pick fruit and vegetables they have planted and nurtured. When out for the day, children have more fun as they have a picnic of bread, cheese, burgers and beans. They toast their own marshmallows over a small fire using a whittled stick and sing 'Doe a deer, a female deer'. Some children taste fresh young nettles and wild garlic. Children do not go thirsty as they are encouraged to take a drink at frequent intervals.

Children have excellent opportunities to be outdoors in the fresh air, both in the garden and on walks through the countryside. They are protected from the elements; in winter they wrap up warm in coats and wellington boots. In summer children play in the shade of the trees. Children develop large muscle skills as they go on lengthy walks up and down hills. They run across fields. Younger children stretch as they climb independently over the wooden stiles. Towards the end of the walk some children begin to tire but are encouraged to continue at their own pace, so that they are pushed to their limits. In the garden children carry scaffold poles and planks of wood to make dens. They then attempt to scramble up an attached net. They dig lengthy trenches which they cover with twigs and at the beginning of the trench build a Roman road using broken roof tiles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

After school children are welcomed into the kitchen where the large dining table is set out for tea. Children have access to many rooms in the property, but at present are primarily located on the ground floor as the childminder has yet to organise other rooms. The ground floor provides more than sufficient space to meet the needs of the children. As well as the kitchen there is a room for play where children confidently help themselves to a range of clean, safe resources, such as construction and table top games. Toys and games are regularly rotated so that children remain interested. There is a large lounge for relaxation with a range of books and which also accommodates a grand piano. Children are able to move freely between in and outdoors. Outdoors children benefit from having access to a large, fully enclosed garden which provides space for physical exercise, relaxation and play. In the summer, shade is created by the mature trees.

Children play in a secure environment and do not leave unnoticed. There is a detailed written procedure in place so that children are only released to authorised adults and are protected from people who have not been vetted. However, the childminder has not yet secured the fire

blanket to the wall in the kitchen and has yet to practise the emergency evacuation procedure in her new house, so children are not fully protected. Overall, the risk of an accident is minimised as the childminder is vigilant and helps children to understand how to protect themselves. On outings, for which there is a safe procedure, children are alert to the dangers of the road, plants, animals and fire. When children follow safety measures the childminder praises their behaviour so that they are likely to repeat their actions in the future. Children are further protected as the childminder has a good understanding of local safeguarding procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder has received many letters of appreciation from children, for example 'thank you for taking us to Charlecombe Valley. It was really good. I liked making the den and finding sticks'. Children remain interested in what is on offer as they are able to select from a wide range of activities on a daily basis, for example, cooking, playing with a range of construction materials, creating dens and planting potatoes. There is an effective planning cycle which takes into consideration children's individual needs and interests. Children are motivated to learn and develop confidence as they are given the opportunity to develop new skills, such as whittling and are praised for their achievements. On walks in the countryside children know what they need to make a fire. Once the fire is prepared children learn how to light the fire by following the childminder's example and guidance. After several attempts they achieve success and proudly announce 'I did it'. They understand that a fire needs air and three children work together to keep the fire alight by counting backwards from three before 'unison blowing'. Children study the flora and fauna and begin to recognise the tracks of different animals, such as deer and rabbits. Children use fine muscle skills as they make their own marks on stones using chalk. They are confident in telling each other stories as they rest amongst the branches of a tree.

After school children show their competence at reading music and develop dexterity as they play the piano. Afterwards children explain that they are also learning the cello. Children have excellent opportunities to learn about the world around them. As they deliver parish magazines, they engage local residents in conversation. They calculate the money each should pay and afterward calculate the total they have collected. On walks there are further opportunities for counting' steps and animals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have a sense of belonging both in the garden and woods knowing that the dens they have created will not be disturbed by others. They develop confidence as the childminder is sensitive to their individual needs. All children are valued and included, for example each child is given an opportunity to tell a story. The childminder is sensitive in meeting children's additional needs so that they are able to participate fully in activities. Children develop a positive attitude to diversity as they meet people in the village and talk about differences between themselves. They learn about the local community and sometimes meet a market gardener. Many excellent opportunities are provided so that children develop a love of nature. They learn about life cycles as they sow a range of crops and watch them grow. Children begin to understand composting and conservation. On nature walks they study the flowers and animals. They are able to distinguish between a cow and a bull and one child commented that the best part of the day was seeing all the flowers and a horse. Children collect flowers and make colourful

cards to give to their mothers on Mothering Sunday. On such outings children develop friendships. At the beginning of the day they are in small groups, but by the end older children are assisting those younger than themselves. They comment that previously they had been wary of other children at school, but after spending the day together, would not be in the future. Children are polite and very well behaved. They follow the rules, recognising that they are for their own safety. One behaviour incident involving two children was discussed with the two parents as a way of finding a resolution, but in future the childminder is aware that records should be confidential.

Children are emotionally secure in the relaxed relationship between the childminder and their parents. Parents comment positively about the provision; 'they keep up to date with courses, provide good feedback and there is always lots of variety' for children. Parents are aware of the childminder's practices as these are discussed at the beginning of each placement when working through an appropriate, fully detailed contract. Verbal updates are provided to parents of children attending after school and a written report of the day is produced for explorer days so parents know what their children have been doing.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder meets the needs of the children for whom she provides. She is appropriately qualified and keen to extend practice and has undertaken a number of training courses since the last inspection. Further training is scheduled for the near future. The childminder also has plans to extend practice by creating an art studio where children will have free access to craft materials and will be able to display their art work. Dedicated to extending opportunities for outdoor play for all children, the childminder is also involved in training other child care professionals about the type of activities they could provide. The childminder employs assistants who are able to contribute specific skills, for example a qualified art teacher. Assistants are clear about their role and responsibilities as they are provided with clear guidelines, which are relevant both in the home and on outings. The childminder provides a welcoming environment for children where they have space for play, relaxation and physical activity. Children like being with the childminder as they are actively occupied at all times and enjoy an excellent range of fun activities which extend their learning. Although registered to provide overnight care, the childminder has not yet offered this facility. Most of the required documentation is in place. The registration and insurance certificates are displayed, and there are suitably detailed child information records and contracts in place.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to meet four recommendations. The childminder has met the requirements of the first recommendation which required the childminder to develop her knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. The childminder has researched the subject and written a document which she would follow if concerns arose. The second recommendation required the childminder to ensure good hygiene practice in relation to hand washing. Children now use paper towels for drying their hands so there is no risk of cross infection. The childminder was asked to ensure that poisonous plants were made inaccessible to the children. Although the plants remain in the garden children are alert to the potential danger and rarely access the section of garden containing the plants, except as an occasional walk way. The childminder was also required to provide a suitable range of toys in order to meet the needs of all children. Additional resources, such as more board games, dressing

up clothes, construction and a dolls house have been purchased so that children have a choice of activities if they wish to play indoors.

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.

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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):

- improve fire safety by securing the fire blanket to the wall in the kitchen and practising the fire drill
- improve documentation by ensuring that all accident and medication records are signed by parents, and that behaviour incidents are confidentially maintained.

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