

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY275922
Inspection date	20 July 2007
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 2004 and gained Quality Assured Childminder status in 2007. She lives with her husband and one son aged six years old. The whole house, except the main bedroom is used for childminding activities. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play and there is a covered outdoor area to the side. The childminder is registered to care for five children under eight years at any one time and is currently minding two children under five years on a regular full-time basis and three school-age children on a flexible part-time basis. The family have two goldfish. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and has achieved the 'Quality First' assurance award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder works to detailed, written, purposeful policies and procedures which she has devised in relation to health, hygiene, medication and illness. The childminder ensures children are well cared for if they have an accident or become ill. Any injured or sick children are given plenty of reassurance and any first aid treatment that is required. She ensures that the children

are warm and comfortable and are given some quiet time. Parents are called as necessary. The childminder rigorously maintains an accident, incident and medication folder, which details all accidents and incidents that happen and records any medication that is given to children. Children receive appropriate first aid because the childminder holds and regularly updates a suitable first aid qualification.

Children are cared for in an exceptionally clean 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 and a real desire to become increasingly independent in their personal care. Children use individually named towels and flannels in the cloakroom. Children are encouraged and reminded to wash their hands after going to the toilet, after playing outside and after touching any animals. Hands are also washed before eating. 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 has clear procedures for the use of disposable gloves when dealing with bodily fluids to prevent the spread of infection. Children are encouraged to cover their faces when coughing and sneezing.

Children enjoy physical activity specifically according to their individual needs and capabilities. Children visit the park on a regular basis where they have the opportunity to climb, run, slide and swing. On fine days the children spend time out in the garden playing with a vast range of equipment including bikes, sit 'n' rides, sand and water. On wet days children can still enjoy fresh air whilst they play under the covered area to the side of the house. The children enjoy outings to Irchester Country Park and Stanwick Lakes, where the children have the opportunity to run around and climb. Indoor activities include visits to Berzerk indoor playground, and in the house children can dance, sing and march with musical instruments.

Children learn about the importance of healthy eating and drinking in this exemplary setting because they are encouraged to take an interest in how food is grown and where it comes from. Children are involved in the planting of vegetables, care for the plants and harvest the produce, which they then have the opportunity to try. For example, the children proudly tell the inspector that they have planted beans in the ground. Children have access to water and milk throughout the day. Water is thoughtfully placed on the table in the dining room, where non verbal children can see it and indicate their wish to have a drink. The childminder conveys positive messages about fluid intake, demonstrated by the children's naming of 'gogo juice'. The childminder works exceptionally hard to promote healthy, sensible eating in accordance with parental wishes. The childminder has a food and drink policy which is discussed with parents. She takes account of parental preferences and as parents currently opt to provide their own food for their children, the childminder does not currently provide any meals other than breakfast and snacks. Children are offered healthy snacks of fresh fruit or dried fruit.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well protected from harm and neglect in this vibrant and safe setting. They are cared for by a highly committed childminder who is suitably vetted and has highly relevant and substantial experience, knowledge and skills. Children are really well cared for in an exceptionally welcoming, safe and secure home environment. For example, the childminder keeps her front door locked with the keys nearby with an additional safety precaution in the form of a door alarm. This lets out an audible signal that the door has been opened or not closed properly. 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 because the childminder has thoughtfully furnished her home with the promotion of children's independence in mind. Children make their choices from boxes on shelving in the toy room.

Toys and equipment are safe, suitable, stimulating and challenging. The childminder checks the toys on a regular basis and any damaged toys are removed from use immediately for disposal or repair. The childminder checks packaging to see what age range the toy is designed for and checks all toys for small parts. Children are only given toys to play with that are suitable for their age. Toys for older children are kept up high, out of the reach of the younger children. The childminder chooses toys that are bright in colour to give visual stimulation and has a variety of plastic and wooden toys for their different tactile qualities. 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. All domestic safety measures are in place, including electrical socket covers, a fire blanket in the kitchen, and several smoke alarms on both levels of the house. 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 informal risk assessments, extensive and detailed emergency evacuation procedures and frequently practised fire drills.

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, children learn how to handle scissors safely, and when out for a walk the children hold their childminder's hand or hold onto the buggy. She talks them through the Green Cross Code each time they cross the road, always using a pedestrian crossing when available. 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 has attended 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 rapidly in the friendly, relaxed family atmosphere where the childminder purposefully puts her continuous training to good use. The childminder has an exceptionally competent understanding of child development rooted in expert knowledge of child development gained from years of life experience and her own maternal experience. The childminder implements her settling-in policy, talking to parents about their child's routine, likes and dislikes, and favourite toys, making the transition from home to her care as stress free as possible. The children have their own laminated place mat with their photograph and their name clearly printed on it. In time, this helps them to develop a sense of belonging and to learn to recognise their own name. Children are evidently very happy and content here, and they spontaneously burst into song whilst playing, treating the inspector to a rendition of 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star'.

The childminder provides exceptional support for children's play and learning. Children are engrossed in a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which enrich their development and overall learning. The childminder earnestly plans activities prior to the children's arrival. Examples include painting, play dough or cooking and these are out ready for when the children arrive. Planned activities include children decorating t-shirts with fabric

pens to make a splendid present for Father's Day and decorating their own picture frames. However, if children then show an interest in something else, she follows the children's lead to further develop their interest. Children ask lots of questions and the childminder encourages their inquisitiveness through careful explanation and further questioning. For example, the children comment upon the noise which suddenly becomes noticeable from the storm outside. She explains that the noise is made by the raindrops on the conservatory roof and the door and the children watch for a while, chatting about the thunder and the wind and putting the lights on inside the house. Photographs show that the childminder makes good use of spontaneous opportunities presented by the weather and children learn to negotiate and resolve disputes effectively. In the Spring snowfall, the children made a snowman together and named their creation 'Harry Peter' as a compromise from the varying suggestions which included 'Peter' and 'Harry Potter'. Children learn more about 'The Seasons' as they explore activities on the CBeebies website.

Children become confident to make choices, decisions, explore and investigate. The majority of toys and equipment are stored at the children's height and the children are free to choose for themselves what they would like to play with. This encourages them to explore and investigate, as they need to look into the boxes to find out what is in them. Children relate exceptionally well to each other, adults and visitors to the setting. They ask after each other and always seem genuinely pleased to see each other. Relationships between the minded children and their childminder are extremely good. During the inspection, the children chat confidently to the inspector and announce that their childminder calls them 'Honey Bun' and 'Princess' because they are all friends. The children pick up pieces of a jigsaw without being asked to do so and place them back in the box on the shelf. Photographs show the children involved in a wide range of activities including observing piglets on a visit to Twin Lakes at Melton Mowbray and hunting for Easter eggs in the forest park.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy an interesting and stimulating range of activities and resources which are highly effective in helping children appreciate and value diversity. For example, the childminder and her minded children attend a local childminding group which arranged a visit to a Chinese restaurant in Rushden to commemorate Chinese New Year. The children tasted a selection of foods, and photographs show them eating mini prawn toasties with 'training chopsticks'. An extensive range of multicultural resources include books which show how children in other countries live and play. The childminder has a wide range of puzzles and toys which complement children's learning about other cultures and traditions and present positive images of disability.

The childminder has some previous experience of caring for children with learning difficulties or disabilities. 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. Her house rules are expressed in positive terms. For the majority of the time the children play well together and learn to share toys. Where appropriate to their age, children are encouraged to contribute towards keeping the setting tidy, safe and hygienic by putting away toys that they have finished playing with, and by helping to clear up any spills they make. They are rewarded with substantial praise and encouragement.

Children are fully supported through a genuine partnership with parents and carers. The childminder is exceptionally mindful of maintaining confidentiality and has devised thoughtful

contingency plans to cover every conceivable eventuality. The childminder conscientiously implements her 'Working with Parents' policy, taking the time to chat to the parents when they drop off and collect their children. Through discussion, she informs them of any observations she has made about their children. The childminder actively seeks out the views of parents and carers via regular questionnaires about her childcare practices. 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 childminder strives for and achieves, the best possible standards in practical childcare. She takes great pride in her status as a childminder, wearing her red polo shirt with business logo during minding hours. This readily identifies her to children and parents when they are out and about. She adopts a highly committed and conscientious approach to every aspect of her childminding and is regularly involved in on-going professional development activities, attending a wealth of interesting training courses and updates. She has set up her own website to promote her childcare activities to current and prospective parents. The childminder demonstrates a clear commitment to continuous improvement through reflective practice. For example, she keeps a log of improvements made since her last inspection. 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 comprehensive, 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. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder was asked to complete an appropriate first aid course and to improve safety within her home. She completed a first aid course in March 2005 to ensure children's welfare in case of medical emergency. The childminder has relocated the existing smoke alarms in her home and has had additional alarms fitted. All wiring is secure. The actions taken have improved the safety of children. Although not mentioned in the previous report, many other issues for improvement were identified by the childminder herself. For example, she has fitted new carpet to the toy room floor to improve children's warmth and comfort. The childminder has improved children's access to toys and equipment by fitting new shelving units to house the resources. She has designed and landscaped the back garden to make it entirely suitable for young children. She has attended many training courses and workshops to extend her knowledge and skills. She has achieved a recognised quality assurance award. As a result of the substantial and continuous improvements made by the childminder, the childminding service offered is now judged to be outstanding.

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 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