

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY286931
Inspection date	16 August 2007
Inspector	Kate Bryan
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 2004. She lives with her husband and children aged 12, 15 and 17 years in the village of Birstall, which is situated to the north of Leicester City. The whole of the ground floor, the bathroom and two front bedrooms on the first floor are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play and the family has a dog.

The childminder is registered to care for six children at any one time and currently has five children under eight on roll, she also cares for children aged over eight years. The childminder works with an assistant.

The childminder takes and collects children from the local school and attends local pre-school and childcare support groups. She also takes children to local parks and libraries and is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well-maintained because they are cared for in a warm, clean environment where routine and effective hygiene practices prevent infection and maintain health. Children know why they must wash their hands and use liquid soap and a clean towel daily which helps to prevent cross-contamination. Clear written procedures for looking after sick children and an exclusion period for contagious diseases means all children's health is well maintained. The childminder works closely with parents to ensure young children's routines for sleeping and eating are maintained.

Children are encouraged to be outdoors regularly and they enjoy a good range of activities which promote their health and development. Frequent trips to the park provide children with many opportunities to use equipment which promotes confidence in their growing physical skills. For example, a climbing frame and swings. An enclosed garden also provides opportunities for children to enjoy hoops, ride on toys and sand and water play. Indoor activities include a dance mat, action songs, music and movement and regular visits to a songs and rhymes group so children have a good range of exercises all year through.

Children develop a good awareness of healthy eating because the childminder uses activities such as shopping and cooking to discuss healthy options with them. Home cooked meals ensure children have a healthy and nutritious diet and menus show an appetising range such as roast chicken and fish pie. Children enjoy snacks of fruit and drinks of milk, water and no sugar juices. Children can help themselves to juice and bottled water is always available so children can take these outside if they wish. This provides children with good opportunities to learn to be responsible for their own needs for fluids.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are looked after in a child-friendly environment where their pictures are displayed and they are encouraged to play together. They can make their own selections from a wide range of quality resources which are easily accessible in the play room. For younger children resources are rotated so that they have a very good variety to stimulate their interest. Older children can make choices about what they would like to play with. Resources are cleaned and checked on a regular basis to ensure that children's safety is well promoted.

The childminder undertakes daily risk assessments to ensure that the environment is safe for children and a good range of measures are in place to support this. For example, socket covers are used for electrical outlets and children are not allowed into the kitchen if cooking is taking place. Appropriate detection and prevention measures for an outbreak of fire are in place and children have practised an emergency escape plan so they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in the event of a fire. Children are encouraged to think about keeping themselves safe when they are outside by discussions about road safety and they wear wrist bands with the childminder's mobile number which further enhances their safety. Children are secure because the childminder ensures she effectively monitors the home and makes it safe for them to explore the environment. For example, children are always within sight or sound of the childminder when they are in the garden.

The childminder has a good awareness of signs of abuse and a written policy states that the welfare of children is of utmost importance. Children are kept safe because she is secure in reporting concerns to the appropriate authorities and this procedure is shared with parents when they visit.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder has a comprehensive understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework which enables her to provide high quality care and learning experiences for the children. For example, every activity has a learning element as well as a fun element. This means if children are enjoying cooking they are also learning about maths, if they are gardening they are learning about science and growing things, if they are using play dough they are observing changes in properties. The children are also encouraged to learn about re-cycling so they develop a very good awareness of, and respect for, the environment. The childminder has a long term plan which clearly details what activities children will undertake to ensure they make excellent progress within the framework. For example, promoting a strong child will be accomplished by encouraging a growing awareness of self and a skilful communicator will be achieved by providing songs, rhymes, stories and the opportunity for children to negotiate choices. This information is shared with parents so they have a comprehensive awareness of how their child's learning will be successfully promoted.

Children enjoy a very wide range of activities which successfully increases their opportunities to learn through play. This is very effectively supported as children are able to choose their own activities in free play and the successful balance between this and adult-led activities ensures they make very good progress. The children have made purses, egg cups, money boxes, bonnets, hama bead pictures, models and have decorated plates and undertaken weaving so their creativity and imagination are extremely well promoted.

Very warm relationships between the childminder and the children successfully promotes their sense of well-being and accomplishment. Children are clearly recognised as individuals and the childminder ensures that their needs are very well met by providing an excellent range of age-appropriate activities. For example, older children have the opportunity to complete their homework, use the computer, watch television and access all the activities available for younger children, such as dressing up, construction and small world play. Young children's needs for comfort are responded to as they can sit on the childminder's knee and look at books with her. This significantly enhances their sense of belonging.

Children are excellent communicators and are very confident to talk to each other and adults. Lots of positive interaction from the childminder and assistant ensure that children feel valued and listened to. Young children have their early communication skills very well supported by face to face dialogues and new words are repeated so they learn to make meaningful connections between sounds and objects. Older children engage in conversations about their interests and achievements. For example, they were delighted to report to the childminder the scores they were amassing in their teams as they played the target game.

Children work extremely well together as they complete models or play games, they have an excellent understanding that rules must be followed in order to make activities work. This means that children of different ages can join in with activities such as the limbo game and ensures they all benefit. The children were also consulted when the play room was designed and their requests for a television and a board for their pictures were actioned. This provided

the children with the opportunity to influence their environment and demonstrates how resourcefully the childminder encourages children to be involved in their learning.

The childminder and her assistant are very enthusiastic about their work and this is demonstrated as they happily respond to children's interests. For example, children asked to play a dice game and this was provided for them. Both the childminder and her assistant obviously enjoy joining in with the children's games, for example, playing the target game, and this lets the children know they are valued and listened to. Very high levels of support allow children to develop their creative and imaginative skills very well in activities such as painting and sticking and gluing which they hugely enjoy. A young child was thoroughly engaged in cutting out and sticking paper, feathers and pipe cleaners onto paper. The childminder suggested she crumple tissue paper to stick and the child was delighted with the effect this made. The childminder provides many opportunities for children to develop their social skills and increase their awareness of the wider world by providing a very good range of trips out which include, the toy library, carer and toddler groups, walks, visits to other childminder's and story time at the library. This effectively promotes children's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's behaviour is effectively managed because the childminder talks to them about what is unacceptable and time out in a 'chill zone' is used so they have the chance to reflect on their actions. The childminder explains to children about sensible house rules, such as no climbing on the furniture, so that they learn to be responsible for their own behaviour. Good behaviour is rewarded with lots of praise and children behave well and care for each other. For example, an older child told a younger child to put her jumper on if she was going outside as she may become cold.

Children's individual needs are well met as the childminder takes all relevant information about them at admission. Parents are spoken with daily about their child's progress and for young children, and for parents who wish it, a daily diary is completed. This is an informative document which details children's progress and contains photos so parents can share in their child's achievements. The childminder has compiled questionnaires for parents to complete which have asked for their opinions about how the service is provided. For example, could anything be improved and are you happy with the way information is shared? In this way parents have good opportunities to have an input into how their children are cared for. However, a complaints log is not maintained which has the potential to impact upon children's safety.

Children are warmly welcomed into the home and are encouraged to learn about their own and other cultures because the childminder works effectively to promote their understanding. An equal opportunity statement underpins the childminder's aim to value all children as individuals, and to support this all children can access all resources. Children have lots of trips out into the local community and festivals are acknowledged so that the children learn to respect differences. The childminder demonstrated by discussion that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities would receive an appropriate service because she would work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure all their needs are met.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children enjoy an excellent range of activities in a well-organised home that is designed to provide considerable opportunities for play and learning. For example, the lounge is used for quiet time and floor play whilst a designated play room ensures children can enjoy activities at the table, reading or watching television. The use of this room allows children to develop good levels of confidence and independence in initiating their own activities as resources are easily accessible. The childminder works with an assistant and good arrangements are in place to ensure that children benefit from this. For example, the assistant offered activities outdoors to children whilst the childminder offered activities indoors.

Children's welfare, learning and care are promoted effectively by the use of comprehensive policies and procedures which are shared with parents when they visit, they also sign to acknowledge they have read these. This ensures that parents are clear about how the service will be provided in children's best interests. Policies include health and safety, behaviour management, equal opportunities and a description of how the childminder complies with all the National Standards. A recommendation has been raised to make sure parents can have access to the complaints record. All required records are in place so that children's needs are met effectively.

The childminder has undertaken a wide range of extra training which confirms her commitment to providing a good quality service to children, these include the introduction to childminding practice course, food hygiene, health and safety, choice, opportunity and inclusion, child protection and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. She is also currently undertaking a diploma in childcare. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice with regard to culture, lifestyle and disabilities. Resources are in place which effectively promote children's awareness of other cultures, lifestyles and disabilities.

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):

- make sure a record of complaints is kept.

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