



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY321110
Inspection date	02 August 2006
Inspector	Christine Pettitt

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 January 2006. She lives with her husband in the Leighton Buzzard area. They have a two bedroomed house close to shops, parks and local schools. The ground floor of the premises which includes a lounge and dining area and a ground floor bathroom, is used for childminding. The patio area in the garden adjacent to the back door is now part of the registration. The family have a pet rabbit and goldfish.

The childminder currently cares for three children, all aged under five years. They attend at varying times each week. The childminder uses the local parent and toddler

groups and attends story sessions at the library with the children. She has a nursery nursing qualification. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and relaxed. They play in a hygienic, well-maintained, homely and calm environment. Children are learning effective hygiene practice as they are routinely supervised to wash their hands after using the toilet, messy play and before having meals. They know they must wash their hands properly to get rid of the germs and sing a song about washing their hands. Children learn through observing the childminder's hygiene practice when changing nappies, wiping the table before and after activities, or meals and her maintenance of the scrupulously clean home. Children's health is monitored by the childminder and parents are advised if their child becomes unwell. A sickness policy informs parents when to keep their child at home if they are ill. Children use their own bedding and towels are washed on a daily basis. These procedures safeguard the health of children. The childminder has the first aid resources to use and has a current first aid certificate. This enables accidents to be managed competently.

Children enjoy their snacks and meals sitting together at the table or in a high chair close to the table. They chat and ask questions as they eat their meals. Parents provide healthy snacks and lunches for their children. Fruit such as apples, bananas, grapes and strawberries are provided for a snack. Children are encouraged to eat their meals and younger children are helped to develop skills towards independence in feeding themselves. They have access to drinks throughout the day as they are in the play area for them to independently help themselves. Drinks are also provided at meal times. Parents provide lunches which can be micro-waved, the childminder uses a food probe to ensure food is at the correct temperature. Children engage in cooking activities and talk about healthy foods and food hygiene, for example, washing hands before preparing food.

Children experience daily outdoor physical exercise as they walk to local parks, toddler groups, library and shops. They delight to use the park play equipment, or play with balls or hoops. Written plans for activities include extending children's physical development, for example, they are take balls to the park to improve their skills in kicking, catching, throwing and bouncing. They use wheeled toys and large play equipment at toddler groups. These experiences promote their coordination skills. Children are learning about their bodies as they look at a book about doctors. They excitedly open the flaps to see the picture of the heart, they know the heart beats and they make the appropriate noise. Children have opportunity for a rest, usually after lunch. They go to sleep in a calm atmosphere with children's music playing softly in the background. If children do not need a sleep they engage in quiet activities with the childminder.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and supportive environment. Safety precautions such as socket covers, stair-gates, and fire-guards are in place. Hazardous materials are in a locked cupboard and the premises are secure. A risk assessment of the premises and the part of the garden used has been carried out. Children are supervised by the childminder conscientiously and constantly. There is a fire safety and evacuation policy. A monthly fire drill is carried out, the children know they should go immediately to the front door with the childminder.

Children are learning about safety through the routine and on outings. They are reminded not to run in the home, to be careful of the step and younger children are helped as they use the toilet. They know they must wipe up water if it is spilt or they might slip. They know they should not open the porch door. When planning trips the childminder plans the safest route to use. They use the crossings and children are learning what it means when the red or green man is displayed. They know to look both ways before crossing the road. A road mat and cars are used in the house to teach children about road safety. On outings children stay close to the childminder holding her hand or on to the buggy.

Children's welfare is promoted by the childminder's understanding of child protection. She is aware of the possible signs of abuse and knows to record and report any concerns. The required booklets are available and the relevant contact numbers are recorded in a list of contacts. She has received some child protection training on the recent pre-registration course.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children's progress is promoted extremely well through their experience of a happy, warm relationship with the childminder and participation in a range of purposeful, stimulating, varied play experiences and outings. This means children flourish in the provision because their emotional needs are sensitively met and therefore this successfully promotes their learning. The daily routine includes child-initiated free play, stories, music and singing, cooking, creative play, group activities, outings and two planned activities each day. There are detailed written plans relating to the 'Birth to three matters,' framework. These include a definition of the activity, the focus point, items needed for the activity, details of the activity, evaluation about whether the focus was met and whether there is a need to extend the activity. The childminder also records each month which of the four 'Birth to three matters' aspects have been completed to ensure the children receive a balanced experience. This means activities are evaluated and used to define children's abilities and identify areas to build on. Children's progress is recorded for parents and includes comments about the child's intellectual, language, social and physical development. The childminder plans to incorporate the Foundation Stage into the plans when the children reach this stage.

Children have many opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding through the inspiring monthly themed activities. For example, they have previously had a theme on colours, this was obviously successful as they know their colours well. A broad range of resources are on offer, they cover various types of play and are appropriate for the children attending. Children have extensive opportunities to explore the environment as they engage in water play, or investigate pasta, cereals or cornflour. They explore the park and collect leaves, flowers or other found materials to make a collage at the childminder's. They visit the shops, the post office to post letters and watch the refuse collectors to follow their current theme of 'transport' and 'people who help us'. A cardboard 'police car' which the children helped to make and delight to sit in is evidence of the current theme.

Children greatly benefit in all areas of their development through the childminder's planning, her thoughtful interaction and vibrant questioning during all activities. Every experience is used to promote the children's learning. Children delight to listen to stories. They are engrossed in the story and look intently at the pictures as the story about an owl family is read with expression by the childminder. Children show sustained interest and listen to a familiar story and know what will happen next, they are asked varied questions as they listen. They excitedly ask the childminder if she will use the puppets when they do singing. They delight to sing while watching the puppets. They are successfully learning the concept of numbers and of subtraction through seeing the visual aids of three ducks and three men in a flying saucer. Children are enthusiastic and are highly involved in a sticking activity, they are given a paper house shape in which to glue pictures of different tools that Bob the Builder might use. They spread the glue over the house and look at each picture, they choose some to stick on the picture. Children are recognising some tools and are able to say what they are used for. They are motivated and ask the childminder questions. The childminder reminds them that the bear used a spanner in the story.

Valuable relationships have been established between the childminder and children. A supportive and caring atmosphere is provided, this means children know they are valued. They are growing in confidence and constantly ask the childminder what she is doing. They are inquisitive and continually ask questions about their observations. Children are given choices which promotes decision making and are encouraged in skills towards independence. Younger children receive continual acknowledgment and are encouraged to join in activities at their level. For example, they are given the house picture, glue and pictures to stick, using the high chair table to do this. They are encouraged to feed themselves and to join in the child initiated play at their level of ability.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are behaving well. They are learning that they must share, take turns and be kind. They willingly help to tidy toys away before snack time and are encouraged to do so by being asked to put specific toys away. They receive enthusiastic praise for helping. Children know if they have been unkind and are encouraged to say sorry and give hugs if they upset another child. Unacceptable behaviour is managed

through explanations and giving suggestions of the correct way to behave. On rare occasions time out may be given for a few minutes away from the situation. Acceptable behaviour is promoted through children receiving praise and encouragement, through redirecting activities, being consistent and firm. An emphasis on providing stimulating and interesting activities tends to minimise potential for misbehaviour. The childminder is aware that her expectations of children's behaviour relate to their age, understanding and well-being at the time.

Effective partnerships with parents have been established through communication. New parents view the childminder's portfolio which includes certificates, photographs, activities and events attended by children and various policies. They receive a pack of information before the arrangement commences. At the initial meetings in-depth discussion takes place regarding the child's individual needs. Ways to settle the children into a new environment are discussed and they settle in gradually and successfully according to their need. Parents receive a daily written account including all aspects of care. A plan of the weekly activities is displayed for parents to view as they enter the lounge. They receive a detailed progress report at least four times a year. A scrap book containing photographs of children engaged in different activities and samples of their art and creative work provide for parents a delightful visual record of their child's childminding experience. References from parents from the childminder's previous nursery employment contain positive comments about the love, care and support their child has received. A trip with the parents, children and childminder to a farm proved to be a successful event and a means of strengthening the partnership with parents.

There is an equal opportunities policy which indicates the childminder's aim is to provide a safe and supportive learning environment. She encourages children to develop a sense of their own identity and offers opportunities to learn about other cultures. There is a selection of resources which reflect other cultures, including books, musical instruments, dressing up clothes and play people. Children are encouraged to try different foods from other cultures every two weeks, they discuss these. Children with special needs are welcome, the childminder is aware of the aspects of care which would need further thought, for example, equipment, adaptation of activities and research into the specific needs of the child. The individual characters, emotional needs and developmental stages of all children are known to the childminder. She uses this knowledge effectively to ensure children's needs are met.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from an organised provision. The play area is arranged to promote floor play space and safety. The range of play equipment is suitable for the ages, interests and developmental stages of the children attending. A selection of play equipment is displayed attractively to encourage children to play with these. They are changed on a daily basis to ensure children have opportunity to participate in different types of play. The routine is consistent and relates to their home environment, this promotes stability for the children. The activities provided are

purposefully used to encourage children's development. Written detailed plans are used to implement this.

The required documentation is in place, is completed regularly and kept securely. There is a portfolio for new parents to view containing some policies, and a pack of information is given to them before the arrangement commences. A programme of the main weekly activities is displayed and parents receive daily records of their child's day. Progress reports and a scrap book containing photographs and samples of children's art work mean parents have vast opportunities to be fully informed of their child's development and childminding experience. The childminder has a planning file which includes leaflets of places to visit, topic webs of themes, cooking and different types of art work ideas. There is a list of relevant contact numbers available. The complaints information does not currently provide for parents the contact number of the regulator. The childminder has attended a fire safety seminar this year. Her commitment to child-care and her professional approach is evident through the significant amount of planning and enthusiastic hard work which takes place to provide a well-organised and stimulating environment for the children. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints 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.
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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):

- enhance information for parents to include the contact number of the regulator

in the complaints information.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk