

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY358882
Inspection date	14 April 2008
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 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 2007 and holds a level 3 childcare qualification. She lives with her husband and two children aged one year and three years, in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding and there are downstairs toilet facilities. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The childminder drives to take and collect children from local schools. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of two children under eight years at any one time. She is currently caring for one child under five on a part-time basis and one child over five years for out of school hours care on a flexible basis. The childminder attends a local toddler group and childminding support group. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very clean home where the childminder takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection. For example, she washes her hands before and after escorting children to the toilet or changing children's nappies. The childminder encourages children to wash their

hands before meals and after using the toilet, explaining that the process eliminates germs. Children learn to sneeze into their arms so as not to cough germs onto their hands. The childminder plans a 'health and hygiene week' where she focuses on the promotion of healthy practices. Children learn appropriate self-care skills because the childminder encourages them to do tasks such as putting on their own coats before going outdoors to play.

Children receive conscientious care if they have an accident or become ill. The childminder controls infection by excluding children who become sick or unwell, implementing her clear written policy. Appropriate documentation is available to record accidents and any medication in accordance with requirements. The childminder holds an appropriate first aid certificate and obtains permission to seek medical advice or treatment so that children receive prompt emergency treatment.

Children take part in regular physical exercise and play. They accompany the childminder on walks in the locality every day. Children can play in the well-equipped garden and she makes good use of the local parks, where children can play on fixed equipment. The childminder regularly takes them to indoor toddler and childminding groups, where children can be suitably active and develop their social skills. Occasional outings are arranged to farm parks and places of interest and photographs show the children enjoying themselves at Wicksteed Park. These activities routinely contribute towards the development and improvement of children's physical skills and agility.

Young children are able to sleep in a travel cot or rest quietly with books, puzzles or short periods of suitably controlled video or television programmes. Children are provided with nutritious, balanced meals and snacks appropriate to their individual needs because the childminder works well with parents to provide a balanced diet in accordance with parental wishes. Menus are displayed for parents' information. Children do not become thirsty because the childminder regularly offers drinks to young children throughout the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children feel welcome in this homely environment which is kept suitably clean and well maintained. Space is used well to ensure that children may play safely under direct supervision at all times. Children can have easy access to the garden through the kitchen door and the childminder provides a good range of outdoor activities for them. An extensive range of toys is provided and these are in a good state of repair and are age-appropriate. Children independently select books, toys and activities from a wide choice stored around the edges of the living room. The childminder has a suitable selection of toys and books which promote positive images of culture and disability.

Children are very safe and well cared for because the childminder gives good priority to safety within her home. Children are able to move around and play freely and independently because the vigilant childminder has thoughtfully identified and minimised all risks. Appropriate domestic safety measures such as safety gates and fire safety equipment are in place. The childminder has devised written policies to secure children's welfare and safety and displays a clear fire evacuation plan on her living room door. Children 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 know that they must not throw toys because they may injure one another.

The childminder positively safeguards children's welfare and has a competent understanding of child protection in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. She keeps appropriate documentation, reference information and contact telephone numbers to ensure children's safety and welfare at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder is an experienced mother and professionally qualified childcare practitioner who develops enhanced levels of learning through purposeful play. She provides a highly child-orientated, home-from-home environment, where children receive lots of attention, affection and cuddles. Children make rapid progress and thoroughly enjoy their time with the childminder who expertly meets the play and development needs of children in her care. She is highly skilled at dividing her time between children of differing ages and maintains a consistently high standard of interaction. She asks lots of open questions to establish children's level of knowledge and understanding and to make children think. For example, she asks 'where do bananas come from?' and confirms that 'potatoes grow under the ground'. Children discuss the fact that some people drink milk from cows and some drink milk from goats. Children develop independence because the childminder encourages children to attempt tasks for themselves. For example, children use a peeler to take the skin off an apple for snack. The childminder talks about what she is doing and gives choices about which bowl each child would like their snack serving in.

Before the placement commences, to ensure that children are happy and settled, the childminder finds out as much as she can about the children's likes and dislikes. Minded children form trusting relationships with this childminder who joins in play and actively promotes learning through play. For example, the childminder sits on the floor to support children's imaginative play with fire engines, cars and trucks. She talks about how far the fire engine ladders can extend and using the hose to put the fire out. She extends young children's vocabulary, encouraging them to imitate new words, praising them for their efforts. Children make their wishes known and the childminder skilfully responds to their needs. For example, the childminder knows that younger children are trying to communicate to the inspector that they have paintings drying on the rotary clothes line in the garden.

Children are involved in a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which support their development and overall learning. For example, the childminder allows the children to decide what to play with from the broad selection of activities set out. When they choose the floor puzzles, the childminder plays alongside them, encouraging the children to identify the jungle animals in the picture and to recall the experience of seeing a kangaroo with a baby in her pouch at a recent zoo farm park visit. Children benefit from the childminder's expert practice as she weaves song and rhyme into the play routine. For example, she begins to sing a song about a crocodile in response to questions about the jungle puzzle. She uses mathematical vocabulary and encourages the children to pick out the bigger or the smaller animals. The childminder makes timely suggestions, offering alternative activities when interest begins to wane. For example, young children browse from one activity to the next. The childminder offers play with musical instruments, puzzles or construction bricks and happily reads books at their request.

The childminder takes the children out of the home to attend a wide variety of different groups where children can mix with other children to develop their social skills through sharing physical activity, music or crafts. Children are happy, settled and content to play because the childminder

is able to devote her time and attention to the children, ensuring that she is able to accommodate their individual needs and preferences. She knows that they enjoy helping her to cook in the kitchen and ensures that they have regular opportunities to participate in cooking activities. Records show that children recognise the shape of cutters and use language to describe which ingredients were heavier or lighter in the scales. They ask what happens to the cake mixture in the oven, commenting that the mixture gets bigger and is not sticky but soft and warm to the touch. The children know that an oven is hot and has to be set to a temperature to cook the cake. They are shown the numbers on the thermostat.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about their community as they visit social groups, walk in the neighbourhood and visit local parks. The childminder welcomes parents into her home so that they can settle their children in and talk at length to the childminder about their children. This results in the childminder being fully informed about the children and enables her to cater effectively for their needs on a day-to-day basis. The childminder continues to extend her resources to support children's awareness of the wider world.

The childminder has some previous experience of caring for children with identified learning difficulties or disabilities. She has a secure knowledge of child development and consequently, she feels able to approach parents if she is worried about children's progress and obtain appropriate support from outside agencies to address the concern. The childminder has experience of working with children who have English as an additional language and is able to give excellent support to these children through her consistently good quality of interaction as she plays with them. The childminder meets children's needs through the daily routine as discussed with their parents.

Children behave very well in response to the childminder's clear boundaries for acceptable behaviour and consistent expectations. She uses facial expression and tone of voice to remind children about positive behaviour and uses distraction techniques effectively with young children. For example, when she wants to put some toys away to clear some floor space, she encourages the children to help her.

Parents and carers receive a comprehensive introductory visit when they consider placing their children with the childminder. She sets up a daily diary sheet for each individual child and this then records attendance, food eaten, activities enjoyed and any other personal information. The childminder ensures that thorough daily dialogue is used effectively to keep parents extremely well informed about their child's activities. The childminder displays her poster for parents with information about how to contact Ofsted, has a suitable complaints procedure and all required parental permissions are in place.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder is quietly confident in her childcare practice, using her warm personality, her professional childcare experience and her life experience as a mother of two young children, to actively promote positive outcomes for children. The childminder is constantly updating her knowledge through contact with other childminders and professionals. She operates with a mixture of clear verbal and written policies and procedures. A suitable attendance record is in place and the childminder ensures that regular visitors to the household are suitably vetted.

She has yet to extend her self-evaluation systems to identify ways in which her childcare practice, records, policies and procedures can be further enhanced in order to raise the quality of provision for children across all outcomes.

The childminder is able to enrich children's care, learning and play through her constant interaction and interest. All of the children receive individual attention at some time during the day and benefit from social interaction with children of varying ages and backgrounds. Children confidently choose activities and the childminder encourages them to extend their experiences. Children's welfare and education is effectively supported through the childminder's clear use of thoughtful routines which cover the National Standards. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration, 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):

- identify ways in which records, policies and procedures can be further enhanced to ensure the continuing welfare, care and learning of children, for example, through self-evaluation.

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