

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY361042
Inspection date	22 April 2008
Inspector	Alison Edwards
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 registered in 2007. She lives in a house on a residential road in a village in the Blaby, a district of Leicestershire with her husband and three children aged one, three and six years. Minded children have use of the ground floor of the house, including the playroom and cloakroom. There is an enclosed rear garden for outdoor play. An aquarium of fish are kept as family pets. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of three children under the age of eight years. There are currently eight children on roll of whom four are under eight years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is extremely well promoted. The childminder gives great priority to ensuring there is a high level of understanding between parents and herself about the optimum arrangements to promote children's well-being. For example, an information pack for prospective parents explains concisely and clearly why the childminder is normally unable to care for children with contagious or infectious conditions. It also explains the reasons for seeking and recording

detailed personal and health information, for requiring precise instructions for medication administration, and for requesting written consent to obtain emergency medical treatment for children.

On a daily basis, excellent routines are in place to encourage children to consistently follow and understand high standards of hygiene. For example, cue cards in the readily accessible cloakroom remind children of the need to flush the lavatory and wash and dry their hands after use to minimise risks of cross-infection. High standards of cleanliness and hygiene are routinely maintained throughout the premises. These are supplemented by specific precautions to minimise risks of infection to children with particular chronic medical conditions, for example, by additional preliminary cleaning of the kitchen and cloakroom waste pipes to reduce or eliminate potentially harmful spores.

An extensive range of stimulating activities and experiences makes a significant contribution to children's physical well-being and development. Children across the age range benefit from outside experiences in the fresh air on a daily basis, for example when using a range of play equipment in the rear garden, visiting local parks, going for walks in the woods, or when walking to school or playgroup. Written information for parents emphasises the importance that the childminder attaches to ensuring that children are well protected and comfortable in a variety of weather conditions, for example by consistent use of hats and agreed creams or lotions in sunny weather, or by use of sturdy boots and outdoor clothing in wet or cold weather. The childminder has a very thorough understanding of how children's physical skills develop. She ensures children are actively encouraged to extend their movement and coordination abilities by carefully observing their current stage of development and identifying and providing a stimulating range of activities to build on these.

Children are extremely well nourished because they enjoy high quality meals and snacks which consistently include a wide range of nutritious ingredients. For example, toddlers willingly make healthy choices of food when offered a very appetising selection of cheeses, pasta, bread, celery, cucumber, carrot sticks and grapes for lunch. Menus are planned in advance and shared with parents, with home cooked main meals including varied and well balanced dishes, such as, tuna steak with brown rice and peas, beans and sweetcorn followed by fresh fruit salad. The childminder is extremely careful to ensure that foods and drinks provided to children are prepared and served in strict accordance with any identified dietary needs, for example, those associated with specific chronic medical conditions. She provides extremely clear written guidance to prospective parents who choose to provide meals and snacks for their own children in order to ensure that these are consistently healthy and nutritious.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an extremely welcoming and well organised family home, thus promoting their safety, independence and well-being. On arrival they independently put their outdoor clothes on low, labelled pegs in the front hall, so helping them feel recognised as individuals. The dedicated playroom is organised very well to offer interesting and stimulating play activities. For example, children enjoy pairing and trying on a variety of shoes and slippers in a pretend shoe shop set up with a cash desk and a unbreakable mirror. From a young age they are actively encouraged to safely and independently extend their play. For example, within the playroom, a further selection of very well-chosen high quality playthings, such as, construction sets, inset puzzles or small world toys are accessibly stored in low wall units identified with coloured pictures of their contents. Children are therefore make purposeful and independent choices

within their play. From a young age, children safely and confidently move throughout the ground floor of the premises where they consistently remain within the childminder's sight or hearing, so ensuring they are always well supervised. For example, whilst the childminder plays with two other children nearby, she remains aware of a young toddler using the lounge who independently selects a photograph album of himself and his family from low bookshelves and seats himself comfortably on the sofa to look at it quietly.

The childminder has taken exceptional care in drawing up a comprehensive safety policy, which is specific to her setting and this is shared with parents. Consequently, this underpins extremely effective safety practices. For example, the parents' pack contains a clear and concise summary of the procedures to be followed in the event of emergencies, such as, a major power loss, serious accident or a lost or uncollected child. This helps to reassure parents that the childminder has given careful forethought to how to act in children's best interests in any such circumstances. Comprehensive measures are in place to promote children's safety and independence across the age range. For example, precautions, such as, key operated window locks, electrical socket covers and cupboard safety catches minimise risks to all children. In addition, the childminder takes special measures to take account of children's varying developmental stage and maturity when caring for children of varying ages. These include use of an additional extending safety gate to provide defined play areas where older children can purposefully use items, such as, small construction pieces, without posing any risk to younger children. Children are kept safe in the car because the childminder is aware of, and implements, the latest legislation regarding seatbelts and car seats. They actively learn to keep themselves safe because the childminder involves them in a range of thought provoking activities and discussion to help build their awareness and understanding. For example, a village quiz and treasure hunt designed by the childminder for her minded children includes questions about the meaning of the yellow and black symbol on the perimeter of the electrical sub-station near the school.

The childminder has a high level of awareness of child protection issues, such as a range of possible indicators of abuse. She has established very careful practises to minimise risks to children whilst in her care. For example, she checks the identity of any unknown caller to the premises, seeks photographic confirmation of the identity of any adult authorised by parents to collect children, and ensures children are constantly within her sight or hearing. She ensures parents have a very clear understanding of her responsibilities for ensuring children's welfare is safeguarded by explaining locally and nationally agreed procedures in the written information pack which is given to all prospective parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in this very caring and well-organised setting because the childminder gives great priority to ensuring their individual care and learning needs are met effectively. Younger children are extremely confident and relaxed because the childminder takes careful account of their individual care routines and actively encourages them to make links between their experiences at home and with her. For example, she seeks information from parents about preferred names, settling routines and sleep patterns and incorporates these into her practices with children. She makes imaginative use of items, such as, photographs of family members, pets or home experiences and provides much useful information about children's experiences with her, so actively promoting meaningful links between different aspects of children's life.

The childminder has a very thorough understanding of child development and of current national guidance, such as, the 'Birth to three matters' framework and is experienced in working with

young children in home and group settings. She is very confident in using this understanding and experience to make frequent, systematic and objective observations of children's current stage across all areas of development and in using these assessments to identify the next steps in children's progress and to plan activities and experiences to support these effectively. This supports the provision of flexible, high quality care, expertly tailored to each individual child's needs.

Children show high levels of interest, independence and engagement in their activities. For example, a young toddler shows purposeful concentration when choosing to look at a small photograph album of family members and events. Children are encouraged to use spoken language to express their ideas and predictions, for example when anticipating what might be inside a surprise package, and when comparing ways in which the white packing materials are similar or different to snow. The childminder confidently makes use of spontaneous learning opportunities to extend children's understanding of mathematics, for example when comparing the numbers and shapes of items, such as, grapes, cucumber sticks and cheese cubes at lunch time. From an early age, children are actively encouraged to explore and investigate the properties of different substances and materials. They show enthusiasm and concentration when exploring a wide variety of natural and manufactured items in well presented treasure baskets, for example as they pop bubble wrap, manipulate a small metal kitchen whisk, or explore the textures of a wooden and bristle nail brush. They show excitement and care when exploring the natural world, as when they find mini-beasts in the garden and examine them under a magnifying glass. They develop an understanding of their local environment as they are encouraged to observe and think about features of their village when participating in a well designed treasure hunt.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder prioritises developing very strong communication with parents. She values their knowledge and expertise about their own children, provides them with excellent information about her services and works with them to track children's development and identify ways to support their progress. For example, she seeks detailed guidance from parents about children's identified health needs and preferred care routines. Sensitive and thoughtful measures encourage younger children to settle readily and make links between their experiences. For example, the childminder encourages parents to provide photographs of family members and experiences for children to look at and talk about when with her. A very helpful information pack gives clear information to prospective parents about the arrangements for their children's care. In addition to informal daily discussion, the childminder provides regular observations and assessments of children's activities and progress and encourages regular meetings to review care arrangements and share ideas on further ways to support children's development.

Children are respected and treated as individuals because the childminder is very careful to seek detailed information from children and their parents about specific health and dietary needs, and about individual preferences and dislikes. She takes account of children's ideas and views in her dealings with them, for example, using their preferred name and offering them choices between a range of healthy options at lunch time. From a very early age, children are actively encouraged to recognise and respect individual and cultural diversity. Pictures in different areas of the premises show positive images of people with different ages, skin tones and clothing. Books and play materials within the home are actively chosen to reflect aspects of different abilities or lifestyles, such as, play figures with mobility aids or Chinese play food and cooking utensils. These are regularly supplemented by use of additional toy library resources

reflecting diversity. The childminder has an extremely positive attitude to diversity and to the provision of care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. She has undertaken training to increase her understanding and skills in this area and has links with local agencies active in this area.

Children are actively encouraged to understand each other's feelings and to manage their own behaviour. The childminder involves children in establishing simple and positive guidelines to keep everyone safe and happy, and to minimise harm and damage, such as, listening to each other, being kind and keeping running, jumping and shouting for outside. Consequently, children develop a mature understanding of right and wrong, and of how their behaviour impacts on others. From an early age, toddlers are encouraged to show care for themselves and their environment, for example by washing their own hands before meals, by helping to sweep up packing materials after playing with a surprise box, or by watering seeds which they have planted.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Exceptional organisation significantly enhances children's care. Although the childminder has only been registered for a relatively short time, she makes excellent use of a relevant Level 3 early years qualification and previous experience as a nanny and in nursery care to offer a highly professional standard of care. She is pro active in extending her existing knowledge and skills through ongoing training, for example, through attendance at accredited training on aspects of disability. Very comprehensive and clear policies and procedures are extremely effective in underpinning arrangements for children's care, so promoting their health, safety, development and learning and their overall ability to make a positive contribution. Required records are meticulously kept and purposefully used in order to ensure children's individual needs are met. For example, the childminder carries written parental consent for emergency medical treatment with her when she is outside the home, so ensuring that any sudden serious illness or accident could be promptly dealt with in children's best interests. She is pro active in seeking clear, factual and updated information and advice from parents and other professionals regarding children's chronic health conditions, so ensuring she is able to work in the best possible way to support children's individual needs. Children's development and learning is enhanced because the childminder systematically observes and assesses their progress across all developmental areas and uses this information to plan and provide a stimulating range of activities and experiences to promote the next steps in their development. 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 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