

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** EY360675  
**Inspection date** 22 May 2008  
**Inspector** Caroline Wright

**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](http://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. She lives with her husband and three children aged nine and 11 years, and eight months old in a village near Cambridge. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding, with upstairs for sleeping and using the bathroom, and there is fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time. She is currently minding six children on part-time basis. She walks to local schools to take and collect children and she attends the local parent and toddler group. The family has no pets.

The childminder supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. She is member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA) and attends the local childminding group. The childminder holds a Level 3 early years qualification and uses the Montessori approach to help children to learn and develop new skills.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a suitable range of activities that contribute to their good health. They take part in outdoor activities regularly to help them to enjoy the benefits of fresh air and exercise and learn to lead a healthy lifestyle. For example, the childminder walks to the local school with babies in the buggy and older children play outside in the garden so that they get plenty of fresh air. The childminder encourages children to take part in suitable activities according to their individual stage of development. Babies use small equipment such as wooden sorting blocks and learn to press buttons on 'cause and effect' toys to develop their manipulative skills. 'Treasure baskets' with natural materials for heuristic play enable them to learn about everyday materials as they play.

Children benefit from the childminder's very good knowledge and understanding of healthy eating. They are encouraged to eat fresh fruit for snacks and she makes sure that babies are offered drinks of water or given a bottle feed when they need them to help them to remain well-hydrated and stay healthy. In addition, the childminder works closely with parents regarding babies' individual feeding routines and the kind of foods they are being 'weaned' on to, so that they are well fed and their dietary needs are well met. The childminder has plans to increase the range of activities she provides to help children to develop their understanding of staying healthy through play based activities. For example, the childminder plans to develop a 'square foot' garden to enable children to grow vegetables for their meals in the future. Older children make fruit salads for their tea to learn about healthy eating and help themselves to drinks of water from the water dispenser in the kitchen so that they remain well-hydrated to promote their ongoing good health.

Babies are protected from cross-infection by good procedures for nappy changing and the preparation of food and snacks. The childminder cleans baby toys regularly and makes sure that all areas of the home are clean so that children stay healthy. If the children have an accident or become poorly whilst they are in the care of the childminder, the necessary records are maintained to make sure they receive the right treatment.

### Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an extremely safe environment where all risks are minimised and they move around safely and independently under the childminder's constant supervision. The childminder is highly proactive in seeking guidance on promoting children's safety. As a result, she has developed a very effective risk assessment document to support the daily procedure for checking that the home and garden are safe. In addition, the childminder expertly helps children to learn to keep themselves safe by discussing relevant safety issues with them. A recently developed 'sun smart' policy helps children to be well-informed about the dangers of overexposure to the sun and helps them to keep themselves safe in the future.

Children select their own activities and resources from clearly labelled storage boxes as well as access to Montessori style toys and equipment on the low-level shelving. Toys with small parts or those which can be dangerous, such as scissors, are stored out of reach of younger children. All of the toys and equipment that children use are rigorously checked by the childminder to ensure they are all in perfect condition and safe. Children's overall welfare is extremely

well-maintained by effective procedures that actively promote their safety. For example, the childminder has put in place a child protection policy and has excellent understanding of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures for dealing with any concerns for children's well-being.

Children's safety on outings is exceptionally well-promoted. The childminder takes essential information with her when she is on outings or walks with children, to alert the emergency services in the event of an accident. This includes details of children with allergies or existing illnesses, and contact telephone numbers of minded children's parents

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the childminder's house and form very strong relationships with each other and the childminder. Their learning and development is encouraged in an excellent range of interesting and meaningful ways. For example, older children enthusiastically paint pictures to explore colour and learn as much as they can about the texture of paint. Children always have free access to a good selection of stimulating drawing and colouring materials so that they can make marks and learn to communicate their ideas through pictures and early writing. They develop their imagination through role play, dressing up and telling their own stories. Their own efforts in artwork are consistently valued and displayed attractively on the walls in the playroom for others to see and enjoy, promoting children's confidence and developing positive self-esteem.

Children eagerly pursue their own interests and their independence is actively promoted. The childminder prepares an extensive range of stimulating toys and exciting activities for older children in the kitchen area before they arrive and they are easily accessible to the children so that they can easily choose what they want to play with. Heuristic 'treasure baskets' and other interesting toys are set out in the sitting room area for babies to support their exploration and learning. The childminder puts toys for babies within their reach, with others a short distance away, to encourage them to move around the room whilst encouraging them to pursue their own interests.

Babies form excellent relationships with each other, as they play together and learn to share resources. The childminder enthusiastically responds to babies' 'babbling' with encouraging smiles and comments, to help them to become confident communicators. Relaxing music and the singing of familiar songs helps them to feel secure and develop in confidence. Interesting activities such as exploring jelly and pasta, enable babies to learn about texture as they play. Children of all ages enjoy sharing stories and looking at books. The childminder uses her excellent knowledge and understanding of how children and babies learn to encourage them to make comments and develop their language skills.

The childminder records daily observations of children's progress and achievements and uses these to inform the planning of activities for the future.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

All children have equal opportunities to access a wide range of interesting activities and resources and are very confident and independent. They play with a diverse assortment of resources and role play equipment that represent all members of society and learn about the world they live

in. They engage in interesting activities to celebrate a wide range of cultural and religious festivals to help them to develop positive attitudes towards diversity.

Children under three years have extremely high levels of self-esteem and they form excellent relationships with the childminder and other children. The childminder listens enthusiastically to their attempts to communicate and responds with animated smiles and encouraging comments. Close contact with the childminder and consistent attention to their individual needs makes them feel secure and valued.

Older children behave very well and understand what is expected of them. They learn through purposeful routines and consistent expectations. For example, they always sit at the table to eat meals and wash their hands before eating. The childminder sensitively explains what she expects them to do in a way that they can understand and she listens patiently to their views so that they feel respected and acknowledged. In addition, the childminder encourages children to tell her about the activities that they like best and they are asked for their comments about the childminding provision so that she can take account of their opinions and make any changes that might be necessary. Those children who are able to, write their comments on 'evaluation' sheets that the childminder provides whilst younger children draw their favourite activities and the childminder acts as a 'scribe' so that they are able to be fully involved in the feedback process. They say that they enjoy 'cooking, making and playing with dough and 'brigs'.

Children benefit from highly effective relationships between the childminder and their parents and carers. Their individual progress is discussed daily with their parents so that their changing needs continue to be met. Clear information regarding activities that the children take part in and daily updates of their achievements enables parents to share their children's progress and helps children to move confidently between home and the childminder. The childminder works closely with parents and carers of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as those who speak English as an additional language to help them to build on what they already know and to become confident communicators. A very good system is in place to enable parents to comment on the care their children receive, as a complements and concerns book is available in the entrance area and a clear written procedure provides the necessary information for them to make a complaint if they need to. As a result, children's individual needs are very well met.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The very good organisation of the childminding promotes positive outcomes for children. Children are welcomed into a relaxed and comfortable environment and leave their parents with confidence. The organisation of the play space and resources promotes children's independence and enables them to pursue their own interests. Toys and equipment are ready for when the children arrive each morning to encourage them to leave their parents easily and settle into their play. The play areas are divided into age groups to further promote children's safety. Children choose for themselves from the varied resources that are provided by the childminder. There is enough space for them to play indoors and out, and toys and equipment are well-organised.

The childminder is very experienced and has a very good knowledge and understanding of child development. The childminder is committed to her own professional development, as she holds a Level 3 qualification in early years, and attends relevant training courses, such as Child Protection and Early Years Foundation Stage, to enable her to reflect upon her practice and provide good quality care to children.

All of the essential documents are in place and the vast majority are extremely well-organised. Up to date records about individual children's needs, contributes to the health and safety of all of the children that the childminder looks after. However, the register of attendance does not always reflect the number of children present during the day and this has the potential to impact upon children's safety in the event of an emergency.

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 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):

- continue to develop existing plans for practical activities to provide children with opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of healthy eating through play based experiences
- make sure the daily record of attendance accurately reflects the number of children present at all times.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)