Ofsted
raising standards
improving lives

Excellent partnerships with parents and carers helping children to thrive and flourish

URN: 510228
Local authority: West Berkshire
Date published: 3 July 2013
Reference: 130172

Brief description

The childminder develops excellent partnerships with parents and carers that focus firmly on supporting children's wellbeing, learning and development. This gives each child a firm foundation for their future achievement. This example is one of a set of 10 that have been published to support the survey report: *Getting it right first time.*

Overview – the provider's message

'Parents are the central adults in their child's life and the ones who make decisions on their behalf. It is very important for the children that we work in partnership with each other. This gives children the continuity of care and ensures that they do not become confused with different standards of behaviour and boundaries. I have excellent working relationships with parents and carers that are open and honest. As a result, the children thrive and flourish here, at home and anywhere else they go.'

The good practice in detail

This accredited childminder establishes very good communication with parents and carers from the start of the placement. Following her inspection of September 2011, the inspector reported, 'Meticulous attention to detail within policies and procedures thoroughly underpins children's well-being, good health and safety.'

Parents are given a comprehensive information pack about the childminder's service. The childminder believes the level of detail within policies and procedures lays a good foundation for effective partnerships as parents are fully aware of all aspects of the care she provides.

Settling in is tailored to the child's individual needs. 'I have no hard and fast rules about the settling in period. Flexibility is key. I ensure that parents feel reassured because if parents are happy then the children are happy,' says the childminder. She invites the parents and carers to bring their child along to see what is on offer and a child can have as many settling in visits as they want, with or without their parent. During these visits, the childminder finds out from the child and the parent their likes, dislikes, their stage of development and

interests. The childminder asks parents to text, phone or join the children for lunch so that they can be reassured that their child is settled and secure. One parent said; 'The length of the settling-in sessions were left to our discretion to ensure we felt completely at ease with the whole process. It was personalised, family-centred, thorough and friendly.'

The childminder actively engages parents and carers in every stage of their child's learning and development. This ensures a consistent approach to meeting the child's learning and care needs. She uses daily diaries and verbal feedback to ensure that each parent is fully informed of their child's day, and this two-way communication informs her planning. She completes comprehensive learning journeys which include her observations and assessments of the child, and details of how these are used to plan for the next steps in the child's learning and development. Children's learning journeys are comprehensive and include observations and assessments of the child, which the childminder uses to plan for the next steps in children's development. Parents and carers contribute to their child's learning journey and regularly take these special books home. Comments from parents include; 'It's all so well written, I almost feel as though I was there with her.'

The childminder is skilled in building on children's interests and provides an exciting range of stimulating activities, targeted on the needs of individuals and groups of children. For example, she successfully engages boys in their learning when they attend 'Superhero skills school.' Here, they access curriculum areas, such as early literacy through physical activities, so that they are strengthening their muscles during games which help them to recognise where different letters, for example, in the superhero's name.

The childminder uses a 'wow' board to celebrate children's achievements. This builds children's pride in their accomplishments, and fosters self-esteem well. Examples include: achievements observed by parents in the home. The 'Wow' moments are shared in the setting and used to inform children's next steps.

The childminder has developed a range of useful resources for parents to support their child's development at home, which further enhances a consistent approach to meeting the child's care and learning needs. She has leaflets to encourage children's self-help skills, including; 'I want to learn how to dress myself'; 'Let's wash our hands together'; and 'Let's all reduce, reuse and recycle'. These are supported by a selection of games designed for children and parents to play and learn together at home.

The childminder is committed to the continuous improvement of her practice through professional development and reflection on the impact of her work. 'I regularly look at all

aspects of my daily practice to consider and implement new ways to develop my best practice to ensure the best learning and positive experiences for children,' says the childminder. This includes seeking regular feedback from parents through questionnaires, daily diaries, face-to-face exchanges of information, texts and email. Feedback from parents is valued and used to adapt and enhance the childminder's practice. For example, in 2011, as a direct result of working in partnership with parents to meet the individual needs of each child, the childminder accessed a signing course to support children's developing communication skills, particularly those of babies and children at risk of speech delay.

'Communication and flexibility are key,' says the childminder. The excellent partnership with parents and carers contributes to her outstanding practice and as a result children are making excellent progress in their learning and development.

Provider background

The childminder lives in Calcot, near Reading and was registered in 1995. The provision was judged to be outstanding at the last Ofsted inspection.

Other examples published in this set

Blagdon Nursery School and Children's Centre
Boldon Nursery School
Garstang Pre-school and Nursery
Highters Heath Nursery School
Southwater Village Hall Pre-school
Newstead Children's Centre
Our Lady Star of the Sea Nursery
Witton Gilbert Nursery
Wheatley Hill Community Nursery

Are you thinking of putting these ideas into practice; or already doing something similar that could help other providers; or just interested? We'd welcome your views and ideas. Get in touch here.

To view other good practice examples, go to:
www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/goodpractice