



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	100945
Inspection date	30 November 2006
Inspector	Angela Cole
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 1999. She regularly works alongside one registered childminder and three assistants and is the senior childminder. The three-bedroom, semi-detached property is located in the residential area of Northway on the outskirts of Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire. The principal childminder lives at the premises with her husband and one teenage child. The whole of the house is available with a playroom dedicated to the childminding. Upstairs bedrooms are available for sleeping. Children have access to an enclosed rear garden with patio and grassed areas.

The childminder is registered to care for six children at any one time. She is currently minding

18 children under five years who attend on a full and part-time basis, and five children over five years before and after school. The childminder also cares for children over eight years of

age and offers holiday care. She takes children on visits to places of interest in the area. There are play parks, shops and a library within the locality. The setting provides a drop-off and collection service from playgroups and schools.

The childminder holds a relevant childcare qualification and has completed the National Vocational Qualification in Childcare and Education at Level 3. She is an accredited member of the Tewkesbury Childminding Network and is currently in receipt of funding for early education for three children. She is a member of the National Childminding Association and the setting is currently working towards the Bristol Standards Quality Assurance Award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and well-maintained family home. They independently access suitable ground-floor toilet and handwashing facilities so they learn the importance of personal hygiene. Children's general health is fostered through an effective system for giving first aid and recording accidents. However, some medical consent forms do not state the specific condition for which the medication should be administered. Children are protected from the spread of infection through the childminder's clear sickness policy which she shares with parents.

There is a secure, rear garden where children may play with equipment, including smaller balls and a hopscotch mat. Three- and four-year-olds go outside regularly, for example, to chalk stars which they use to find their own space to play jumping and balancing games. Babies go out more frequently in the summer whilst older children have appropriate opportunities for exercise and fresh air on daily outings to and from schools. Pre-school children regularly go on walks around the neighbourhood and visit play parks with challenging, large equipment.

Children are, overall, encouraged to eat healthily. Their parents provide their meals and snacks and the childminder works with the families to ensure children eat a suitable selection of foods. After school, children are offered a wide selection of fruits, plain biscuits and, usually, white-bread toast. Children occasionally help to prepare foods as treats, such as healthy pizza or iced cakes with sweets. The foods comply with the children's dietary needs so they remain healthy. Children begin to learn the importance of taking regular drinks as a way to maintain their health. Parents send water or juice which the childminder dilutes and makes accessible to babies and older children throughout the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are safe because the childminder identifies and minimises risks in the house and garden and on outings. For example, household chemicals are stored out of children's reach and a safety gate restricts children's access to the stairs. This means that the children move around safely and independently when indoor or outdoors. The childminder and her co-workers carefully monitor the access points to ensure that children do not leave the premises

unsupervised. The adults make sure that sleeping children are checked regularly to safeguard their well-being.

The children play with toys and equipment that are well maintained and in good condition. Their choices are monitored to make sure their toys are appropriate for their age and stage of development. Children are learning to take responsibility for their own safety. They practise leaving the house in an emergency with adults who have assigned responsibilities. They hear reminders about how to sit and move around the home safely and discuss the reasons for using knives carefully and keeping lit candles upright. They learn how to keep themselves safe away from the house and tell each other to 'listen and look' as they cross a road.

The childminder safeguards and promote children's welfare and has all the required procedures in place. She holds a current first aid certificate and has attended detailed, relevant training to develop her understanding of how to protect children and respond appropriately to any child protection concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies and children enjoy their play with the childminder. They gain confidence and enthusiastically engage in the activities they choose from the broad range of adult and child-initiated activities offered. They interact well through communication that is well supported by the childminder who listens and talks with the children about their play. She responds to their interests so they are encouraged to continue to play and develop. Babies receive good stimulation from regularly rotated experiences that include sensory resources such as paint, dough, wooden toys and treasure baskets. They explore musical instruments and begin to pretend in role play with small-world items such as toys animals and cars. Older children receive a good level of care before and after school and during the holidays. Using appropriate adult suggestions, they each plan activities for an ideal week and these are effectively used to guide the activity for the whole group. They particularly enjoy cooking activities, handling natural materials and playing table games together.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make consistently good progress in each of the six areas of learning. In communication, language and literacy, they gain good speaking skills to express their feelings and ideas using new words such as 'foal'. They enjoy books and eagerly 'read' out sentences from stories. They recognise other children's names and suggest words from their initial letters. They gain good pre-writing skills and are keen to name their own work. The children make good progress in relation to their starting points, for example, to confidently use a wide range of mathematical language. They count accurately, for example, as they jump outside, build with bricks, and recognise numbers on display. They enjoy solving problems in number songs and find how many younger and older children altogether. They gain a good understanding of shape, space and measure to talk about the 'smallest' and 'biggest' pieces of equipment and to recognise 'pyramid' shapes.

Both girls and boys make good progress, for example, in their creative development. They explore a wide range of media such as mixing paint colours and exploring gold and silver craft materials. They describe 'lumpy' and 'smooth' textures of leaves and enjoy free modelling with clay. Children play imaginatively with telephones, puppets and small-world toys. They co-operate to act out traditional stories using realistic 'props', such as 'The three bears' who wear furry jerkins. Children respond well through their senses as they taste different foods and handle pet snails. They enjoy favourite songs, explore different sounds of musical instruments and move rhythmically to music. The children confidently gain new ideas and skills to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. They notice changes and similarities in a wide range of objects and materials, including items related to different celebrations such as Christmas and Chinese New Year. They show good interest in technology to confidently use electronic toys and home appliances such as a food mixer. Children gain good sense of time and place to recall their outings into the community and to notice the changing seasons and weather.

The childminder has a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn. Through her regular observation of the children and her detailed, careful planning, she ensures children access a broad and balanced range of experiences across six areas of learning. She plans the learning environment flexibly to suit the needs of the children and increasingly uses their interests and ideas to influence the activities. The childminder engages well with the small group of children, and her teaching effectively interests them so they are focused and persevere at their activities. She uses appropriate methods so children focus on both adult and child-led play and they have first-hand experiences. She regularly comments on their play so children are well challenged through effective questioning as well as by the resources. The childminder makes good use of time so changes in routine go smoothly and the children have ample time to complete activities to their satisfaction.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well with the childminder and are happy. They relax in the homely environment and children of different ages often play alongside each other. In this way, the older children learn to be helpful and to think about the needs of the younger ones. Babies are encouraged to play with toys set out; pre-schoolers sometimes choose activities using picture cards to supplement what is in their room. Children are cared for with equal concern as the childminder knows each child well and she ensures that they spend quality time with the adults each day.

The children behave well as the childminder gives the children clear explanations about her age-appropriate expectations. They are prompted to be polite and receive warm praise for their efforts and achievements. Children learn to take turns with equipment, such as rolling pins, and hear well-timed reminders to share materials, including craft stars. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children with additional needs are suitably supported as the childminder liaises closely with their parents; she is willing to work with other agencies if the need arises.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. The childminder spends time getting to know new parents and their wishes so the children's care needs are met within her flexible routine. Children's continuity of care is generally supported through shared permission forms, regular

discussion and accessible, written information about the setting. Families are invited to comment on detailed, termly reports about the children's development and learning. However, parents of funded children do not receive detailed information about the Foundation Stage provision to foster their support for children's learning. Parents are suitably involved as, for example, they receive newsletters with information on themes and activities. Parents come into the playrooms and see the work that children regularly take home so they have opportunities to talk with the children about their play and try out similar activities at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children settle quickly in the relaxed atmosphere. Some of the childminder's time is spent organising the provision; the rest is dedicated to the children in teamwork with other staff in the setting so children have individual care and attention. She follows a flexible routine and formally plans some appropriate, adult and child-led activities around the children's interests and stages of development. The youngest babies receive consistent care in the sitting room while the other children have satisfactory space for table and floor play in the playroom and kitchen-diner. They use the garden in groups where appropriate small equipment is taken out for them to play.

Legally required documentation is maintained though some medical permissions do not include sufficient detail. All records are stored securely with suitable regard for confidentiality. The childminder has sheets for a log to record any complaint and this is compliant with Ofsted's requirements. The registers for children, staff and visitors clearly show their hours of attendance. New families are asked to note the children's home routines to foster consistent care and they receive written clearly-written reports on the children's development at the end of each term.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The childminder has a basic understanding of appropriate systems to appoint new staff and support their continuing suitability. She regularly contributes towards the review of clear aims, policies and procedures that are initially organised by her co-childminder. For example, permission to leave assistants in sole charge of children is gained, though the times are not agreed in writing. In this way, she ensures that the children's care is consistent. In due course, the childminder reports significant changes to the regulator. She has recently focused on informal training in order to gain the status of an accredited childminder, for example, on the use of systems to observe and plan to support children's learning.

The childminder contributes significantly to working towards the setting's quality assurance award. In this way, she has identified strengths and some areas to improve children's well-being, such as appraisal of staff's professional development. The childminder monitors children's progress towards the early goals to inform the planning for the group of older children. She is considerate towards other members of the team and delegates responsibilities. In this way, she makes sure there is suitable focus on the development and achievements of all the children. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that the childminder further developed the children's opportunities for play and development. She has continued to extend the range of stimulating activities and interesting experiences that she offers to children. For example, she has increased the focus on children's own ideas so that activities are more suited to their needs. This has had a positive effect on the care, learning and play of the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 the 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):

- ensure the written permission obtained from parents before administering medication to children includes the specific reason for the medication to be administered
- obtain permission from parents to leave an assistant in sole charge of the children at times agreed and confirmed in writing.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- provide parents with more detailed information about the Foundation Stage provision to foster their support for the children's learning.

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