



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	144833
Inspection date	31 August 2006
Inspector	Carole Argles
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 has been registered since 1993. She lives with her husband and three teenage children in Salisbury, Wiltshire. The family's pets are a cat, a dog, a rabbit and a cockatiel. At times, the childminder works with an assistant, who with the written consent of parents, may provide sole care of the children. At present, the childminder provides part-time care for nine children, of whom eight are aged under five years. She provides care for children who have learning difficulties or disabilities.

The children have access to the ground floor areas of the house and usually use the kitchen-dining room, conservatory and a ground floor cloakroom. Two first floor bedrooms are used for sleeping young children. There is a fully enclosed rear garden for outdoor play. The childminder takes children on outings to local parks, venues, and toddler groups. She is a member of the local childminding network and National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children's good health is supported well by the childminder who has a good knowledge and understanding of ways to minimise the spread of infection and to promote a healthy lifestyle. The children receive nutritious food and have drinks readily available for them to take as required when they are thirsty. Parents supply a packed lunch for their child, which is stored appropriately in the refrigerator. They receive wholesome additional snacks from the childminder, which include fruit, toast and cereals. They learn about the importance of eating a healthy diet through a wide range of activities and discussions with the childminder. They help to cook nutritious foods including vegetable soups, pizzas and cakes. They visit local supermarkets to look at and buy a range of fruits, and have recently made a collage of healthy food they might take in a lunch box.

The children are protected well from the risk of illness and infection. They wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet or touching the pets, and dry them using individual paper towels. The childminder promotes good hygiene by keeping the premises, toys and equipment clean. She does not care for children when they are ill. The children are suitably protected from the possible health risks posed by pets. The childminder holds an appropriate first aid certificate and has a well-stocked first aid kit readily available in the event of an accident. There are suitable procedures for the safe administration of medication to the children.

The children are helped to keep fit through daily exercise. They go out for frequent walks with the childminder, often taking her dog. They play in the garden and visit parks and an activity centre. Here they use a wide variety of age-appropriate play equipment, including wheeled toys, climbing equipment, tunnels and balls, and this helps them to develop new skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are well maintained and comfortably furnished and are welcoming to the children. There is a dedicated playroom in the conservatory with toys readily available for them to use. Displays of their art-work and photographs create a child-friendly environment and this ensures that the children feel settled and secure.

The childminder has a good understanding of safety issues and takes appropriate measures to minimise risks to the children's safety. She supervises the children well and checks sleeping babies regularly. She keeps the house and the garden secure and stores hazardous items out of the reach of the children. There is a good range of toys and equipment and the childminder checks these frequently to ensure they are safe for the children to use. Suitable fire safety precautions are in place and children have the opportunity to practise the emergency evacuation plan. The children are kept safe on outings and remain close to the childminder who often uses reins or holds hands with the younger children. Appropriate safety seats are available in the car. There are sound procedures to ensure children are only collected by authorised people and the childminder uses a password with people whom she does not know. The children begin to

learn how to keep themselves through discussions with the childminder, for example, learning how to cross the road safely and about the importance of not talking to strangers.

The childminder has a thorough knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and understands the action she should take if she is concerned about the welfare of a child in her care. She ensures that the children are never unsupervised with persons who have not been vetted. This contributes effectively to safeguarding them from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The children are very happy and settled with the childminder and have a warm and relaxed relationship with her. There are extremely good levels of conversation and interaction between them. The childminder encourages the children to talk about themselves and their families which makes them feel valued and secure. The children receive copious praise and encouragement for their achievements and this gives them the confidence to attempt new tasks and develop new skills. The children show concern for others, readily sharing and playing cooperatively, willingly allowing younger children to take part. They learn concerns for animals as they help the childminder care for her pets, feeding the rabbit and the cockatiel.

The children's language and communication skills are very well supported as the childminder takes advantage of all opportunities to extend their vocabulary and knowledge as they chat. For example, she explains words she uses like 'unravelling' when they are talking about the sticky tape becoming tangled. The children become familiar with the use of numbers and letters as the childminder uses them often in their conversations and play, for example, when making and writing in birthday cards.

The childminder plans and provides an excellent and varied range of interesting activities and outings for the children. This supports their learning very effectively and helps them develop wide knowledge and understanding of the world around them. For example, they often go for walks to feed the ducks and visit parks, farms and the local cattle market where they talk about what they see. The children frequently visit toddler groups where they can socialise with their peers. The childminder becomes involved with the children's play and shares her enthusiasm with them and, as a result, they become engrossed in their play. The children were enjoying celebrating a soft toy's birthday, wrapping presents, making cards for him and preparing a birthday party. The childminder encourages the children to use their imaginations well, for example, when they are setting the table for the birthday tea, she gently asks them questions so they think about what they are doing and why. Activities are carefully adapted so all can take part and children are encouraged to become independent. For example, a very young child was involved helping to wrap a parcel, sticking on the tape to the best of her ability.

There is a wide range of toys, activities and books to support the development of children of all ages. The childminder frequently uses a toy library, borrowing resources to provide new interest and enjoyment for the children who were enjoying exploring a range newly acquired electronic music making toys. Although the childminder plans activities, the children make many choices about what they do and follow their own interests, either selecting toys from the

boxes and low drawers or requesting items from the cupboard. The children are very well occupied at all times and thoroughly enjoy the stimulating activities and play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children benefit from the effective working relationship between the childminder and their parents who talk and share information about them daily. Diaries are used with most parents and the two-way exchange of information ensures that there is continuity in the children's care and that their individual needs are met. The childminder provides good quality information for parents, giving them copies of her policies and procedures so that they understand what is provided for their child. The childminder respects children's usual routines and is flexible so that they feel comfortable and secure in her care. Children who have learning difficulties are well supported by the childminder who works closely with their parents and others involved with their care to ensure that their needs are well met. The childminder adapts activities to ensure that all children are included and they will support their development effectively. The childminder monitors and records the development of all children, passing this information on to their parents, to keep them well informed about their progress. This also allows her to plan appropriate activities for them and identify any children who may need additional support.

The children use a good range of resources, which show positive images of diversity and this helps children develop an accepting attitude towards others in society. The childminder often uses a local toy library to provide a wider variety of toys, for example, puzzles and role-play cooking utensils. The childminder plans a range of activities to help the children learn about the wider world and the culture and traditions of others. Recent activities have included themed days that have included cooking and creative art activities.

The children behave well and play cooperatively with others, taking turns and sharing fairly. The childminder is a good role model for the children who copy her example and are polite and considerate to others. She has a good understanding of positive ways to manage children's behaviour and gives the children careful explanations to help them learn why sometimes their behaviour is unwanted. Good behaviour is rewarded with praise and stickers. These are kept in a book with a note about what the child has done well, for example, helped others. The book is shared with their parents and this celebration of their achievements helps them develop good self-esteem and confidence.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children benefit from the childminder's commitment to the continual development of the service she provides. She attends many child care courses to extend her knowledge and understanding of child care issues. She has suitable policies and procedures in place to support the children's welfare, learning and safety. She understands how to act in the event of a complaint from a parent.

The childminder maintains most of the required records. However, some accidents to children are not recorded in the accident book but in their daily diaries. As a result, these records are not retained for the required period. The childminder is well organised, planning activities in advance and making effective use of her home to meet the children's needs. For example, she uses first floor bedrooms so that they can sleep undisturbed while others play. The play areas have a range of toys easily accessible to the children, in boxes and drawers.

The children receive appropriate levels of attention and support because the childminder keeps to the required adult-child ratios. She provides continuity in their care by being flexible to meet parents' work commitments. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder agreed to develop her child protection procedure to include the action she would take in the event of an allegation of harm to a child whilst in her care. The procedure has been amended and this contributes effectively towards safeguarding the children from harm.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 2004.

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 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):

- review the procedure for recording accidents to the children.

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