

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	209183
Inspection date	22 January 2008
Inspector	Lindsey Ann Cullum

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 was registered in June 2000. She lives with her husband and two children aged 14 and 16 years, in the market town of Spalding. All areas of the downstairs of the property are registered for use by minded children. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. Local amenities are within walking distance of the home. The family has a dog and two cats.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time. Overnight care is not provided. The childminder is currently caring for eight children on a part-time basis, before and after school and during school holidays only.

The childminder holds an early years qualification and is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and well maintained home where they gain a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. They independently access the toilet and hand washing facilities and are provided with individual paper towels, minimising the risk of cross-contamination. Children are aware of the importance of washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Photographs of the children demonstrating the thorough hand washing techniques to be used are sited near the wash basin as a visual reminder to children. Information is gathered from parents at registration regarding children's health and medical needs, enabling appropriate care to be provided. The childminder has completed additional training in order to manage the care of children with specific medical conditions. She holds a current first aid certificate and has a first aid box to hand, ensuring children's well-being should an accident occur. Systems are in place to record any accidents or medication administered to children. However, written consent from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment for children is not in place for all children, compromising children's health in an emergency. Children are protected from the risk of cross-infection as the childminder's policy on health and the care of sick children is shared with parents.

Children are well nourished. They eat healthy snacks such as fresh and dried fruit, chopped vegetables, toast, savoury biscuits or crumpets, promoting their understanding of healthy eating. Children are involved in the preparation of snacks, enjoying chopping the fruit and laying this attractively on the serving plate. Snack times are social occasions when all the children sit at the table with the childminder and discuss the days events or activities they would like to do that evening. The childminder shares her policy on healthy eating with parents.

Children benefit from a range of activities which contribute to their physical development and promote a healthy lifestyle. They walk to and from school, providing some exercise each day and an opportunity to be out in the fresh air. Children enjoy playing in the childminder's garden. They delight in making dens and joining in imaginative games. A varied range of equipment including bikes, ride on toys, a trampoline, slide and small climbing frame promote children's physical skills. Regular trips to the local parks enable children to use more physically challenging equipment or run about freely enjoying large open spaces. Children are able to rest according to their needs and make use of comfy sofas to sit quietly if they wish.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being looked after in a bright and welcoming environment where they feel comfortable and at home. They experience a strong sense of belonging as they are provided with space to store their personal items and photographic displays around the premises show the children enjoying the play and activities available. Effective use is made of the space within the home so children can move around freely and access a wide range of activities which promote their development. An attractively presented playroom is equipped with accessible storage enabling children to select items they would like to play with. This leads directly into the garden and in good weather children freely choose to play indoors or outside. The dining area is used for meals and table top activities such as craft, homework or board games. Quieter activities take place in the lounge, for example, children set up the puppet theatre. The layout of the home enables the childminder to provide age-appropriate supervision, encouraging children's

independence whilst maintaining their safety. Children's risk of accidental injury from toys is minimised because the childminder ensures they are of good quality and appropriate for the range of children that she minds. A large trampoline with safety netting is erected in the garden for several months of the year. The childminder is aware of the safety issues and has written a set of rules on the use of this piece of equipment which she intends to share with parents. However, the childminder has not completed a full risk assessment, including consultation with the insurance company which compromises children's safety whilst using this piece of equipment.

Children's safety is promoted within the home as suitable action has been taken to minimise the risks. Dangerous household substances, medicines and electrical sockets are inaccessible to children and the premises are secure. Low-level, accessible storage enables children to safely choose resources they would like to play with and help with clearing away. Children are developing an awareness of safety issues because clear explanations are given by the childminder, for example, they know it is not safe to run in the house. Fire safety equipment is in place in accordance with the Fire Officers recommendations and the childminder has attended fire awareness training. Children are familiar with the practices for emergency evacuation and the childminder makes parents aware of her policy at the start of any arrangement in order to safeguard children. A 'grab bag' containing basic equipment such as children's emergency contact details, spare nappies, wipes and first aid items is sited near to the exit door and is collected by the childminder in the event of an emergency.

Children are kept safe on outings. Written consents are in place to transport children and an ample number of car seats are available so that children are transported safely. The childminder is aware of the potential hazards when out with children and has clear strategies in place to keep them safe. For example, older children know they must walk in pairs and wait until the childminder instructs them it is safe to cross the road.

Children are well protected as the childminder has a sound understanding of her role and responsibilities in safeguarding children. She has attended recent training to update her knowledge and has relevant literature available for reference. Written statements are shared with parents outlining the measures the childminder has in place to safeguard children whilst in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very confident, secure and happy in the childminder's home. They enjoy family life and interact confidently with other members of the childminder's family, fostering a strong sense of belonging. They thrive within the relaxed, homely environment where they enjoy a range of activities which contribute to their development. Their self-esteem is fostered as they are offered lots of praise and encouragement. Children have developed warm and trusting relationships with the childminder who is consistently supportive and caring in her approach. Children's interests and capabilities are known by the childminder, who ensures that activities and resources are available which stimulate their play, enabling them to build on their previous knowledge and skills. They are consulted over the purchase of new equipment strengthening their sense of belonging and catering for children's specific interests.

Children are able to access an extensive range of age-appropriate resources and activities enabling them to pursue their own interests. Older children freely select what they would like to do and engage in concentrated periods of play with minimal supervision. They enjoy setting up their own imaginative games, for example, using the puppet theatre and create their own

storyline and narrative. Some children choose to be the audience whilst others the puppeteers. Children play co-operatively, share resources and are kind and caring towards one another. Older children actively support the younger ones, for example, whilst playing table football. Children chat together during activities or share experiences such as what they did at school or over the weekend, promoting friendships. Children frequently use creative resources such as crayons, chalks, collage materials or paints. They take pride in their own achievements, for example, showing their drawing to others. The childminder reinforces this through praise and by offering to frame the finished work. Planned activities such as making calendars or decorating glass pots to fill with sweets, engage all the children and enable them to use their own creative ideas. Children confidently communicate their thoughts and ideas. The childminder listens with interest, responds to questions and joins in conversations. She offers ideas to extend children's play, for example, suggesting to a child who is uncertain what to draw that they might design a football strip for the table football game. Children relish time spent in the garden and talk excitedly about past activities, such as making dens using a large camouflage net or painting their handprints onto the fencing. They enjoy regular visits to the local parks after school or, in the summer holidays, trips to the beach or zoo. Children are very well occupied and interested in the activities on offer. As a consequence, they enjoy their time spent with the childminder. Children provide positive comments about the care they receive whilst in the childminder's care.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder knows the individual needs of children well and is very attentive to their respective care needs. Children are given appropriate support, contributing to them becoming very confident and secure within the childminder's home. They are encouraged to make choices and decisions and respond well to the praise given by the childminder which helps develop their self-esteem. Children are being helped to develop positive attitudes towards differences in people through the attractive books, posters and resources depicting a variety of lifestyles and cultures. Encouragement is given to children to share words from the languages spoken at home. The childminder provides a positive role model for children, helping them develop a caring and considerate attitude to others. She is pro-active in making sure that appropriate actions would be taken to support and fully include any children with identified needs. The childminder has completed a British Sign Language course and is teaching the children some basic sign language in a fun and relaxed way.

Children are happy, sociable and well behaved. They are encouraged to be polite, share and play together through the childminder's caring attitude. Good behaviour is valued and children are given frequent praise and encouragement. Children receive gentle guidance with regards to rules and boundaries and clearly know what is expected of them. Strategies used to manage children's behaviour are discussed with parents to promote consistency.

Children benefit from the strong partnerships that have developed between the childminder and their parents. The childminder liaises closely with parents to ensure she is familiar with children's needs and parents' wishes are respected. Friendly, open discussions take place as children are collected ensuring parents are fully up to date with the days events. A noticeboard in the hallway enables parents to view the childminder's registration and insurance certificates, the previous inspection report, snack menu and photographs of the children enjoying various activities linked to different areas of their learning. Parents are well informed about the childminder's policies, practices and the procedure should they wish to raise a concern or make a complaint. Parents' satisfaction is reflected in their exceptionally positive feedback.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a qualified and experienced childminder who is committed to ongoing training and development. The childminder has attended various courses and workshops covering all aspects of childcare through her work in a pre-school and is currently completing an NVQ Level 4 in Children's Learning and Development. She has a clear understanding of the requirements of the National Standards which is reflected in the care she provides for children. Checks have been completed to ensure that all persons living in the household are suitable. Records which contribute to the children's health and well-being are available and stored confidentially. A register of children's attendance is maintained, however this does not accurately record children's arrival and departure times, compromising children's safety.

Children are welcomed into the child-friendly, relaxed environment of the childminder's home. Space and resources are well organised to allow children to enjoy a range of activities of their choosing. Children benefit from good levels of support and attention and are confident and happy in the childminder's home. Parents' wishes are actively sought and respected, enabling appropriate care to be provided. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of the last inspection the childminder agreed to establish written agreements with all parents which set out the expectations of both parties.

The childminder completes written agreements in consultation with parents, prior to each child starting to attend the provision promoting children's welfare.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 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:

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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):

- obtain written permission from all parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment for children

- promote children's safety by undertaking a full risk assessment, including checking appropriate insurance cover is in place, prior to children's continued use of the trampoline
- ensure the daily register accurately records children's hours of attendance.

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