



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221235
Inspection date	25 July 2006
Inspector	Margaret Coyne
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 satisfactory. 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 1987. She lives with her husband and two adult children. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding. This consists of a dedicated playroom, a kitchen, lounge and downstairs toilet. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time and is currently caring for four children under five on a part time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends a local toddler group and childminding support group. The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities

The family have a pet dog.

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

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminder has secure routines and practices in place to teach children the importance of personal hygiene. For example, when washing their hands children are encouraged to play a 'catch the fish' game with a fish shaped soap. Children are mainly protected from infection because the childminder is well informed about their health care matters and her procedures such as a sick child policy. However children do not have separate flannels and towels available to them to further protect them from cross contamination. The toys and equipment are kept clean and well-maintained and children share in cleaning some toys outside. Any additional information is gained at the onset of the arrangement with regard to any health care the children may need. For example, if they have any allergies or dietary requirements. Children's health is promoted through the records and documents in place and the training the childminder has completed. For example, her first aid certificate has just been renewed and she has completed additional training to manage epilepsy. A first aid box is available for children to deal with any minor accidents or ailments. Most required records are in place for the administration of medication and to record any accidents. The childminder will ensure all suitable consent has been obtained from parents to administer medication or medicated products and to seek emergency treatment using the available forms. The family have a pet dog who is well cared for and all hygiene measures are in place. Children are encouraged to respect the animals and follow basic hygiene rules.

Meal times are a social occasion where children benefit from sitting together, learning table manners and social skills. Meal arrangements are planned with parents in advance and parents' wishes and children's preferences are respected. The childminder has sound thoughts on providing children with opportunities to try new experiences and tastes including cooking activities, to extend their views on food and healthy eating. At present parents provide lunch for their children which is nutritious and adequate for their appetites. The childminder is willing to provide meals for children and is flexible in her approach. On discussion she demonstrated a clear understanding of healthy eating. Snacks are not given between meals as the childminder and parents feel the children eat their meals better and because these are plentiful for their needs. Children remain hydrated particularly during hot weather as they have regular access to drinks.

Children have opportunity to experience a range of physical activities which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. An appropriate range of resources ensures children of all ages have access to equipment to develop their physical skills and promote exercise both in the home and in outside venues such as the park, trips to the forest and adventure playgrounds. The childminder ensures children get fresh air each day through daily walks and outdoor experiences. She is on hand to support and guide the children giving them opportunity to develop their own skills and confidence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for within a safe and secure home environment. The childminder makes appropriate use of space to provide opportunities for children. Toys and equipment are in a good state of repair and are age appropriate. The childminder carefully monitors and supervises children's choice of toys, to ensure they are suitably stimulating for their age and stage of development. Toys are stored in boxes and bags on shelving in the play room to enable children to choose items independently.

Children benefit from an effective range of safety measures within the home. For example, stair gates and fire safety equipment, socket covers, safety glass and appropriate car seats. Children are kept safe due to the childminder's vigilance to safety around the home and while out of the home. For example, when out walking children wear wrist straps and play areas are checked for safety before children access them. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as they practise road safety and follow the boundaries within the home such as not running inside or climbing on the furniture. However, children do not practise an emergency evacuation procedure so they can learn how to leave the home in an emergency. A suitable level of car insurance is in place. A visual risk assessment is carried out to ensure hazards can be identified and reduced to safeguard the children.

Children remain protected because the childminder has a secure understanding relating to child protection issues. She has a sound knowledge of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and understands the procedures to follow should she have any concerns. However, at present she does not have a confidential system in place to record any concerns. Most supporting documents are in place for the childminder to refer to should she have any concerns about a child. However she does not have the supporting literature 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused' The childminder is confident she can support children and is aware of keeping her records and documents up to date to provide clear evidence of her practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are well-settled and happy at the childminder's home. They are secure and confident in themselves and play happily together. Children relate very well to each other and the childminder in a friendly, happy and sociable manner which is a pleasure to watch. They share games and activities together and help each other out. For example, when playing in the sand and when sharing musical instruments and a bike. Children's independence skills are developing as they take part in child-led activities using their own imaginations. They freely choose from the range on offer and the childminder is adept at stepping back from her suggested activities to allow this independence and freedom for self-selection.

Children are supported well by the childminder whilst providing a wide range of stimulating and challenging experiences for them. The activities are varied and appropriate to the children's development, this enables them to move forward and to progress. Children make decisions about their own play as they explore and experiment for example, in the sand pit and when taking part in creative activities such as making playdough, cooking, and art work. Children

have opportunities to explore growth and change by taking part in simple experiments such as growing beans and cooking activities. Their language skills are developing because the childminder continually speaks to the children and gains their attention. She introduces strategies to use to build on language skills and this aids the children's development. Children's sensory abilities are stimulated because the childminder has toys and equipment which promote this area of development. Today the children are looking forward to going on a picnic and feeding the ducks.

Younger children benefit from the childminder starting to work with the 'Birth to three matters' framework to organise activities which focus on children's development of their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. Individual children's routines are respected which promotes children's well-being and contributes to them making progress at their own pace. The childminder has a secure, purposeful knowledge of child development and engages the children in meaningful play opportunities. Children make steady progress because the childminder responds well to their interests and takes part in their activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are accepted and valued and activities can be adapted to meet the needs of all children. The childminder demonstrates a genuine concern for children and is a positive role model. This contributes to children's feelings of security within her care. The childminder is able to meet the needs of children through the information gained from parents at the onset of the arrangement. The ongoing sharing of information ensures any changing needs can be identified and appropriate care provided. A range of resources are available to promote a balanced view of the world and an understanding of diversity. Children are able to take part in celebrations of both familiar and unfamiliar festivals and events such as Diwali, Chinese New Year, Christmas and Easter to gain a further understanding of the wider world and the diversity around them. The childminder has a great deal of experience working with children who have disabilities or learning difficulties. She is secure in her knowledge of integrating children in her care and adapting activities to meet the needs of all children attending. The childminder has built a caring rapport with the children and this helps them develop their trust and security within her care. She has completed 'Portage' training and has organised and runs holiday play schemes for children with special needs.

The childminder has developed positive behaviour management strategies which dwells on the positive rather than the negative. This ensures children develop good feelings about themselves and enhances their self-esteem and confidence. The childminder recognises any trigger points which may cause unsettled behaviour and removes these when ever possible to help children learn acceptable behaviour patterns. Dramas are avoided because this is used consistently and the children respond well to instruction. She has realistic expectations of the children, uses praise and encouragement and gives simple explanations when discussing right from wrong. This has a positive impact on the children's belief in themselves and promotes the fact that they can achieve things for themselves. Children are aware of the boundaries and know what is expected of them. They are secure and happy in her care and play positively together sharing toys and time with the childminder.

Children's needs are met through the developing relationships with parents. This impacts on the children's feelings of belonging, trust and security. The childminder takes time to discuss a child's day and involves parents in their child's care, learning and play. Parents are encouraged to participate, sharing information and any events which may impact on their child. This includes routines at home and favourite things. The childminder has started to put together information for parents about her practice including information about the care the children receive, her training and qualifications. However, this has not yet been fully developed to show clear information to underpin her practice with written policies, procedures and consent forms. For example, consent to transport children or take them on outings in order to maintain their welfare. An open, honest and trusting relationship is being developed with information about how to make a complaint. However, a complaints policy is not yet in place or a system to record any complaints and the action taken to resolve these. This impacts on the children's security and well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children are relaxed and at ease in an organised and child friendly environment. The space, resources and routine impact on the children's play and feelings of security. Children are able to explore within this organised environment knowing they are well-supported and cared for. The childminder draws on her parenting skills as a mother, her experience and qualifications working in a nursery and caring for children for many years as a childminder. She has completed additional training such as an NVQ level 3, manual handling, Makaton sign language and training to work with children with Autism and Epilepsy. Her commitment to further training raises her awareness of child development and working with children with disabilities or learning difficulties and further enhances her practice and skills as a childminder. This is evident in the calm, patient and caring manner she portrays and positively represents the care she provides for all children attending.

Most documentation and records are in place which she has developed to support the care of the children and these will be updated in line with current changes to present herself as a professional child carer, to fully support the welfare and care of the children and promote partnerships with parents. At present some records are not well-organised to fully promote the level of care she provides. The childminder must ensure that all adults living on the premises hold current checks and clearances to ensure children are protected at all times. The time she spends with the children is organised so she can provide individual time and attention to meet the children's needs and promote their development. The childminder links with other local childminders to broaden children's experiences and social skills. This contributes to the quality of care she provides for children.

The childminder is aware of maintaining ratios in order to sufficiently meet the needs of the children attending. The childminder is keen to develop her written policies, procedures and portfolio to share with parents to underpin her childminding practice. Overall the children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to ensure any vehicle used to transport children has appropriate insurance. This has been completed as the insurance document states that she is covered for business use.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- ensure children's health is maintained and cross infection minimised for example with the use of separate towels and flannels
- ensure children develop an understanding of emergency evacuation procedures
- obtain the Department of Health leaflet 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused - Summary' and introduce a confidential system to record any child protection concerns
- ensure parents are fully informed about the childcare practises with regard to written policies and procedures to underpin the services provided, a system to record any complaints made and the action taken to resolve these and to obtain written permission from parents to transport children in the car, use public transport and take them on outings
- ensure that persons over the age of 16 years living on the premises hold a current criminal records check.

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