

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	313632
Inspection date	16 October 2007
Inspector	Kathleen Snowdon

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 1999. She lives with her husband and two children, aged 11 in Tanfield Lea, County Durham. Her home is close to all amenities, including schools and nurseries. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is an enclosed garden for outdoor play. The family has a pet cat.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time. She is currently minding three children under five all day and older children attend also. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and she attends a local parent and toddler group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Eating nutritious, fruit based snacks encourages the children to develop healthy tastes and preferences. As well as this, the children enjoy appetising and well balanced meals such as pasta dishes and traditional roast dinners, which keep them satisfied during the time that they spend

with the childminder. The childminder plans 'food days', to coincide with festivals, such as Divali or Chinese New Year. On these occasions the children taste foods that are associated with other cultures and so experience new flavours and textures.

Effective routines help the children to establish good personal hygiene. For example, after using the potty the children are given wipes or anti bacterial gel to wash their hands with. Older children are sufficiently competent to do this themselves after using the bathroom and before eating. Along with the highly appropriate arrangements that deal with sick children, this minimises the spread of common illnesses and infections.

The children have good opportunities to be active. For example, they walk to and from school on a daily basis and get plenty of fresh air in the process. Frequent trips to local soft play facilities give the children the chance to move vigorously, which teaches them that exercise is fun and boosts their fitness. The children take naps on comfortable furniture in the childminder's home. This ensures that they are sufficiently well rested and refreshed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Sensible use of safety equipment reduces the risk of accidents in the childminder's well organised home. For example, the large rug in the childminder's living room is secured by grips, which allows the children move around freely and helps them to negotiate space safely. As well as this, children learn effective ways in which to protect themselves from danger through following house rules that prevent them from running indoors or touching electric wires.

On outings, children who cannot walk are harnessed in buggies while mobile children wear reins. This contributes to their ongoing safety as does the childminder's excellent awareness of child protection issues. Indoors, the children play with good quality and developmentally appropriate resources. These help them to make progress in all areas of their development while thorough cleaning and checking routines keep items safe, hygienic and suitable for use by children.

Outstanding measures are in place to prevent fire. For example, the childminder arranges an annual fire officer visit which interests the children enormously. They watch and listen to the officer as he gives advice and makes an assessment of the childminder's smoke detection system, fire blanket and emergency evacuation plan. This acquaints the children with the work of the fire department. As well as this, monthly fire drills take place. All the children take part in these, as do their parents and members of the childminder's own family. These excellent arrangements equip the children with the knowledge that they need to cope in an emergency.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Interesting, outdoor activities keep the children motivated and give them ample opportunity to enjoy themselves and have fun. For example, they go on 'bug hunts' and collect a range of mini-beasts. On their return to the childminder's home they build structures to accommodate the creatures using leaves, sand and soil. These experiences allow the children to make first hand observations of how nature works and increase their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Excellent relationships exist between the children and the childminder. The children receive the childminder's full attention during the time that they spend with her. Consequently, they are happy, settled and secure. The children practise emerging skills like talking, encouraged by the childminder's supportive words and praise. This approach promotes the development of effective communication skills. Regular visits to local toddler groups gives the children the chance to meet other children and make friends. At these settings, they play alongside others and develop social skills that help them to function successfully as part of a group.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children are treated equally and equal concern and regard is given to their individual needs. The children learn to respect individuality and difference through occasionally handling good quality books, such as 'All Kinds of People', that show positive images of culture, disability, ethnicity and gender. Other resources include dolls and jigsaws but in general, the range of resources that reflect diversity is rather limited as is the children's access to it.

Highly effective strategies help the children to behave acceptably. For example, the childminder uses distraction to calm the youngest children and gives simple explanations to the older children to help them to understand right from wrong. As well as this, the children are praised when they behave with kindness and consideration, which promotes the development of positive personal qualities.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. For instance, parents are kept very well informed through daily discussions with parents. Alongside that, the childminder uses text messages to keep parents constantly abreast of how their children are and what experiences they have had. Excellent systems are in place to give parents the opportunity to express their views and opinions. For example, six monthly reviews are held between parents and the childminder and questionnaires are used to enable the childminder to assess the quality of her work. Parents have highly positive views of the childminder. They describe her as 'very special, kind and understanding' and rate the service that she provides as 'exceptional'.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Documentation is meticulous. All essential records are in place, readily available and stored securely to protect confidentiality. The childminder routinely reviews documentation every three months and makes necessary adjustments immediately, as soon as changes occur in the children's or parents circumstances. As well as this, parents are given a full set of written policies that are an accurate reflection of the childminder's practice.

The registration certificate is prominently displayed as well as a poster outlining how parents can make a complaint to Ofsted. The childminder shows an extremely good understanding of registered numbers and the importance of never exceeding these. She frequently participates in further training and recent courses include safeguarding children and working with families.

The childminder gives good priority to the children's health and safety and makes very good efforts at monitoring whom they come into contact with, for example, by recording visitors to her home. She plans worthwhile things for the children to do, such as gardening. She also arranges exciting activities like setting up camp in a nearby field, which the children enjoy.

immensely. Her positive approach makes a significant contribution to the children's happiness and well-being.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to continue to participate in training relevant to her work. Training features prominently in the childminder's practice. This keeps her up to date with current trends in child care and builds on her already strong ability to provide good quality care for children. Positive early experiences like the ones that the childminder creates for the children enable them to build sound, subsequent relationships with others.

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:

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):

- continue to promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, for example, by extending the range and increasing the availability of resources that increase children's awareness of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability.

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