

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	317150
Inspection date	26 February 2008
Inspector	Julie Morrison
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 1999. She lives with her husband and two children aged eight and 11 years in a semi-detached house in Stainton, near Kendal. The whole of the ground floor and a first floor bedroom of the property are used for childminding. There is an enclosed rear garden for outdoor play and children have supervised access to the greenhouse in the front garden. The childminder is registered to care for five children and currently has five children under the age of eight on roll. Children attend on a part-time basis. She is a member of Sedgwick Parent and Toddler group. The family has a pet rabbit.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children clearly thrive because the childminder follows highly effective and robust procedures and practices. This ensures that children's physical, nutritional and health needs are extremely well met. For example, the children are consistently protected from cross-infection as they have individual hand towels and individual drinking beakers. The childminder further supports children's learning as she encourages them to identify their own colour cup; this begins to help

children to learn about good hygiene along with reinforcing colour recognition. Younger children learn by example as they watch older children independently wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet. The childminder encourages children to further become independent as they ingeniously use the shiny front of the oven to check their faces are clean after meals.

The childminder has excellent procedures and policies in place to record accidents, medication administered and consent for emergency medical treatment. This means that parents are kept informed and their wishes are acknowledged and adhered to. Excellent procedures, such as keeping an up-to-date list of all items in the first aid kit and when they are due for renewal, along with relevant first aid training, means that the childminder is able to provide immediate treatment in the event of an accident.

Children flourish as they have superb opportunities for physical development. For example, they attend baby dance sessions and play in the garden on mini trampolines, climbing frames and ride bikes. Such activities provide excellent opportunities for children to improve balance and coordination. The childminder gives a high priority to children's physical health, making excellent use of the car port and outdoor clothing to ensure that children benefit from fresh air and exercise regardless of the weather.

Children's well-being is enriched as the childminder provides a healthy diet of meals which are made from home grown vegetables and local produce. Meals consider individual children's needs and ensures that they receive a balanced diet. For example, the childminder uses her in-depth knowledge of nutrition to plan snacks so that children have fruit in the morning and carbohydrates later in the day; such highly effective planning ensures that children's individual needs are met. Children have fantastic opportunities to learn about the importance of a healthy diet as they are actively involved in growing their own vegetables in the greenhouse, they then use these to make meals. This helps children to learn about how food grows and supports their understanding of a healthy diet. The childminder plans interesting and innovative activities to encourage children to eat fruit and vegetables, such as making banana scones. Such activities ensure that children receive a healthy diet as well as being fun for the children. Drinks are freely available for children and carefully monitored by the childminder to ensure that children remain hydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and very safe indoor and outdoor environment. Written risk assessments ensure that resources and space are checked regularly, which means that children are able to move around freely and safely. The childminder provides a good range of toys and resources for the children which is rotated regularly to ensure that children benefit from an excellent variety of activities. The childminder cleans and checks resources regularly to ensure that they remain safe and suitable for the children, this is effectively recorded in a resources file.

Children are kept safe on outings through effective procedures put in place by the childminder. Young children are securely strapped into pushchairs and the childminder carries information cards containing relevant details of the children should she be involved in an accident. The children benefit from good opportunities to learn to keep themselves safe; they discuss road safety, carry out regular fire drills and confidently explain that they must hold the rail when walking down the outside steps.

The childminder gives priority to children's welfare. She has attended safeguarding children training and is confident about the signs and symptoms of abuse and procedures to follow should she have any concerns. This is further supported with a comprehensive written child protection policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the childminder's home. They achieve extremely well because the childminder is highly skilled and has an excellent understanding of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework. She uses this to support a well planned and balanced range of activities, both inside and outside of the home. Children are animated and enthusiastic as they make choices about what they want to do in the home. For example, they confidently select books which they excitedly take to the childminder for her to read to them. Their communication skills are fostered well by the childminder as she talks constantly to them and responds to them well, and this results in the children being competent speakers and listeners. For example, they confidently approach visitors to ask what they are doing, they sing songs and they have excellent opportunities for imaginative play, such as dressing up where they proudly explain, 'I'm going to be a princess today.'

Children take part in a stimulating and varied programme of outings, for example, they visit local farms and go on nature walks to collect leaves which they make pictures with. The childminder skilfully combines the planned activities with free play for the children. She recognises and records the skills and learning that children develop from everyday activities. For example, filling wheelbarrows with stones is great fun for the children and also helps to promote physical development and hand-eye coordination skills. The children have built warm and secure relationships with the childminder as a result of the excellent way in which she interacts with them. They laugh and giggle as she talks to them and enjoy cuddling with her on a beanbag as they read stories. As a result, children feel secure with the childminder. They confidently approach her for help when dressing up but then report, 'look I've done it myself' as they put the clothes on independently. This supportive environment gives children the opportunities to develop their independence and self-care skills whilst knowing that the childminder is there if they need her.

The childminder demonstrates an extremely good understanding of how children learn. She follows the 'Birth to three matters' framework and implements this positively into her plans. She is able to clearly monitor children's development as she keeps written records and colourful photographs in individual children's books, clearly linked to the outcomes for the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This broad, exceptionally well planned and balanced range of activities that children take part in offers them huge scope to have fun and to develop extremely well.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder provides a meaningful range of activities to promote a positive view of the wider world. Children benefit from very good opportunities to learn about their local community as they go for walks to the mobile library and get involved in local activities such as fundraising days. They have good opportunities to socialise with other children as they regularly visit local toddler groups. Planned activities promote children's learning about different cultures, for example, they celebrate the Chinese New Year and Diwali. However, resources to promote

children's awareness of disability are limited. The childminder has a positive attitude towards caring for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. She is committed to ensuring that children are involved in activities and to working with parents to ensure that individual needs are met.

Consistent routines, such as hanging their coats up on their own pegs, help children to feel a sense of belonging at the setting. Consistent boundaries and good role modelling encourage positive behaviour; this is further supported by regular praise and encouragement, for example, the childminder remarks, 'well done, I knew you could do it' as children open flaps in books independently. This helps children to develop confidence and self-esteem.

Children benefit from positive relationships with parents, who speak extremely highly of the care and learning that their children receive. Written policies and procedures are effectively shared with parents who are kept informed about their child's care and development through written diaries and verbal feedback. This ensures continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is significantly enhanced by exceptional organisation by the childminder. Highly effective procedures ensure that all policies and procedures are in place, reviewed annually and fully support her excellent childcare practice. Detailed and comprehensive files clearly linked to the outcomes for children enhance the childminder's understanding of excellent quality care and benefit children. Meticulous recording of all equipment and resources, including photographs and showing dates purchased, is used by the childminder to record any safety issues. She has a firm commitment to training illustrated through her attendance on a variety of relevant training courses. This allows her to continue developing her childminding practice, thus ensuring children's care and well-being are always a priority and they are fully supported in reaching their full potential. A noticeboard ensures that information, such as the childminder's registration certificate and public liability insurance, is prominently displayed.

Children benefit from highly effective plans which ensure that their daily routine is well balanced to promote a very good mix of quiet and busy times. The childminder uses her comprehensive understanding to plan a wide range of activities which is clearly linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This ensures that young children are able to make progress in all areas of their development. Space indoors and outdoors is planned to maximise play opportunities for children. For example, clearly drawn plans of the garden show the wealth of opportunities children have for physical development and play.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection a recommendation to improve the childminder's information technology skills was raised. The childminder has made very good progress in addressing this, attending several relevant training courses to enhance her skills.

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 parents, which they can see on request. The complaint 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):

- further develop resources to promote children's understanding of disability
- continue to develop knowledge of learning difficulties and disabilities through attending relevant training courses.

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