

Thompson, Elizabeth

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	317298
Inspection date	19 March 2007
Inspector	Carys Millican

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 1998. She lives with her husband and two sons aged 14 and 16 years, in a rural village, north east of Carlisle. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding, except for the master bedroom which is excluded from childminding use. The conservatory and utility are used for access only. The garden is not available for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding seven children under five for various sessions, and two children over five before and after school. The childminder uses her car to transport children to the local school and on outings. The childminder attends the local carer and toddler group and takes children on regular short walks within the farm grounds and surrounding fields. The family has a dog, which children may have access to.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, warm and homely environment. Their individual care routines are discussed with parents and closely followed by the childminder. Young children are protected from the potential risk of infection. They wash and dry their hands before eating and after toileting. The childminder follows her sick child policy and uses appropriate health and hygiene practices to prevent illness and the potential spread of infection. Medication and accident records are maintained. However, the accident recording document that is used by the childminder does not maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Written consent to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment is obtained from parents.

Young children enjoy an appropriate range of activities which contribute to their good health. They enjoy walks in the fresh air as they go out with the childminder to feed the sheep in the fields and hens and ducks on the farm. Children attend a carer and toddler group and visit the school adventure play area and vegetable patch. Indoors, children access plenty of space to walk around freely and play with larger toys such as the horse rocker. Children benefit from a secure, close, caring relationship with a regular carer, therefore, promoting their emotional well-being.

Young children are nourished. Their dietary needs and preferences are obtained from parents and daily routines are followed. Initial discussions with parents ensure that children are provided with healthy options in their packed lunch boxes. Children enjoy a range of snacks and fresh drinks are accessible to them at all times. Children rest and sleep according to their needs and individual routines to ensure continuity of care.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and well-maintained environment. Appropriate safety equipment is in place and any potential hazards or risks are identified and minimised. The fire evacuation procedure is discussed with children and the childminder is clear on what she would do in an emergency. However, the childminder has not practised the evacuation procedure when caring for children.

Children are provided with suitable age appropriate resources within a safe and secure environment. The childminder selects toys and equipment for children, which meet safety standards. Toys are regularly checked for small, broken or loose parts and play areas are checked before young children arrive. Most ages and stages of development are catered for and resources are carefully supervised and monitored to ensure younger children's safety.

Children are kept safe and their welfare safeguarded by the childminder maintaining most of the required documents and procedures. Children are kept safe when travelling in the car, by the use of suitable car seats, written permission is obtained, and business use car insurance is in place. Named persons allowed to collect children are recorded on children's individual record sheets. The first aid box is complete and accessible for use in an emergency. The childminder has a suitable understanding of child protection issues. The childminder is clear on the procedures to follow as set out in the child protection leaflet 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused'.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young children are happy and contented. Their enjoyment and achievement is promoted through the play experiences created during their time spent with the childminder. The childminder has a sound knowledge, understanding and experience of caring for children. Children develop confidence and self-esteem through the interaction, care, love and attention they receive. The childminder actively plays with the children getting down to their level. Children enjoy the interaction as the childminder encourages conversation during their play. Children play with the garage and cars pretending to fill them up with petrol and watch as they roll down the slide. They imitate the childminder's gestures as she smiles and interacts with them. She knows the children well and responds to what they want and need as well as how they feel. The childminder has obtained the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which is seen in practice. She provides suitable play opportunities to help development. However, activities are not planned for, and records of development or care routines are not maintained.

Young children follow flexible routines that flow with their needs. Routines are discussed with parents to ensure continuity of care. Opportunities during the day are created for young children to mix with others when they attend the carer and toddler groups. The childminder includes activities which take into account children's individual needs and offer sensory experiences. They visit the local school vegetable garden patch and plant seeds. Children enjoy baking cakes and they help to empty the dishwasher placing the cutlery into the drawer. Children enjoy outdoor activities such as feeding the sheep, hens and ducks. The childminder actively plays with the children, supporting them in their play and encouraging development, therefore, children benefit from the close attachment formed with their 'special carer', which contributes to their sense of belonging.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated with equal concern and their individual needs are met. They develop a sense of belonging and self-assurance since they form familiar, trusting, safe and secure relationships with the childminder and her family. Children thrive on the positive interaction they receive. They confidently sit beside the childminder as they play together with the cars and garage. Children are provided with a suitable range of resources to promote an understanding of diversity and the wider world.

Children settle easily. They benefit from the physical, psychological and emotional comfort they receive from the childminder. Young children enjoy the company of others, they feel safe and loved. Children behave well. They respond well to the positive ways the childminder rewards achievement, through gestures, such as smiling, praise and encouragement.

Children benefit from the positive relationships developed with parents. Their general welfare is promoted since the childminder collects information from them to ensure individual care is consistently followed. Most of the required documentation and parental consents are in place. However, a system to record complaints is not established and written parental permission to take children on outings, including the farm and surrounding fields has not been obtained. Information is shared verbally with parents on collection. Although the business arrangements made with parents are recorded, written information about the care and activities provided by the childminder is not available.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Young children are cared for by an experienced childminder who supports and encourages them. The childminder has attended a number of additional training sessions; however, her first aid certificate has expired. The childminder therefore, is not meeting the overarching standard and children's safety may be compromised if an emergency situation arose. Children's care, learning and play is supported by the childminder as she gives them individual attention. They settle easily and feel at home and at ease in the warm, welcoming and well organised environment. Young children's developmental needs are met. The childminder has a sound understanding of child development and provides appropriate experiences to enable children to develop, learn and grow into well-rounded individuals.

Children's health, safety and welfare is satisfactorily promoted by the childminder keeping most of the required documentation and appropriate procedures in place. Children's individual needs are recorded and the childminder shares information daily with parents to keep them informed about their child's day. This contributes to continuity in the children's care. The childminder provides a suitable selection of toys and activities for the children she cares for. They experience a number of outdoor activities, which contribute to their good health and socialise with other children at carer and toddler groups.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the childminder has improved the system for recording the administration of medication. Initial permission to administer medication is obtained from parents and then parents countersign the entry in a duplicate recording book. A copy of this entry is then given to parents on collection. Written evidence is available to show business use car insurance has been obtained for carrying children in the car, and the contents of the first aid box is checked and replenished at regular intervals.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- practise the emergency evacuation procedure when caring for children
- ensure a written agreement is maintained with parents which sets out the expectations of both parties as to the care and activities to be provided including the outing arrangements on the farm premises and at lambing times
- obtain an early years first aid certificate.

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