



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	500897
Inspection date	18 October 2006
Inspector	Pauline Pinnegar
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 2001. She lives in a house in Haughton area of Darlington with her husband and two children aged 15 years and eight years old. The ground floor of the house plus upstairs main bedroom is used for children. There is access to a secure garden for outdoor play.

The childminder may care for a maximum of six children at any one time; she is currently caring for three children including one child over eight years. Children attend on both a full and part-time basis. She also has regular care of her two grandchildren aged eight months and four years old. The childminder is a member of her local childminding group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well protected due to the childminder's good procedures and hygiene practices. For example, the children are cared for in a clean and successfully maintained environment. The childminder follows good hygiene practices, such as using anti-bacterial spray to clean food preparation areas before use. Relevant written policies are in place, such as health and hygiene, and no smoking. Children's good health is promoted because they follow daily routines such as hand washing before meals. Clean towels and wipes are used daily. The risk of cross infection is successfully minimised because the childminder has a clear policy for dealing with children when they are unwell and she shares this with their parents. Successful systems are in place and are used to record accidents and medicines involving the children in the provision. The childminder holds a relevant first aid certificate and has this information displayed for parents. The childminder responds well when children are tired, offers cuddles and puts them down to rest; they sleep comfortably in a travel cot.

The children enjoy a wide variety of healthy foods and snacks; these include brown bread, fresh fruit and vegetables. The childminder makes sure that the meals she makes for the children meet their individual dietary needs by seeking detailed information from parents about their children's likes and dislikes and any allergies or special dietary requirements. The childminder helps older children to be independent as they take part in activities, such as making their own sandwiches using pita bread and various fillings. Younger children enjoy a selection of finger foods, such as chopped banana's and grapes. The menu is clearly displayed for parents information.

The children enjoy regular exercise as they walk to and from school each day. They use the local park and play facilities regularly, which ensures they benefit from fresh air. They play happily in the space provided using a good range of resources for physical play, such as ride on toys, balls, skipping ropes and hoops. Indoors they enjoy regular dance sessions The children rest and sleep according to their needs and the childminder provides a quiet and calm environment where they can rest.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a very welcoming, child friendly, safe environment. The space is organised very well to provide children with varied play opportunities, for example, they use the large designated play room for dressing up and role play, reading books and small world play. The dining table is used for creative experiences. The childminder works directly with the children and is vigilant as they play and this keeps them safe. For example, children are closely supervised as the childminder is always down on the floor with them, or when they toddle off towards the dining room and kitchen. There are detailed policies and procedures, which the childminder successfully implements to promote the children's well-being. For example, the clear fire evacuation procedure is practised routinely with the children to raise their awareness

of how to deal with emergency situations. Children are learning effectively to keep themselves safe, as the childminder talks to them about crossing the road safely.

Children thrive in the warm environment. Many activities take place in the playroom, which is attractively decorated with an abundance of children's art work, photographs and educational displays. They feature colours and numbers. Children access safe toys and equipment, which the childminder constantly develops to provide variety. All are kept clean, are in excellent condition and presented invitingly to children at floor level. This successfully promotes their developing independence.

Children are safeguarded because the childminder has a good understanding of her responsibilities in relation to child protection. She knows the common signs and symptoms displayed by children suffering abuse. The childminder has devised a detailed procedure for dealing with child protection and knows how to record concerns and who to report them to. As a result, she is able to act in the best interests of the children in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem because the childminder welcomes them warmly into her home, and considers their needs above all others. She praises them freely, talks to them frequently and is endlessly patient in her approach to the children. They clearly feel comfortable and secure in their surroundings, and respond with smiles and laughter. Minded children are affectionate with each other which shows that they are forming positive relationships.

Young children show great interest in what they do, for example, they are totally engaged in appropriate activities, such as looking at books with the childminder, and pointing to interesting pictures. Although children have not yet developed sufficient vocabulary to ask questions, they are very confident and make their needs well known to the childminder as they point to toys they would like to play with. She responds positively and provides the words to help build their developing vocabulary. Children acquire new knowledge and skills as they carefully manipulate the keys on the computer the musical activity toys. Although activities for very young children are interesting and entirely appropriate the childminder has little knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to further enhance outcomes for children.

Older children enjoy an abundance of art and craft activities which adorn the playroom. In school holidays the activity plan is displayed for them, with them having lots of input into various ideas for activities. This holiday they have chosen clay and 'foam' modelling. Following the autumn theme, they plan to collect leaves and make collage pictures. A large display reflecting an 'under the sea' in the play room takes pride of place. Baking and dressing up are also firm favourites with the children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for and have their individual needs very well met because the childminder liaises closely with parents to ensure she can cater effectively for all their likes, dislikes, special requirements and routines. She shares all relevant information successfully with parents, such as detailed accident records and excellent verbal communications about the children's day. Settling in periods are offered, which appropriately assists with children's transition from home to setting. Relevant documentation supports the partnership with parents well and they give their written consent where necessary.

Children feel a strong sense of belonging and are very secure in their surroundings because the childminder welcomes them as part of the family, treating all children with equal value and concern. She provides an abundance of resources and equipment that are age-appropriate and educational. Children have a growing awareness of the local and wider community because the childminder provides a range of multicultural equipment, such as books, dressing up clothes and small world equipment. Children also explore festivals, such as Chinese New Year and practise writing their names in Chinese script. They also taste different foods from around the world, such as Italian pasta, Chinese tea, and onion bhajis. Children's awareness is raised further by visits to the local Mosque and Christian churches.

The space available to the children and the ground floor facilities enable all children to access the provision with ease. The childminder has a good understanding of child development, which enables her to support all children as they play and learn. Young children are given lots of attention; therefore, they are fully occupied and interested in their toys and surroundings.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are very settled with the childminder and in the environment. This means that they are happy in their play. Space is used effectively to cater for the children's play needs. They are able to move around confidently. The childminder has completed the required training and is committed to ongoing training in order to develop her knowledge and understanding of childcare practice. The childminder plans her day well and routines in place are based on the children's needs, thus enabling them to gain maximum enjoyment from activities provided.

Children are kept safe and their welfare is safeguarded by the childminder's appropriate implementation of required documentation. These are well organised and stored confidentially. However, the complaints procedure has not been updated to reflect changes to regulations. There are effective systems in place for the sharing of information with parents about the service and their child's activities. This contributes to continuity in the children's care. The childminder's certificate of registration is clearly displayed for parents. She has written and adopted a full range of user-friendly policies and procedures which she shares effectively with parents.

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 provider was to ensure the complaints procedure contains the contact number for Ofsted.

The complaints procedure for parents now includes all the relevant contact detail for Ofsted which contributes to successful partnership with parents.

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 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):

- develop knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to enhance outcomes for children
- develop the complaints procedure in line with changes to regulations.

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