



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	505672
Inspection date	01 September 2006
Inspector	Alison Weaver
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 2000. She has completed a CACHE level 3 Certificate in Childminding Practice. She lives with her husband and three children aged 13, 11 and three years. They live in a house in a residential area near to schools, shops and parks. The whole of the ground floor of the property is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The childminder has a rabbit and a tortoise.

The childminder is registered to care for four children at any one time and is currently minding two school age children. The childminder attends local carer and toddler groups on a regular basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean environment. They learn the importance of personal hygiene through good everyday routines such as hand washing before eating and doing cooking activities. The childminder gently reminds children about the need to wash their hands and not to put fingers in their mouths. The use of a shared towel is less effective at preventing cross infection. The childminder uses appropriate procedures to help children stay clean and healthy, for example, she wipes the toilet seat each time a child uses it.

The childminder provides drinks regularly for the children to prevent them becoming dehydrated. Children bring their own packed lunches with them, which are stored appropriately. The childminder makes sure that the food the children bring is healthy so that they eat well. If necessary, she supplements the food provided with healthier options. She encourages children to eat fruit when they are with her. They enjoy picking fruit from the trees in the garden, which they wash and then eat for snacks.

Children regularly enjoy activities to help them develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills. The childminder is aware of the importance of children having fresh air and exercise, particularly those who do not have access to outdoor space at home.

The appropriate procedures for the care of sick children ensure that their welfare is promoted. The childminder has the necessary knowledge and acts appropriately if a child has an accident. She gives medication to the children with the prior written agreement of parents. However, she does not always record the time it is given to ensure that parents are made fully aware and the danger of over dosing is minimised.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a secure and generally well-organised home where risks are minimised effectively. The childminder assesses the risks well for the individual children and takes all necessary precautions to enable them to play free from harm. She makes children aware of safety issues, for example, when they sit on the tall chairs in the kitchen she reminds them why they need to sit still. Toys and resources are age appropriate and well maintained so that children play safely with them. These are stored in a side room so that children can access some of them easily. The children learn how to use equipment safely as the childminder chats to them about it. For example, they talk about being careful with scissors when making large models together.

Effective procedures for the collection of children and the childminder's satisfactory knowledge of child protection procedures contribute to the safeguarding of children. In addition, the childminder has good procedures for outings to help keep children safe whilst in her care; for example, child restraints are used, emergency contacts are in place and a first aid kit is taken on outings. The childminder sets clear safety rules for the children when they go out, particularly when they go to places where there is water about. Children practice road safety with the

childminder. They also learn about the need to be wary around strangers and dogs when out. This all helps children to develop their own understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

An appropriate evacuation plan, smoke alarms and an accessible fire blanket contribute to keeping children safe in the event of a fire. Children regularly practice fire evacuation with the childminder so that they know what to do in an emergency.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children make themselves at home in the friendly and caring environment. Their sense of belonging is encouraged by the use of low coat pegs for the children. The childminder develops their independence by getting them to try to do things for themselves, such as putting on their shoes and coats.

The children choose from a good range of age appropriate toys and activities, which challenge and stimulate them. Children enthusiastically participate in the wide variety of activities provided. They experience different craft activities, including making boats from huge cardboard boxes. The childminder promotes their imagination very effectively by getting them to think about what they are doing and express their thoughts. She lets the children make their own decisions about how to make the models but provides any necessary support to enable them to achieve their end goal. The children enjoy making chocolate cakes and smoothies. They explore using their senses, playing in the water with different objects and materials. They have fun finding creatures in the digging area in the garden. Children also benefit from a range of interesting experiences outside the home, including walks on the Downs and outings to farms.

The children play very happily in the setting. The childminder devotes her time to playing with the children and supporting them in their play. As they have fun, the children develop and learn new skills, such as number recognition and counting. They discover what is heavy and what is light as they chat together about 'floating' as they wash the fruit in the sink. The childminder builds good, close, caring relationships with the children. She is sensitive to their needs, for example, when they get tired she offers quieter activities or cuddles up with them to look at books together. The childminder encourages a love of books with the children. She helps children improve their vocabulary and language skills by talking to them and reinforcing words.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder has a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities and is aware of the need to ensure individual children's needs are met. She obtains the necessary information about the individual children so that she can care for them appropriately. Children have access to some resources that show positive images of other races, religions and cultures to make them aware of the wider world. There are also some available that show images of disability. The childminder has limited experience of working with children with special needs, but has a reasonable understanding of possible issues around their care.

Children benefit from a lot of praise and encouragement given by the childminder. As a result, the children are confident and well behaved. Basic house rules maintained by the childminder help them learn what behaviour is acceptable. The childminder encourages children to develop good manners and to respect others. She has her own appropriate methods of behaviour management, such as diffusing situations before a problem develops and encouraging children to develop the skills to sort out differences themselves. The childminder also uses a good range of books with the children to discuss and develop their understanding of different issues relating to behaviour. The childminder seeks to provide consistent care for the child with the parents. However, not all behaviour management strategies agreed with parents, though not yet put in force, are appropriate to meet the needs of individual children.

The childminder works closely with parents to keep them informed about their child's day. She uses verbal feedback at the end of the day and more formal written information for parents of younger children. This consists of a useful sheet called 'A Day in the Life of' which tells parents what the child eats, activities they enjoy and about toileting. Parents of older children receive a plan of the proposed activities for the school holiday periods so that they know what their child will be taking part in.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children receive a good level of adult support and attention, which helps them feel secure. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides. The relevant and required documentation and consents are in place to support the care of the children and to comply with regulations. There is a minor weakness with regard to the records relating to the administration of medication. The childminder gives new parents a professional looking introductory handbook. This written information sets out a clear outline of her policies and childminding practices, which helps towards creating a good working relationship with parents.

The childminder keeps herself well informed of current childcare practices by attending further training. This includes courses on childminding practices, the Birth to three matters framework and first aid. She uses this knowledge to continue to improve the care she offers children. The childminder has also kept up to date with the recent changes to the National Standards and amended her written policies accordingly.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to consider including the exclusion policy for infectious diseases in the information for parents. The childminder has now done so and this helps ensure that children are cared for appropriately if they become ill.

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):

- ensure that behaviour management strategies agreed with parents meet the needs of the child
- improve the recording of administration of medication.

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