



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	506545
Inspection date	01 September 2006
Inspector	Michelle Smith
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 has been registered for approximately 20 years. She lives with her husband in Market Drayton and regularly works with an assistant. The ground floor of the property is used for childminding. There is an enclosed garden, which is accessed from the kitchen. The property is within walking distance of a playing field, schools and parks. The childminder has a budgerigar that is kept in a cage in the kitchen.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum six children under eight years when working alone and eight children when working with an assistant. She is currently caring for eight children under eight years. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and has a level three child care qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is effectively promoted for the large majority of the time. Children know that they need to wash their hands before eating and after toileting. Older children role model hand washing well and give gentle reminders to younger children. A bag with soap inside provides a useful tool to encourage them to be independent. Routines such as cleaning the table before they eat and a written sick child policy help to prevent the spread of infection. Most procedures protect children in emergency medical situations. The childminder has a valid first aid certificate and a fully stocked first aid box. However, not all parents have been asked to provide written consent for the childminder to seek emergency medical advice or treatment should the situation arise. This compromises their protection overall.

Children enjoy healthy and nutritious food. They are involved in the preparation of meals, such as chopping apples and blackberries. This helps them to have a positive attitude to food and to begin to understand through discussion where food comes from. Snacks, such as strawberries and bananas help children to eat their five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. They are well hydrated as the childminder offers drinks frequently.

Children's physical development is encouraged and promoted. For example, they gain further control of their large skills through riding bikes in the garden and outdoor play. Children's small skills, such as their hand eye coordination are making sound progress. They use scissors with increasing control as they cut around set shapes and hold small pieces with their finger tips as they make cards.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children use the space available with confidence. They set up a tea party in the play area using materials and food to create an imaginative area in which their ideas flow. The back lounge and the breakfast kitchen provide sufficient space for them to play and move freely. Children move their resources around to suit their play needs. The toys are stored at an appropriate height, are well maintained and easily accessible. This helps them to become independent, self motivated learners.

Children are cared for in a safe indoor environment. They are unable to leave the premises alone as a stair gate restricts access to outdoors. A belt is fastened to the external gate to prevent children leaving or visitors entering quickly. Children are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They use knives during a cooking activity. The childminder provides knives suitable to the age and developmental stage of the individual child. Children explain with growing knowledge why they have different knives and understand the consequences of them being too sharp. Children are mostly safe outdoors. Their access to certain parts of the garden is limited and suitable car seats are in place. However, not all parents have given their consent for their child to be transported in a vehicle which reduces their safety overall.

Children are safeguarded as a result of the childminder's developing knowledge of the child protection procedures. All contact details for the relevant agencies are readily at hand ensuring that any concerns are forwarded to the appropriate agency and advice is sought.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the childminders care. They participate with enthusiasm in both focused and free play activities. Children enjoy expressing their creativity as they make cards using a wide variety of textures, such as cardboard and lace. They talk with confidence during activities, about their own culture and familiar experiences. The childminder builds warm relationships with the children. Children make reasonable decisions, for example what to write inside the card they have made. She plans activities and asks questions to make them think and challenge their learning. For example, children carry out an experiment to find out the properties of objects such as wool and pasta. Younger children learn about floating and sinking and older children are challenged to define objects which they are not familiar with, such as curtain hooks. All children concentrate well and work effectively together.

Children learn about shapes, colours, numbers and textures as they explore their resources and surroundings. They name the colour of the object they are experimenting with and count with pasta. The childminder interacts sensitively with them. She gives them space to play alone and negotiate ideas between themselves, balancing this with focused tasks which she has planned to provide challenge and extend their learning in a more formal way. Children are secure and enjoy their time in the childminder's care.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are respected and valued as individuals. The childminder knows them well and takes care to make sure that activities are pitched at a level to provide challenge for all. Older children know they are more able to in some areas and offer help to younger children, for example when using scissors during an art activity. A calm environment is provided where children show care and concern for each other. They make sure the fruit at snack time is shared fairly and work out for themselves whose turn it is to go first when completing an experiment. This helps them to develop a clear sense of right and wrong and to begin to take reasonable responsibility for their own actions.

Children benefit from the childminders experience of working with children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The childminder takes time to understand each child's needs and to make sure that she is tailoring her service to meet the needs of all children attending. All children are supported very positively which makes learning fun. Through posters, discussions and resources they are learning about their own culture and the beliefs of others.

Relationships with parents are satisfactory. Parents can request to see the written policies at any time and are shown them directly at the initial interview. Any new policies which are introduced are discussed with all parents and most of the required documents are signed. The

childminder keeps parents adequately informed of their child's daily experiences and routines as she talks to them at the start and end of the day. This helps to mirror the child's home care routines and provides them with consistency of care.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children receive a high level of attention when the childminder is working alone with them. She makes good use of her time, space and resources. Some activities are planned prior to the children's arrival. As a result, the childminder spends the large majority of her time working directly with them. She sits at the table with them whilst they are making cards, supporting their play and adding different resources to inspire new ideas. The space within the home is well organised. Children are able to move freely between rooms and access their resources with ease. Children's welfare is protected as they are never left alone with persons not vetted.

Documents are not sufficiently organised to support children's care. The large majority of the regulatory documents are in place, for example all accidents are signed by parents. However, not all parents have been asked to give written consent for emergency medical care and for their child to be transported in a vehicle. The childminder regularly works with an assistant. The times when the assistant is present are clearly recorded, as is the attendance of the children. A condition of the childminders registration states that 'an assistant may, at agreed times be left in sole charge of the children with parents written consent'. This consent is not in place for all children and compromises the care they receive. The childminder does not give sufficient importance to maintaining documents on a daily basis and many documents were updated in bulk prior to the inspection taking place.

Overall, the needs of the range of children cared for are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, some improvements have been made to enhance some aspects of children's safety. The childminder now has a copy of local child protection literature and records the times when her assistant is present. Written consent is now in place for the large majority of children to have sun cream applied when the weather necessitates.

Complaints since the last inspection

Concerns were raised after a child in the care of the childminder suffered a serious head injury. The cause for this injury is not known, and it is believed that the injury may have occurred during the times the child was minded. These concerns relate to National Standard 13 – Child Protection.

The childminder agreed to voluntarily suspend their childminding services during the course of an investigation from an outside agency. The outside agency completed their investigations with no further actions, and the childminder returned to her childminding service. Ofsted made the decision to address these issues with a full inspection, which took place on 1 September 2006.

Ofsted can confirm the childminder remains qualified for registration.

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):

- obtain written parental consent to transport children in a vehicle and for the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment
- ensure all documents are maintained on a daily basis
- ensure parents give their written agreement to children being left in the sole care of an assistant for agreed times.

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