

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	506988
Inspection date	08 January 2008
Inspector	Ann Marie Lefevre
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 1992 and continued to mind when she moved to the current home in 1997. She is approved to mind a maximum of six children at a time. There are currently seven children attending at various times; two of these children are 12 and 13 years of age.

The household consists of the childminder, her husband and their two sons who are aged 14 and 17 years of age. Their home is a semi-detached house which is situated in a market town located between the towns of Morpeth and Berwick-upon-Tweed. The house is a short distance from shops, schools and other local amenities. Minded children have access to the sitting room, dining room, conservatory and kitchen on the ground floor. There are two bedrooms and the bathroom available for minding purposes on the first floor. A further bedroom is not available. The front garden is open plan and used for access to the premises. The enclosed rear garden is available for outdoor play.

Children are taken to local resources on a regular basis. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association. She also helps run a parent and toddler group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well protected as the childminder ensures that their health needs are fully met in accordance with their parent's wishes. Their health requirements are highlighted in the individual records and relevant information. Accident and medication recording systems are in place the childminder is fully aware of how to maintain these. The childminder also has relevant written policies in place which are available for the parents of children attending. There is a very well stocked first aid kit in place which is replenished as required and items are in date. However, there is also a travel kit and some items have exceeded the use by date. The childminder has recently updated her first aid training. The childminder sees that children benefit from being cared for in a healthy environment.

Children really benefit from being in premises which are very clean and comfortable. They have many opportunities to develop their understanding of health and hygiene in their daily routines and activities as well as from the extremely positive example set by the childminder. Children are encouraged to take responsibility as they gain age appropriate awareness of washing their hands before handling food or after going to the toilet, after messy play and on their return from outings. There are clean towels each day and liquid soap dispensers are used to help minimise cross infection. In addition, children are encouraged to keep their play space tidy after activities and respond well to prompts to clear small items away. They happily use toy vacuum cleaners in games of pretend to demonstrate how carpets are cleaned.

The childminder has a clear awareness of healthy eating which ensures children have a balanced diet. Children enjoy a variety of fresh fruit, raisins and an occasional biscuit at snack time. Freshly prepared and cooked main meals are also provided which include vegetables or salad. Meals are relaxed social events as children sit around a dining table in appropriate seating. Children are encouraged to have regular drinks of water or sugar free juice and drinks are easily accessible for each child. They also have opportunities to see how food arrives on the table as they help make buns or biscuits for snack time. The childminder has strategies in place to ensure that any special dietary needs are met effectively.

Children develop their physical and emotional well-being in a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. They are able to gain lots of exercise and fresh air from supervised outdoor play where they can have energetic fun in the enclosed garden. The childminder does not drive which results in children really benefiting as they walk to a wealth of resources. Children may visit a local park, the gardens of a country estate or enjoy trips to the shops. They also have many opportunities to socialise with other children and adults as they visit a toddler group, soft play or meet up with other childminders and minded children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder ensures the premises are safe and secure. Many effective safety measures have been taken, for example, hazardous materials are kept out of child reach, smoke alarms and a carbon monoxide detector are fitted, a fire blanket is located on the kitchen wall for ease of use and a fire evacuation procedure and plan of the premises has been prepared. Safety gates are in place to the top and bottom of the stairs, the exit doors are secured effectively and hazardous materials are inaccessible.

Children gain independence as they use the designated childcare areas with good, close age-appropriate supervision and support from the childminder. The premises are very welcoming and well organised for children to use safely. The childminder actively encourages children to be aware of hazards, both in and outside the home, in daily routines and in activities. Care is also taken when children are out of the home environment in the community, for example, they are helped to understand about road safety, following the green cross code and generally being careful when near traffic.

Children use a variety of good quality equipment and toys so they can play in safety. They respond well to guidance about the safe use of these resources. Children are protected as the childminder ensures that the toys, equipment and furniture are in a sound and clean condition by checking items regularly. She ensures that the play resources are appropriate for the age and stage of development of each child.

Children's welfare is promoted well by the childminder having documentation in place in relation to safety. Current public liability insurance has been obtained. A child protection policy is in place and the childminder has participated in child protection training. Although there have been no concerns to date, the childminder has a clear understanding of child protection procedures, what signs to be aware of, who to contact and what to record if she has concerns in the future. Therefore, children are protected in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thrive and progress very well as they have many opportunities to enjoy a wealth of stimulating and exciting activities and projects. They learn effectively and develop their knowledge and skills in lots of fun and imaginative ways. There is a good balance of resources in the setting so that children may pursue their individual interests as well as participate in group activities.

Art, craft and other creative activities feature highly in the setting. Children use lots of different materials to create lovely pictures, models and designs. They make 3D cards, Halloween calendar pictures to hang on the wall and use different shapes to make patterns. They participate in embroidery activities, dressing up for games of pretend and join in songs and rhymes. Children also gain practical life experience as they join in cookery activities. There are many games, puzzles, books and construction toys which are rotated to maintain maximum interest.

The childminder shows warmth and affection as she works with the children. She clearly values them and has a very good understanding of how they learn and develop. There is a sound knowledge of each child, and the wishes of parents, to ensure there is consistency and continuity for children to progress and learn effectively. The childminder is skilled at using a range of methods to promote and reinforce learning, for example, as she initiates and encourages interesting discussions to help children extend their learning and awareness. The childminder helps children to develop their vocabulary skills by using simple and clear language; this is obviously a strength in the setting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to be polite and well behaved. They learn about sharing and valuing others from the very good role model provided by the childminder. She gently and sensitively

supports, praises and encourages them in daily routines and activities which helps children to develop their self-esteem, confidence and sense of belonging. The childminder actively encourages children to share their opinions and make decisions. Children respond well to guidance from the childminder and they participate fully during each session.

Parents are fully involved in planning for the care of their children and the exchange of information necessary for their child's positive development. The childminder keeps them up to date in relation to daily activities and events as well as health and safety issues. There is a very well organised and detailed information file and a brochure, which includes policies and procedures. In addition, children share their experiences with parents as they may take lots of art and craft work home to show what they have achieved.

Children develop their awareness of equal opportunities and respecting individual needs from the childminder's positive attitude and good example. There are many ways for children to develop a greater understanding of their local community. Children participate in activities relating to familiar celebrations, such as Christmas when they made cards and crackers. They are also developing their understanding of the wider world and other cultures in activities, for example, making a dragon in relation to the Chinese New Year. There are resources that reflect differing cultures and backgrounds, for example, books and toys.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children really benefit from the childminder's professional, caring, calm and focussed approach in her contact with children. This is reflected in the way she has organised child care areas in her home, in the many health and safety measures taken and in the range of resources and activities provided. Clearly defined daily routines enable children to settle well and feel secure in the setting. The recording systems are very well maintained. The register of child attendance is kept as each child arrives and again as each child departs.

The childminder has a positive approach to developing her existing knowledge, skills and childcare awareness as she participates in a relevant training. She has completed a some courses in relation to health, safety and care. She has plans to do further training in the coming year to enhance her existing good practice.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one recommendation made at the last inspection in relation to the childminder continuing to develop her existing skills by participating in additional training. This has been addressed as first aid training has recently been updated and there are plans to update child protection training and participate in the Introduction to Childminding Practice course for the benefit of children attending.

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 the 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 the contents of the first aid kits are within the use by dates.

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