

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	510975
Inspection date	04 February 2008
Inspector	Deborah Jaqueline Newbury
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 registered in 1997. She lives with her husband and three children aged 13, 10 and eight weeks in Whitton, Middlesex. Local shops, schools and parks are within walking distance of the childminder's home.

The whole house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The childminder is registered to care for a total of four children under eight years at any one time. She is currently minding three school aged children. Days and times of children's attendance vary.

The childminder has achieved NVQ Levels 2 and 3 in Early Years, Care and Education and she is a member of the National Childminding Association.

The childminder takes and collects children from local schools.

The family has a cat.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have opportunities to play outdoors in the garden, weather permitting. They usually walk back to the childminder's house after school each day, and thus benefit from physical activity and spending time outside in the fresh air. The childminder finds that this arrangement also encourages conversation, which means that she is able to share in the children's day and find out what they have been doing. Children sit and relax on the sofa if they are feeling tired and need a rest.

Children have a drink and snack when they get back from school. The childminder tends to choose items that she knows children will eat and which take account of their preferences. However, the food provided does not generally include anything to encourage and promote children's understanding of the importance of healthy eating. Parents are aware of what their children have to eat as the minder discusses and agrees this with them; she also ensures she is aware of any specific dietary requirements children may have. This ensures she is able to meet their individual needs.

Children are always encouraged to wash their hands when they get back to the childminder's house after school; they are conscious that this forms part of their usual daily routine and immediately race upstairs to the bathroom after taking their shoes off. Children share a towel although the childminder does change this on a daily basis. There are suitable procedures in place to ensure hygiene within the home and to minimise the potential for the spread of infection. The childminder provides a clean home and she does not care for children when they are unwell. Positive steps are taken to ensure the family's cat does not pose any health or safety risk. Children are treated appropriately in the event of them sustaining a minor injury or accident whilst in the childminder's care as she has a valid first aid certificate.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a warm and welcoming environment. They have sufficient space to move around and sit and play in comfort. They explore a suitable range of age appropriate resources that are clean and of good quality. Play materials are well organised and are checked regularly by the childminder to ensure they are safe for children to use.

Children stay safe because the childminder assesses her home according to the age and ability of the children she cares for and takes steps to minimise potential hazards. The premises are secure and the childminder implements generally suitable fire safety precautions. A fire blanket and fire extinguisher are available in the kitchen although currently there is only one smoke alarm in situ. The childminder has given some consideration as to how she would safely evacuate the premises should this be necessary but does not practise this with children to develop their understanding of what they need to do if there is a fire.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe with the support and guidance of the childminder and the setting of clear boundaries. They are very aware of these and chat about what they need to do when crossing the road, and the reasons why they need to stay within sight of the minder when they are walking home from school.

Children are safeguarded because the childminder has a satisfactory understanding of her role and responsibility with regard to child protection. She has access to relevant information with appropriate contact numbers to guide her in the action she should take if she has any concerns. However, she does not inform parents of her responsibility to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children currently in the childminder's care attend for short periods of time only. She is aware that children are likely to have been engaged in directed activities for most of the day and prefers not to organise them too much after school. Children therefore have the freedom to make their own decisions about what they do. They chat freely with one another and play contentedly with independently chosen play materials that interest them and satisfy their individual preferences. They have the opportunity to play outside in the garden, where they often devise their own games. They sometimes take part in creative activities, such as painting or playing with playdough or perhaps read their school books.

Children get on well with one another, and with the childminder and her family. They enjoy exploring the different play materials available; for instance setting up a play mat and using different small world animals to act out stories and investigating the different objects a magnet will attract. Children express their views about the activities they like doing best when they are at the childminder's home; they state they enjoy playing outside in the garden and watching their favourite DVD.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are acknowledged as individuals and treated with equal concern. They have equal access to the different play materials available and are not restricted in what they choose to explore. These include a small selection of items that reflect positive images to support their awareness of social diversity and the wider world in which we live. The childminder expresses a willingness to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities provided she can meet their needs and balance with the needs of any other children present.

Children behave well. The childminder uses positive reinforcement to promote children's understanding of acceptable forms of behaviour and ensures they are aware of her house rules; for example the need for politeness and good manners. Children's self-esteem is fostered through her use of praise and positive manner.

The childminder discusses and agrees arrangements for children's care with parents on an informal basis. They are invited in when they come to collect their children at the end of the day and the childminder makes time to talk to them about how children spend their time and to share any information she has been asked to pass on by the children's teachers. The childminder has recently put together a written policy statement to inform parents of the procedure they should follow if they wish to make a complaint although this is not sufficiently detailed to ensure they are well informed. Written consent is in place for some aspects of children's care.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, the childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides. Children benefit from a suitably organised home in which they feel at home. They move freely around those areas used for minding and make their own decisions about where they play; thus they develop confidence in their surroundings.

Required documentation is in place although there are some gaps in the healthcare records to promote the welfare of children. The childminder displays her certificate of registration but does not ensure that this is in a place where it can be easily viewed by parents, to enable them to check her conditions of registration if they so wish.

Since the last inspection the childminder has completed a National Vocational Qualification level 3 in Early Years, Care and Education. This demonstrates a positive attitude to professional development.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder was asked to obtain written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. She has put together a written consent form for this purpose but has not yet asked the parents of the children currently in her care to complete this. This issue has been carried forward as an area for attention.

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):

- consider ways of providing children with a greater choice of food items for snack to promote their awareness of healthy eating
- improve fire safety precautions by ensuring there is a fully operational smoke alarm on both floors of the home and provide opportunities for children to practise the emergency evacuation procedure

- ensure parents are sufficiently well informed of the procedure they should follow if they wish to make a complaint and how they can expect this to be dealt with if it relates to a National Standard and in what time-scale. Obtain written parental consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment
- ensure the certificate of registration is displayed so it is visible to parents during the hours of minding.

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