

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	560130
Inspection date	13 November 2007
Inspector	Carole Argles
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 1999. She lives with her husband and three children aged five, eight and 10, in Mere, Wiltshire. Minded children use all ground floor areas of the house except the dining room. A first floor bedroom is used for sleeping young children. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The family owns several pets including a dog, a cat and two tortoises. Their home is within walking distance of local schools, pre-schools and parks.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time. She currently provides care for four children aged under five years and for three children of school age. At present, there are no children on roll who have learning difficulties or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children's health is well supported by the childminder who has a good understanding how to provide a nutritious and balanced diet and is careful to meet specific dietary requirements.

Children receive freshly prepared cooked meals and snacks which include organic meat, fruit and vegetables. Drinks of water or additive-free cordial are readily available at all times so that the children can help themselves when they are thirsty. Children take part in cooking activities, sometimes, helping to prepare sandwiches or to make pizzas for their meal. They talk with the childminder about the importance of eating a healthy diet and about how to look after their teeth.

There are effective measures in place to minimise the risk of infection spreading between children. The childminder keeps her home and the toys clean. She provides individual bedding and a separate nappy changing mat for each child. Children are not cared for if they are ill or infectious. The childminder holds a suitable first aid certificate and there are appropriate procedures for the safe administration of medication. The children begin to learn about the importance of good hygiene routines.

The children are encouraged to be active and have daily opportunities for exercise. For example, they walk to the nearby school and often go to parks to play football and run around freely. They go for walks to feed the ducks or play 'Pooh sticks'. There is a wide variety of physical play equipment in the childminder's garden including a climbing frame and trampoline. The younger children push buggies and trolleys around in the childminder's house and some attend age-appropriate gym sessions. These enjoyable activities promote control and coordination of their movements and encourage them to adopt an active lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are welcoming to children, well maintained and kept secure. There is a separate playroom which is decorated with many posters and examples of children's artwork. Toys and activities are stored where they are readily available for the children to select independently. The childminder makes effective use of space sometimes providing activities in different rooms so that older children can play undisturbed with toys that are unsuitable for the younger ones. There is a wide range of age-appropriate toys and resources which are safe and suitable for the children to use because they are of good quality and checked regularly by the childminder.

The childminder has a good understanding of safety issues and takes appropriate measures to minimise the risk of injury to the children. For example, she has stops on the doors to prevent children trapping their fingers, and stairgates and cupboard locks to prevent them accessing hazardous areas. She promotes their safety on outings and has age-appropriate car seats available for all children. The garden is securely fenced and gated and generally safe for the children to use. There is a safety net on the trampoline and a bark surface underneath some larger play equipment. However, the childminder does not always ensure that the garden is kept tidy as, for instance, there are plant pots and other miscellaneous items lying around. The children begin to learn how to keep themselves safe. They frequently practise the fire drill so they know how to act in an emergency. They talk with the childminder about how to cross the road safely and what they should do if they become separated from their carer when out.

The childminder has a sound understanding her role in safeguarding children and protecting them from harm. She knows the signs that may indicate that children are being abused or neglected and the agencies to contact in the event of concerns about the welfare of a child in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are relaxed and comfortable with the childminder and young children readily go to her for cuddles and reassurance. There is a good level of interaction between them and the childminder sits on the floor so that she can be involved with their play. The children can choose independently from a wide range of age-appropriate toys. They are well occupied and enjoy what they do. They investigate objects and are beginning to show sustained concentration. For example, young children sit for a long period examining toys to see how they work, or using a shape sorter, or taking small items in and out of a box. These activities help to promote their hand-eye coordination and small muscle movements. The children enjoy singing with the childminder and happily take part in action songs such as 'Row the boat'.

The childminder provides a varied range of activities for the children, taking account of their interests. For example, she has accumulated a wide variety of resources for a child who enjoys collage. At present the children are thinking about space and planets. Activities are adapted so that all can take part, for example, when they make pictures of rockets. The childminder takes advantage of children's play and routine activities to support their learning. For example, they count bricks, apples as they put them in a bag at the shops and pictures in books. The younger children visit a local toddler group weekly where they have opportunities to mix with others their own age. Children receive plenty of praise and encouragement from the childminder and this promotes their self-esteem and confidence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The children's individual needs are met effectively by the childminder who establishes sound working relationships with their parents. They ensure there is continuity in the children's care by talking about them daily. There is a suitable process to help young children settle quickly and information is exchanged about the child's usual routines, for instance, how they like to be made comfortable for a sleep. The childminder keeps an eye on the children's development and brings any concerns about their progress to parents' attention. She is flexible to accommodate parents' work patterns and has information available for them so that they understand what is provided for their child. The childminder obtains most of the written required consents and information. However, she has not requested written consent from all parents to seek medical advice or treatment for their child in the event of an emergency.

The children use a suitable range of resources including books and pretend play toys, which show positive images of diversity. The childminder helps them begin to find out about their own culture and traditions as well as those of others in society by talking with them about celebrations and festivals such as Christmas and Diwali. This helps the children develop an accepting attitude towards others. The childminder has a sound understanding of positive ways to manage children's behaviour and they respond well to this. She has consistent age-appropriate expectations and the children are helped to understand why sometimes what they do is unwanted. She works closely with parents to achieve a consistent approach, agreeing the strategies that she uses. This helps the children learn to manage their own behaviour.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Suitable policies and procedures are in place to promote the children's safety and welfare. The childminder maintains most of the required records which are kept confidential and retained for the required period. The children benefit from her organisational skills. She makes effective use of her home to provide a welcoming environment for them and to ensure that their needs are met. She keeps to the required adult to child ratios and gives children her attention and support. She undertakes appropriate training and holds a relevant childcare qualification. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the childminder agreed to ensure that the record of children's attendance is accurate and kept up to date, and to establish written agreements with parents. The children's safety has been increased because the childminder now completes her attendance record as children enter her house, detailing the times of their arrival and departure. She has enhanced the partnership with parents because detailed written agreements are in place. These set out the expectations of both parties about the financial arrangements and the children's care, ensuring parents understand what will be provided for their child.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the childminder or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The childminder 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):

- request written consent from parents to seek medical treatment or advice for their child in the event of an emergency
- review the tidiness of the garden to promote the children's safety.

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