

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY235692
Inspection date	31 July 2007
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 has been registered since 2002 and lives with her husband and two children aged three and five years of age in Blackwater, Hampshire. The home is within walking distance of local shops, parks and schools.

Most minding takes place on the ground floor of the home. Toilet and sleep facilities are provided upstairs. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play; this is fully paved. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children under eight years of age. She is currently caring for eight children aged from 20 months to eight years. Days and times of children's attendance varies.

The childminder goes to local schools, pre-schools and nurseries to take and collect children. She attends a local childminding group and regularly takes children to the park, library and on other outings. The family has one dog.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children spend lots of time outside and so, benefit from plenty of fresh air and exercise which contributes to a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy playing on the bikes and scooters in the garden and using the bats and balls. Children are also able to use the trampoline. This is enclosed with a safety net and children are only allowed on one at a time under supervision. Written parental consent to use this has not been obtained though. Children regularly go to the park and the childminder will often stop here on the way home from school. This allows older children the opportunity to engage in active play after spending the day at school. Children also go to a play gym.

Children are accommodated in a clean environment. They learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care as part of the daily routine; for instance washing their hands before eating. Children share the same towel although this is changed each day. The childminder takes steps to minimise the spread of infection; for example she uses an anti-bacterial spray and ensures family pets do not pose a health or safety risk to children. She makes sure that children playing outside in the sunshine have had sun cream applied and she remains vigilant in ensuring that small children keep sun hats on.

Parents and childminder share responsibility for the provision of food. Food provided by parents is stored appropriately to minimise any potential risk to children's health. The childminder implements a healthy eating policy and she encourages children to try new things. Children enjoy a varied selection of fruit at snack time and they all sit together to share this. They have opportunities to cook whilst they are at the childminder's house and often eat what they have made. Some children bring a packed lunch from home and the childminder makes a point of providing a similar type meal herself for those children she is catering for so that nobody feels left out. Children drink regularly throughout the day.

The childminder has a valid first aid certificate which means she is able to respond appropriately should a child have an accident whilst in her care. However, there are some gaps in the health care records of children attending the setting as the childminder is not always consistent in obtaining prior written consent from parents to administer medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children remain safe as the childminder understands her responsibility to ensure their safety at all times, both inside and outside the home. Children are supervised carefully and the childminder uses appropriate safety measures such as socket covers in areas accessible to children, protecting low level glass and providing stair gates. Generally good security and fire safety precautions contribute to children's overall safety. The front door remains locked and children cannot leave the premises unattended. There is a fire blanket in the kitchen and a smoke alarm on the upstairs landing. However, there is no smoke alarm downstairs. The childminder sometimes talks to children about the procedure they should follow should it be necessary to evacuate the premises and they are familiar with the noise the smoke alarm makes. They have practised fire drills in the past although not recently. The childminder has recently made contact with the Fire Officer and is in the process of arranging for him to visit and talk to the children about fire safety.

The childminder has some understanding of child protection issues and her responsibility to safeguard the children in her care. For instance, she has attended relevant training to develop her knowledge and she informs parents of the action she must take if she has any concerns. However, she does not keep a record of existing injuries and is unaware of the Government booklet 'What To Do If You Are Worried About A Child Is Being Abused.'

Children use age appropriate play materials and equipment. Many items are stored to be easily accessible, which helps children develop their independence. Children learn how to keep themselves and others safe as the childminder draws their attention to potentially unsafe practices. She teaches them road safety when they are out and about and uses relevant books to promote and encourage discussion.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy playing outside in the garden on a warm, sunny day. They have the freedom to choose what they wish to do. Water play is especially popular and the children use the outside tap endlessly to fill up the water pistols which they then delight in squirting everywhere. Younger children use the water to fill a small bath to wash the dolls. Children are happy. They get on well together and have formed secure, friendly relationships with the childminder and her children. Young children enjoy the closeness of cuddles and receive good levels of reassurance from the childminder who picks them up when they indicate this is what they want.

Children develop their social skills as the childminder includes opportunities to meet up with other children. They gain familiarity with their local community and explore areas further afield as they regularly visit the library and go to different parks. They go on outings to a country park, museum and Legoland. On occasions they have gone to the beach and on a hovercraft to the Isle of Wight. Children develop their creativity and explore their imaginations as they participate in art and craft activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are treated with equal concern. Their individual needs are met appropriately because the childminder takes the time to discuss and agree arrangements with parents. She asks parents to complete an information sheet at the start of any placement about their children's likes, dislikes, their general daily routine, any fears they have and any special names they may use for people or objects. She uses this as part of her settling-in procedures. Children learn about diversity and the wider world in which we live as the childminder provides them with books and offers them opportunities to take part in activities relating to other countries.

Continuity of care is achieved through on-going informal exchanges of information with parents. The childminder has devised written policy statements about some aspects of her service and provides parents with their own copy of these. However, parents are not sufficiently informed of the procedure they should follow should they wish to make a complaint and the way they can expect this to be dealt with. The childminder displays her certificate of registration and the Ofsted Parent poster in the hallway where they can be easily seen by parents. She seeks written consent for most aspects of children's care. Written information from parents available at the time of the inspection provides evidence that they are happy with the quality of care children receive and the different activities they take part in.

Children's self-esteem and confidence is fostered through praise. Their awareness of acceptable ways to behave is supported by the childminder who acts as a positive role model. She intervenes as necessary to guide children and encourages sharing and good manners.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are settled and at ease in a warm, welcoming home. They have sufficient space to sit and play in comfort and move freely around those areas used for minding. The conservatory, in particular, is arranged to be appealing to children, with posters on the walls and easily accessible play materials.

The childminder maintains most documentation relating to childminding activities appropriately. However, there are gaps in some records which could compromise children's health and safety. The childminder is not always consistent in her completion of other records and she does not sign some records. Paperwork is stored securely to ensure confidentiality.

The childminder updates her practice through on-going training which benefits the children she cares for.

The childminder has not fully understood the conditions of her registration in respect of the number of children under five years of age she is able to care for at any one time and the need to formally request consent to vary these. From discussion and a sampling of records it is evident that she has been acting in breach of her existing conditions of registration, as stated on her certificate, in that on occasions she has been minding two children under five but her certificate states she can only care for one.

Overall, the childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to develop her record keeping systems. This issue has been addressed appropriately as the childminder keeps records of any medication administered to children, together with the time this is given. This information is shared with parents who are requested to countersign the record.

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):

- ensure permission from all parents is in place before administering medication to children
- improve existing fire safety precautions by ensuring there is a fully working smoke alarm on both floors of the home
- become familiar with the guidance in the Government booklet 'What To Do If You Are Worried About A Child Is Being Abused' and maintain a record of existing injuries
- ensure parents are sufficiently informed of the procedure they should take should they wish to make a complaint and the way they can expect this to be dealt with. Seek parental consent for children to use the trampoline
- ensure that all records relating to childminding activities are complete and signed where appropriate.

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