



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY242133
Inspection date	21 June 2006
Inspector	Noreen Elizabeth Appleby
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 2002. She lives with her family, in Prudhoe. There are schools, pre-schools and toddler groups nearby; as well as shops, parks and local amenities.

The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding purposes. Toilet and hand washing facilities are also on the ground floor. A first floor bathroom is also available. The enclosed garden is not used for outdoor play. Instead, the childminder takes children to a local park.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time. She is currently minding two children, aged two years and six years, as well as two children over eight years of age. All children are cared for on a part time basis. The childminder supports children with learning difficulties. She takes children to, and collects them from, the local school.

The family has a pet dog and a chipmunk, that lives in a cage in the lounge.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children are learning about suitable personal hygiene routines, such as washing their hands after toileting or before mealtimes and by using their own towels and facecloths. Tissues and wipes are also stored within children's reach, thereby encouraging them to attend to their personal needs independently. Children also benefit from suitable hygiene practices that prevent the spread of infection. For example, regular home hygiene routines generally ensure play areas and food preparation areas are adequately clean. However, children's health and hygiene arrangements are presently compromised because of the proximity of areas used by pets, particularly with regard to children's ability to access pet faeces. In addition to this, nappy-changing routines do not adequately minimise the risk to children, through cross-contamination.

Children's health requirements are appropriately discussed with parents and there are suitable procedures in place for sick children or those who have individual health needs. Children's medication and accidents are appropriately recorded and signed by parents. However, children's emergency health requirements are presently compromised because parental permission has not yet been obtained for the seeking of emergency medical treatment or advice. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate, although the course does not adequately cover first aid for infants and young children, nor meet necessary timescales; as required in the National Standards. Regular opportunities for outdoor play and fresh air contribute satisfactorily towards children's health. Children walk to school and they enjoy visits to the park or going to soft play, at the local swimming baths.

Children are adequately nourished and have regular drinks throughout the day. Catering arrangements and children's dietary needs are suitably discussed with parents. The childminder takes account of any special requirements or preferences. Children are offered a suitable range of healthy foodstuffs, such as fish or meat with fresh vegetables or pasta. They sometimes eat processed convenience foods, although they rarely have chips. There is always fresh fruit available and children know they can help themselves. The childminder talks to children about what they would like to eat and encourages them to make healthy choices. Children are learning social skills as they sit together round the table for meals and are encouraged to use good table manners.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children benefit from a warm and welcoming environment. Rooms are sufficiently spacious and suitably ventilated to ensure children's comfort. Children's play areas are adequately organised to allow space for floor and table-top activities, quiet activities and children's rest areas. However, present arrangements do not prevent children from accessing areas used for pets. Accessible toilet and hand-washing facilities enable older children to use facilities independently.

Babies and young children are appropriately supported and their privacy respected. Children move around confidently within the setting. They are appropriately supervised and made to feel welcome.

Children enjoy a satisfactory range of toys, furniture and equipment, suited to their individual ages and developmental stages. Resources are adequately stimulating, interesting to explore and provide sufficient challenge. They help children to develop new skills across all areas of their development, although equipment and activities that promote equality of opportunity and diversity are limited. A suitable variety of toys, books and games is appropriately stored, within children's reach; thereby promoting free choice and independence. The childminder makes sure resources and equipment meet relevant safety standards and she checks them regularly to ensure they are clean and safe for children.

Children's safety is generally considered, both within the setting and on outings. The childminder ensures that premises are secure and that most potential hazards are appropriately minimised. She uses suitable safety equipment, such as cupboard locks, socket covers, smoke alarms and fire safety equipment. However, children's safety is compromised because the childminder has not given sufficient consideration to identifying and practising an emergency evacuation procedure. Therefore, children do not have a clear understanding of action they should take in an emergency. Children are learning to keep themselves safe out of doors, as they use appropriate road safety routines and use the pedestrian crossing, when walking to or from school.

Children's wellbeing is not given sufficient consideration regarding matters of child protection. The childminder does not demonstrate a clear understanding of child protection issues or the need to maintain confidentiality. Present arrangements do not effectively ensure that any concerns about children are promptly reported, in line with procedures issued by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB.)

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's care arrangements are appropriately met. The childminder takes account of children's daily routines and individual needs, whilst providing a sound range of interesting play and learning opportunities. Children generally initiate their own play activities and are allowed to develop at their own pace. The childminder adequately monitors the children's play and asks or responds to questions, to support children's play and learning. Children enjoy exploring a suitable variety of toys and resources, within the home. They also have occasional outings, such as going to the park, to soft play, or occasional outings to the Metrocentre.

Activities build satisfactorily upon children's individual interests and help them to develop new skills. Children are learning social skills as they play nicely together and help one another. Younger children enjoy imaginative role play, such as pretending to be hairdressers or using small world toys and resources. Some children are developing an appreciation for books through listening to stories or looking at illustrations. Older ones sometimes do homework after school. They also enjoy using the computer or watching television. All children have regular opportunities

for creative activities, such as drawing, writing or colouring in and they take pride in their achievements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder has suitable plans in place to learn about children's individual needs. She talks to parents and discusses children's home routines, likes and dislikes to provide continuity of care and help children to settle in comfortably. Sound working relationships are maintained with parents. Information about the child care is appropriately shared with them, using formal contracts and some written agreements. Informal verbal daily updates also keep parents informed of their child's care and progress.

Children are developing a sound understanding of gender issues, as they freely access all toys, equipment and activities. They are beginning to learn about the wider world, through outings into the community, reading books, or watching television programmes that show positive images of different races and cultures. However, resources and activities that positively promote equality of opportunity and diversity continue to be limited. Children with special needs are appropriately supported. The childminder is knowledgeable and sensitive to their individual requirements and ensures they have sufficient support and attention.

Children are learning to behave appropriately as a result of sound strategies which the childminder uses, such as giving the children encouragement and purposeful praise. The childminder uses appropriate speech and body language to reinforce positive behaviour. She talks calmly when handling challenging behaviour and promotes older children to consider the results of their actions. As a result, children are learning to have consideration for each other, manage their behaviour well and are gaining personal self esteem.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children's personal details are suitably recorded and most other required documentation is appropriately maintained in line with the requirements of the National Standards, although parental permission for seeking emergency medical treatment or advice is yet to be drafted. Records are adequately organised and retained for a minimum of two years.

Children benefit from regular, flexible, routines and a suitably organised environment. As a result of being appropriately supervised and supported they are happy and settled with the childminder. Children's care, learning and play experiences are suitably met because the childminder's has completed relevant training and has a positive attitude to her role. However present arrangements regarding accessibility of pet areas, child health and hygiene issues, child protection procedures and fire safety do not effectively ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing. Overall, the provision does not meet the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of the last inspection the childminder agreed to seek parental permission for minded children to play upstairs with the childminder's own children; to improve the range of age appropriate games, toys, art or creative materials and multi-cultural equipment; to install smoke detection on the lower level of the house; to improve the hygiene practices of the children; to draft parental permission for the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future and for outings and transportation and to improve her knowledge of child protection procedures.

Some recommendations have been satisfactorily addressed, whilst others are still outstanding. Bedrooms are no longer used for childminding purposes, so parental permission has not been sought. The range of toys and resources has generally improved, although multi-cultural resources are still very limited. A battery operated smoke alarm has been installed on the ground floor and is suitably maintained. The childminder states she now ensures children wash their hands after toileting and before meals. Parental permissions regarding outings and transportation are included on formal contracts but parents have not yet given consent for the seeking of emergency medical treatment or advice. The childminder has not taken steps to improve her knowledge of child protection procedures. As a result of outstanding issues, children's health, safety and wellbeing is compromised.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted has received one complaint, which related to Standard 13: child protection. The complaint related to children behaving inappropriately, whilst not being closely supervised. In November 2004 an investigation was carried out by Social Services and Ofsted. As a result, actions were raised. The childminder agreed to ensure a suitable procedure is in place for supervising children at all times, to keep a sufficiently detailed record of significant issues and to ensure Ofsted is informed of any significant events. The childminder remained 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:

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure children's health and hygiene requirements are not compromised by the accessibility of areas used for pets, or through the risk of cross contamination during nappy-changing routines
- request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment
- improve fire safety for children, by devising and practising an emergency evacuation plan
- ensure that possible signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect are able to be recognised and that procedures in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) are able to be put into practice

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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