

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY273136
Inspection date	12 June 2007
Inspector	Carol Johnson
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 was registered in 2003. She lives in Birmingham with her husband, who is also a registered childminder and their three children aged 11, nine and eight. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding. This includes a dedicated room for minding purposes, changing area and self contained toilet and wash area. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered for a maximum of six children when minding alone, and a maximum of eight children when co-minding with her husband. Both childminders have joint responsibility for the childminding practice and are currently caring for 11 children between them. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The family keeps tortoises and has two cats.

The childminder supports children with special educational needs. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well protected because the childminder takes effective steps to help prevent the spread of infection. They are cared for in a clean and hygienic environment. Good nappy changing procedures are followed and hygiene routines with regard to the family pets are thorough. Children are learning about the importance of good hygiene practices through well-established daily routines and following the childminder's good example. They are encouraged to wash their hands before meals and after visiting the toilet or messy play.

The childminder takes effective measures to promote children's health and to ensure that their best interests are served should they become ill or have an accident. Regular communication with parents and carers ensures that children's individual medical information is accurately exchanged. The childminder is a qualified children's nurse and holds a current first aid certificate and maintains well-stocked first aid supplies. The childminder's written sickness policy makes it very clear to parents that they should not send children who are clearly unwell and could pose a potential health risk to others. This policy, and the procedures for administering medication, are clearly explained to parents before children start.

Children's dietary needs are met because they are provided with a range of healthy meals and snacks that meet their individual needs. Fruit and vegetables are offered on a regular basis and meals include sandwiches, pasta and jacket potatoes. Discussions, between the childminder and parents, take place with regard to home feeding routines and any allergies or special dietary requirements. This information is recorded and respected. Children are not at risk of dehydration as drinks are a range of drinks freely available, for example, sugar-free squash, water or milk.

Children have easy access to a wide range of activities that help to contribute to their increased physical development. They enjoy regular outings in the local environment, along with visits to soft play centres and local community facilities. The childminder's garden is used as an extension to the indoor environment and contains a wealth of physical play equipment and resources. For example, they can access slides, swings, and wheeled toys. Stimulation and interest is added to their play experiences through the creative use of sand, water, scented flowers, and wind chimes. Children play out in the garden, weather permitting, on a daily basis. They are well protected from the dangers of too much exposure to the sun as natural shade is available and children wear hats and sun screen when necessary.

Children are encouraged to take risks in a safe and supportive environment. They are shown how to safely climb the steps on the slide and use the swings and climbing frames. Children's achievements, now matter how small, are praised and this increases their self-esteem and motivates them to attempt new challenges and refine skills. Indoors, children dance, play musical instruments and join in with action songs. They also take part in activities that help to develop their fine muscles and hand to eye co-ordination. For example, they play with jigsaw puzzles, dough and participate in a wide range of craft activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming, secure and safe environment. An exciting range of toys is accessible to children and attractively presented. Sensory items are placed at child height, both indoors and outside and boxes of toys are placed where children can easily help themselves. Careful attention is given to planning the environment and selecting resources. This ensures that children are not overloaded with choices and stimulation and that there is enough room for them to move and rest in safety and comfort. Comfy and child-height furniture, photographs and examples of children's work displayed on the walls all help children to feel at home and develop a sense of belonging.

Children are kept safe as a result of the childminder's good awareness of safety issues and the sound attention she gives to all aspects of safety inside and outside the home. The childminder and her husband are vigilant, at all times, and they check all areas of their home and toys and equipment on a daily basis. Children are generally well protected from the dangers of fire as an emergency escape plan has been devised and this is displayed in the kitchen. Fire exits are clearly marked; smoke alarms are maintained on both floors of the home and a fire blanket is easily accessible in the kitchen. However, emergency escape plans have not been practised and this compromises children's welfare and safety in the event of a need to evacuate the childminder's home. Children and adults have not had the opportunity to see if these plans work in practice.

The childminder's husband transports children to and from the setting and ensures that his car is well maintained and relevant documentation is in place. The childminder often accompanies her husband on journeys to ensure that ratios are maintained and to offer additional support. Children are suitably restrained, whilst in the car, by the use of appropriate car safety seats. When walking with children the childminder discusses and reinforces road safety. Children are closely supervised and when available, they use crossing patrols or pedestrian crossings.

Children's welfare with regards to child protection is excellently safeguarded. The childminder has a thorough knowledge of child protection issues and is fully aware that her first priority is the safety and welfare of the children in their care. Through discussion she demonstrates a sound understanding of her role in child protection and is fully conversant with the procedures to follow should a concern arise. All parents are shown a copy of the setting's child protection policy and sign to confirm that they are clear with regards to procedures. Children are not released into the care of unknown individuals or left unsupervised with persons who have not been appropriately vetted, for example, workmen or visitors.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children can access plenty of experiences and good quality resources that help to extend and support their learning and play experiences. For example, they can play with construction toys, small world items and lots of wheeled toys. Toys are stored in various places throughout the childminder's home and a selection of toys is put out, on a daily basis, for children to choose from. The selection is adapted to the needs of the children attending the various sessions. Great care is taken to ensure that the amount of accessible resources is not overwhelming to children and that they are developmentally appropriate and safe. Additional resources are borrowed from local loan schemes and children regularly visit community facilities where they

can enjoy a wider range of toys and experiences. This helps to add variety to their play and offers them opportunities to socialise and mix with other adults and children.

The childminder and her husband work together to flexibly plan and organise the daily routine. Sessions include a good mixture of planned and spontaneous play and they reflect children's interests and meet their individual needs. Themes are used to create a focus for activities, for example, colours and numbers. At the time of inspection the theme was 'Me, Myself and I', taken from the 'Birth to three matters' framework and children were being helped to recognise parts of their bodies through looking at mirrors and sharing songs and stories. Mirrors are cleverly used to encourage children to communicate and explore their features and children eagerly join in with action songs, using various parts of their bodies. The childminder mainly supports and plans for children that attend after school. She organises suitable activities, for example, craft and planting flowers and she encourages them to communicate by asking about things that are of interest to them and listening to their responses.

Children are happy and having fun. They laugh; smile and some children eagerly seek out others to join in their play. Children have begun to form positive relationships with the childminder and have settled well. They are at ease to go to her for comfort, reassurance and support and are developing the confidence to explore and initiate their own play. The childminder supports children by giving them time to explore resources, sounds, materials and objects fully. She demonstrates a calm and patient manner and openly shows appreciation of children's efforts, not just their successes. She shares in their delight at their discoveries through using an enthusiastic tone of voice and lots of praise. Children are well nurtured because the childminder responds to and anticipates their needs, for example, she recognises when they are tired or hungry. Consequently, their individual needs are being acknowledged and affirmed.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Differences are valued and children play in an environment that is extremely rich in positive images of diversity. Photographs of children, involved in play, are displayed on the playroom walls and resources reflect the wider community. Soft furnishings, low music and comfortable furniture, in the playroom, create an immensely calm and cosy atmosphere that helps children to settle and feel at home. The childminder works closely and co-operatively with parents and carers, sharing information verbally on a daily basis and providing detailed written information about policies and procedures. Confidentiality for children and their families is assured and personal information is kept secure. The childminder offers parents flexible settling in arrangements for their children and this helps all to adjust gradually.

The childminder displays a very positive attitude towards caring for children with special needs and she demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of a range of needs. A clear policy is in place that effectively captures the provision's inclusive ethos and the nature of the service offered. A proactive approach is taken to ensure that all reasonable adjustments are made for disabled children. This ensures that they can be included in the life of the setting as fully as possible. All areas allow disabled access and privacy is provided when intimate care is needed. The childminder displays a 'can-do' approach and encourages children to take risks and try new experiences in a safe and supportive environment. Children's individual needs are discussed in detail and parents concerns and queries are treated with sensitivity and professionalism. The childminder has an extensive knowledge and understanding of available support mechanisms and works effectively in partnership with parents and other professionals to meet children's

various identified needs. Therefore, all parents can expect any requests for care to be very carefully considered and additional support sought if necessary.

Children's good behaviour is encouraged very effectively through the consistent use of positive behaviour management techniques by both the childminder and her husband. The childminder's thorough and clearly written behaviour policy outlines the methods used and reinforces rules and expectations. Children are taught to show respect for each other, themselves and the property of others. The childminder sensitively offers parents and carers clear support and guidance in dealing with unwanted behaviour. She deals with any incidents patiently and calmly and desired behaviour is encouraged through positive praise and lots of encouragement.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder and her husband work together and take joint responsibility for most aspects of their service. They plan children's activities together and take an equal part in liaising with parents, carers and other professionals. The childminder takes the lead with regards to medical issues and confidently carries out a variety of medical procedures. Parents and children benefit positively from the childminder's experience. She demonstrates a commitment to training and working in partnership with parents and other professionals. This is reflected in the good level of care and service she and her husband provide. Ofsted training requirements are met and suitable systems are in place to protect children from unvetted persons.

Children's care, learning and play are positively supported by the childminder who ensures that they receive a good level of attention and supervision. Daily routines reflect children's needs and parental requirements and carefully planned experiences help all children to flourish and have fun. Children have access to a wide range of accessibly stored and attractively presented toys and equipment. Space is plentiful and utilised well to enable children to play, rest and sleep in comfort and safety.

Children's care and welfare is promoted as the childminder has all documentation necessary for the safe and efficient management of the provision. However, daily records of attendance are not completed until the end of the day and this potentially compromises children's well-being. All confidential information is securely stored, whilst still being easily accessible in an emergency. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to complete an appropriate first aid course that includes training in first aid for infants and young children. A recognised course was attended and as a result as the childminder has gained up to date knowledge of measures used to help protect children's health and welfare in the event of an accident or illness.

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 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):

- practise emergency escape plans
- ensure that daily records of attendance are accurately maintained.

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