

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY350540
Inspection date	17 April 2008
Inspector	Cathryn Parry
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 was registered in 2007. She lives with her partner and two children aged four and six years, in a residential area close to the centre of Houghton-le-Spring. The whole of the ground floor and the bathroom and rear bedroom on the first floor of the childminder's house are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently minding two children aged under eight years. She also cares for children aged over eight years. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and attends the local parent and toddler group. The family has a hamster.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into suitably clean and well kept premises where they have sufficient space to play. They access some opportunities for physical play, including running with kites and playing football. Children develop and test their physical skills as they access slides and

swings in the park. The childminder's flexible routine incorporates time for quiet play and rest, enhancing children's well-being. Children are encouraged to enjoy generally healthy snacks and meals. These include scrambled eggs, casseroles, yogurt and a variety of fruit. The children are also involved with cooking some of the meals, such as a homemade quiche. This encourages good lifestyle habits. Relevant documentation with regard to health, including specific dietary requirements are in place and up to date. These positively safeguard children's well-being.

Children are beginning to understand simple health and hygiene practices. They are usually encouraged to wash their hands before eating snacks and meals, and after using the toilet. Records are kept in respect of accidents and medication and these are shared with parents and carers. However, written permission from parents and carers to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is not in place. Consequently, children's welfare is compromised. Children do not generally attend if they are sick, which enables the childminder to protect others from illness. She can respond appropriately if children have an accident as she is trained to administer first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally kept safe as the childminder supervises them closely. However, she does not lock the front door. This has a negative impact on safeguarding children. The childminder does have a suitable procedure in place for adults collecting children, including the use of a password system if needed. Windows in the living room and dining room enable children to benefit from natural light whilst playing indoors. Those who go on outings are kept safe as they learn road safety procedures and understand simple rules, such as holding hands when crossing the road. Children are able to explore safely using clean and well-maintained resources, which are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Children's knowledge about personal safety is encouraged by gentle reminders from the childminder to pick up the toys so they do not trip and not to climb on the furniture. This is complemented with the older children discussing the fire evacuation procedure and younger ones practising it. This positively contributes to children developing a sense of danger and how to keep themselves safe. All safety equipment is in place reducing the risk of accidents. This includes electrical socket protectors, a stairgate and three smoke detectors. The latter are regularly tested and the checks logged. The childminder has covered child protection issues on other childcare training. She has a suitable understanding and has a list of contact numbers should she need advice or to report a concern. This ensures children are safeguarded appropriately.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and relate well to the childminder, as she joins in with their play. They enjoy their time in the childminding environment and are eager to participate in the variety of activities provided. These include using construction toys, playing board games and baking. Children benefit from a flexible routine, including a balance of child-centred and adult-led activities. They enjoy looking at books, both independently and with the childminder. Children delight in using their imagination, for instance, when they pretend to use the toy tools and make a den under the table. Effective use is made of the local area giving children a breadth of opportunities. An example of this is where they visit the toy library.

Children's creativity is nurtured as they experiment with different media and explore ideas. An example of this is where they made a model volcano and made it erupt with bicarbonate of soda. They develop good counting skills through a variety of activities, such as playing dominoes and looking at numerals in books. They show an awareness of shape as they complete puzzles of differing complexity. Consequently, children of different ages and stages of development are suitably challenged. They enjoy mark making and are developing good hand-to-eye coordination as they draw with a variety of crayons and pencils. Children's all round development is enhanced well as a good range of activities and resources are on offer, which include relevant outings to appropriate groups.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

A short induction period, including visits with parents and carers, enables children to settle in to the new environment. These visits are tailored to meet children's and their family's individual needs. A set of the policies are also given to the parents and carers on a computer disc, which they can keep. Consequently, they can refer to them at any time and have a clear understanding of the service provided. The childminder's appropriate approach to equal opportunities contributes to children's positive attitudes to the wider community. This is complemented with access to a selection of resources reflecting different cultures, including dolls from around the world and related books. However, although the childminder said that she can access resources from the toy library, there were none showing positive images of people with disabilities at the time of the inspection. This has a negative impact on raising children's awareness and understanding of difference. The childminder does not have any experience of caring for children with learning difficulties or disabilities. However, she does show a positive attitude to providing an inclusive environment.

The childminder has suitable behaviour management strategies in place to promote children's good behaviour. They are learning to share and take turns through her appropriate support. Children are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility as they help to tidy toys away and set the table for mealtimes. Information is shared verbally with parents and carers daily. Consequently, they are informed of the activities their children have participated in. She also asks them to periodically complete a questionnaire. This helps her to evaluate her practice.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children access play opportunities through the suitable organisation of space, time and resources. The use of the living room and dining room enables children to participate in a range of quiet, boisterous and messy activities. The imaginative use of the hallway also gives children the opportunity to access a computer. The childminder makes suitable use of her time, and appropriately plans activities according to the needs and wishes of children. Toys and resources are organised so that children can independently select what they would like to play with, which promotes free choice.

Children benefit from the knowledge gained by the childminder attending the initial childminding training and subsequent courses. Their welfare is appropriately safeguarded as the childminder and other household members have had suitable checks completed. She is aware of her current registration requirements and adheres to them. This has a positive impact on children's well-being. Relevant documentation is in place and stored adequately to maintain confidentiality.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- gain written consent from parents and carers to seek emergency medical treatment or advice
- ensure the premises are kept secure at all times
- further develop equal opportunities resources showing positive images of people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

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