



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	141049
Inspection date	26 April 2006
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 to care for children since 1991. She lives in a residential area of Shaftesbury with her husband and 3 sons, one aged 14 and 2 of whom are adults. Family pets are 2 cats. The childminder uses the ground floor of her home for childminding and, if required, provides sleeping facilities for children on the first floor. There is an enclosed paved garden for outside play. The childminder currently provides part-time care for 16 children, including 12 children aged between 1 and 4 years.

The childminder usually works with another childminder and, at these times, they may care for 6 children aged under 5 years including 2 babies aged under 12 months. The childminder is a member of the Dorset Community Childminding Network and is registered with Social Services as a shared carer for children with special needs. She is a member of the National Childminding Association and holds a level 3 child care qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and wellbeing is supported by the good practice of the childminder. There are sound procedures in place to minimise the risk of infection spreading between children. For example, there is a suitable policy for the exclusion of children who are ill; each child has a colour-coded towel that is washed daily; the childminder implements good nappy changing procedures and wears protective gloves. The premises, equipment and most of the toys are clean and hygienic. There are effective procedures for the safe administration of medication to children and suitable first aid kits are readily available. Children receive nutritious meals provided by their parents and drinks are available for them when required. The childminder liaises with parents to ensure that children's dietary needs are met and maintains a record of any allergies.

There are many activities to help children find out about good health and hygiene practices and this encourages them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They always wash their hands before eating or after playing in the garden. They talk with the childminder about a healthy diet and take part in a range of activities to encourage them to eat a varied diet. For example, they cook nutritious foods including pizzas and bread, and they grow vegetables in the garden and sample a range of fruit.

The children have daily opportunities for exercise and enjoy using the garden where there is a suitable range of equipment to help them develop new skills. For example, the younger children play with wheeled toys and a small slide, whilst older children use a swing ball. Young children and babies feel safe and secure because the childminder works closely with their parents and respects their normal routines so there is continuity with their care at home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are well maintained, safe and suitable for the children. Posters and children's pictures are displayed, and many toys and activities are readily available. This creates a child-friendly environment, which is welcoming to the children who settle quickly.

The childminder has a good understanding of safety issues and takes effective action to minimise the risk of accidental injury to the children. There is a wide range of good quality furniture, toys and equipment to support the children's developmental needs. The childminder checks these regularly to ensure they remain safe and suitable for children to use. She uses suitable safety equipment, for example stairgates and cupboard locks, to prevent children accessing potentially dangerous areas. The children are well supervised at all times and the premises are secure.

Children begin to find out how to keep themselves safe. They learn about the importance of road safety and talk with the childminder about how to use toys and equipment safely. They have frequent opportunities to practise the emergency evacuation procedure.

There are sound procedures to ensure that children are only collected by authorised adults. The childminder has a good understanding of child protection issues and understands the action she should take if she is concerned about the welfare of a child in her care. This contributes well towards keeping children safe from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are happy and settled, and have a warm relationship with the childminder. They receive frequent praise and encouragement so they develop a good self-esteem and are confident. There is a very good level of conversation and interaction between them and this supports children's language development well. The childminder encourages them to think and supports their intellectual development as she asks questions and discusses about what they can see or hear around them. For example, talking with them about numbers and colours and things they observe around them such as shadows or aeroplanes in the sky. Children develop independence as, for instance, the childminder provides a step in the cloakroom so they can wash their own hands.

There is an extensive range of toys and equipment and the childminder plans and provides a wide range of interesting activities for the children, for example, growing sunflower seeds. These support all areas of their development well. Children develop good hand-eye coordination as they complete puzzles, handle small objects and use simple tools in the sand tray. There are daily creative activities for the children, which include chalking, painting and collage and they explore musical instruments. There are more challenging age-appropriate activities for the older children, such as painting vases as Mother's day gifts. There is a wide range of dressing up clothes and other pretend-play toys and resources and these encourage children to use their imaginations and recreate real life experiences. Children select independently from a wide range of toys and resources readily available in toy boxes and on shelves. This allows them to follow their own interests and make decisions about their play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children behave well and play cooperatively together. They are learning to consider the needs of others and are beginning to share and take turns. The childminder has a good understanding of positive ways to manage children's behaviour and gives praise and encouragement freely to help children know when they have done well. She has consistent expectations, that are appropriate for the age of the children, and she works closely with parents. This approach helps children learn to manage their own behaviour effectively.

There is a friendly relationship between parents and the childminder with good communication between them. There is a suitable settling in procedure so that children become familiar with the childminder and her home. There are flexible childminding arrangements to meet parents' work commitments. The childminder respects parents' wishes for their child, following their usual routines and valuing cultural differences. This ensures there is continuity in the children's care so they are happy and settled. Good quality information about the service provided is

readily available to parents. The childminder has experience of caring for children who have special needs and a good understanding of the importance of working closely with their parents so that she can adapt activities to meet the child's needs. She monitors children's development and discusses any concerns about their progress with their parents.

Many toys and books reflect positive images of diversity and these are readily available for the children to use. Children take part in activities, for example preparing and eating Chinese food, to help them find out about the world around them and the culture and traditions of others.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder is well organised and this supports children's care, learning and enjoyment effectively. She makes good use of her home to provide a welcoming environment where children feel settled and secure. She has a dedicated area for pretend play, set up with a wide range of home play equipment, and makes good use of the conservatory area to provide creative activities. Toys and books are readily available for children to select independently.

All of the required records are maintained and up to date. The childminder implements suitable policies and procedures to support children's welfare. She regularly attends training to extend her knowledge and understanding of child-care issues, and this further enhances the service she provides for the children. She ensures that suitable adult to child ratios are met at all times. As she usually works with another childminder, they are able to provide a range of activities simultaneously for children of different ages and ensure they receive good levels of attention at all times.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At previous inspection, the childminder agreed to ensure that she and the parents always sign the attendance register. The partnership with parents has been enhanced because the childminder and parents sign these documents every week.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- develop a rota to ensure that all toys are cleaned regularly.

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