



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	311617
Inspection date	08 May 2006
Inspector	Kathleen Snowdon

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 1999. She lives with her husband and their 2 children, aged 14 and 17, in a detached bungalow in Whickham, Gateshead. Local facilities include shops, schools, a library, parks and leisure centres. The family keeps a pet dog.

Children use the playroom, kitchen and utility room with cloakroom and toilet facilities. There is a side garden available for children's outdoor play and the conservatory is used when children need to sleep.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and uses their documentation and public liability insurance. She attends the local childminding drop-in group and toddler group on a regular basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children eat a varied range of appetising and well-balanced snacks and meals, which include pasta, fish dishes and lots of fruit and vegetables. They have frequent drinks of water and sugar-free juice throughout the day. This helps to keep the children comfortable and well nourished during their time with the childminder.

There are good opportunities for the children to exercise. They walk to school and nursery every morning and play with items from a very good selection of outdoor play equipment, such as see-saws, slides and swings. These experiences are highly beneficial to the children's overall physical health and boost their fitness levels and their stamina.

The children describe their physical reactions and those of others. For example, they state clearly that they are hungry and point out when other children are yawning or crying. Sensitive and clear explanations from the childminder help the children to understand that these are signs of tiredness and so increase the children's awareness of how the body works.

Sensible arrangements are in place to deal with children who are sick. In addition to this, the children are acquiring good personal hygiene through routine practices like hand-washing. These factors reduce the risk of infection and contain the spread of common illnesses.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Very useful practices equip the children with the knowledge that they need to stay safe in emergencies. For example, the childminder tests her smoke detectors when the children are with her, so that they recognise the sound that they make and understand what that could mean.

The childminder's house is very well organised with sufficient floor space. This minimises the occurrence of accidents and allows the children to move around freely and safely. The children handle toys and equipment which are clean and in very good condition through the regular checks that the childminder carries out. This ensures that they play with safe and hygienic items.

Good guidance from the childminder is teaching the children to take some responsibility for their own safety. For instance, they are expected to hold the childminder's hand before crossing the road. As well as this, they sit sensibly at the table while they eat, to prevent incidents like choking or falling. These expectations help the children to understand that appropriate behaviour contributes to personal safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children have easy access to a lovely range of toys and craft materials, which help them to make progress in all areas of their development. It includes small world items and role play props, which enable the children to use their imaginations. The children particularly enjoy tackling jigsaws and sit for several minutes working out how to complete them. This helps them to develop good concentration and design skills.

A very good selection of books are available. The children love to sit with the childminder while she reads them their favourite stories, such as Mog and Barnaby. They have to guess what might happen next, which captures their interest and leads them through to the end of the story. These experiences encourage the development of effective listening skills and teach the children that text and illustrations carry meaning.

The children benefit from interesting outings. They like to travel by bus to a local shopping mall and they participate enthusiastically when the childminder goes shopping for fruit and vegetables. On these occasions, they count out how many bananas they need, for example, and they watch closely as the produce is weighed. These opportunities teach the children how to apply mathematics in practical, everyday situations.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

On the daily walk to school and nursery, the children pass others who attend a nearby school. These children have disabilities. The children's observations and questions are handled sensitively by the childminder, to increase the children's awareness of disability and difference. A good range of equipment, such as jigsaws and books like Handa's Hen, presents the children with positive images of culture, gender and ethnicity. This helps to increase the children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

The children talk to the childminder, each other, and visitors about a range of issues, such as their family or their holidays. They have a very strong bond with the childminder, who treats them with affection and good humour. They behave well because of the sensible and consistent boundaries set by the childminder, which help them to understand right from wrong. As a result the children are happy, confident and settled. These opportunities foster a sense of belonging and enable the children to form secure relationships with others.

Partnership with parents is good. Settling in periods give parents an opportunity to decide whether or not to proceed with the arrangement. If they do, contracts are used, which set out clearly the expectations of both parties. Daily discussions keep parents fully informed about their child's experiences that day and give the childminder the chance to find out about events in the children's lives, such as the acquisition of new pets.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All records are in place, readily available and well organised. The registration certificate is not prominently displayed. However, it is in a file and is shown to parents. Documentation is reviewed annually, or sooner if there are any changes, to ensure that it is accurate and up to date.

The childminder attends relevant courses to keep abreast of current trends in childcare. For example, she recently completed training on the Birth to three matters framework to support her work with children under 3 years old. She is a good role model to the children, with whom she forms very good relationships. Many of the children in her care have been looked after by the childminder since babyhood, which demonstrates what parents think about the service that she provides.

Overall, the childminder meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, two recommendations were raised. These related to documentation and equal opportunities. Good improvements have been made since then. Written parental consent to seek emergency medical treatment for the children is now in place. Jigsaws, dolls, small world items and books are readily available to the children. These convey different aspects of diversity and help the children to form positive views of culture, ethnicity, disability and gender.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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):

- display the registration certificate.

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