



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	140940
Inspection date	11 May 2006
Inspector	Pamela Woodhouse

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 since 1996. She lives with her daughter aged 13 years in a three bedroom semi-detached house in the coastal town of Weymouth. There are no pets in the household.

Downstairs is used as the main accommodation for childminding purposes, with a lounge, kitchen, dining room and toilet facilities. Two bedrooms and a family bathroom are available on the first floor. The back garden is included in the registration.

The childminder is registered to care for up to six children under the age of eight years and is currently minding six children, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association, she holds the Cache level 3 certificate in childminding practice.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being is promoted through the childminder's good practice and the systems she has in place to meet their physical needs, for example, making sure that they are dressed appropriately for the weather and maintaining suitable temperatures in the home. The childminder implements good procedures to protect children from cross infection, for instance, they do not attend when they are sick and she provides them with separate towels. Children's awareness of personal hygiene is promoted through regular hand washing routines and there is a hygienic nappy change procedure to safeguard babies' health. The childminder takes care to ensure that children are protected from the sun. For example, she applies sun cream at regular intervals and makes sure that all children wear hats, she places babies' pushchairs in the shade when they are outside.

Children eat healthily and are given regular drinks throughout the day. Some parents provide their children's meals and others are provided by the childminder. She makes sure that she offers healthy meals and snacks which are nutritiously balanced, for example, meals contain protein and carbohydrates as well as fruit and vegetables. Children's interest in food is encouraged by the childminder giving them colourful snacks such as pepper, carrot and cucumber sticks and through enjoyable activities. For example, children taste the same fruits as the caterpillar as they follow the story of the Hungry Caterpillar.

Children benefit from fresh air and exercise on a regular basis to promote a healthy lifestyle. They make full use of the garden and play on equipment such as the see-saw, trampoline, slide and tricycles to develop their physical skills. In addition, they regularly visit local parks and the beach where they can run around freely and safely in the fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is assured because the childminder has a sound understanding of this and takes sensible precautions to protect them. She checks toys and equipment regularly for wear and tear, removing any unsafe items, and checks areas of her home used by the children everyday before they arrive. She makes sure that safety equipment such as fire guards and socket covers are in place, however, some cleaning substances are stored in a low cupboard and used plastic shopping bags are within children's reach. This compromises children's safety. Children's safety in the garden is fostered due to the childminder's knowledge of plants and making sure that these are not toxic to the children. Play equipment is sited safely and broken equipment is taken immediately out of use to protect children from injury. Some broken plant pots and the siting of the wheel barrow are hazardous to children when they are running around. The childminder has a clear emergency plan which is practised with the children. This means that they are familiar with the routine and are not unduly worried about stopping what they are doing and leaving the premises quickly. Children are kept safe on outings, they practise crossing the road safely and all have their own car seats when travelling in the car.

Children have access to a range of toys and resources which are safe and suitable for them to use. Most of these are stored within children's reach in toy boxes and are rotated regularly to maintain their interest. The childminder makes sure that toys are suitable for the children's age and stage of development and offers them appropriate challenges.

Children's welfare is safeguarded due to the childminder's knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures and her role in keeping them safe from harm. She is mindful of the action she will take if she has any concerns about a child in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have access to a wide range of activities and resources which promote their all round development. They are well supported by the childminder and show high levels of confidence and motivation in what they do. They often instigate their own games and are encouraged by the childminder who steps back to give them the space to make their own decisions. For example, the children play happily for a long period of time with a bowl of water and pretend sea creatures, re-living their earlier outing to the Sea Life centre. They pretend to be the handlers showing each other the different species such as crabs, fish, and sharks and talk knowledgeably about their habits, for example, how the crab walks sideways. From their discussions with each other it is obvious that the children have received a good learning experience from which they have gained much enjoyment.

Children have a close relationship with the childminder and there is good rapport between them. She constantly talks to the children, encouraging social interaction, for instance, during meal times when they all sit around the table and discuss what they were doing earlier. The childminder plans activities which she knows will interest and engage the children, whilst giving them opportunities for learning, for example, developing their language skills at story time and developing their interest of the wider world. She maintains a routine which provides some structure to each day such as visiting toddler group, story time at the library and childminding network groups where the children can meet and play with other children of a similar age.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very well behaved and know the simple boundaries set by the childminder for their own, and the safety of others, and to maintain an harmonious atmosphere. For example, they do not run indoors and are courteous and polite. Children observe the simple rules because the childminder is consistent and discusses her behaviour management strategies with their parents. This means that there is consistency between the children's and the childminder's homes and that they are not confused by different sets of rules. Children respond very well to the regular praise given to them and the encouragement freely offered by the childminder. This means that they know when they have done well and raises their confidence and self-esteem.

The children play very well together, taking turns and sharing their toys. For example, two children instigate their own game with pretend sea creatures, taking turns to handle the creatures

and tell the other about them such as the number of legs on the crab. They have established good relationships with their peers and are friendly and supportive to each other. They are encouraged to care about others and the wider society through discussion and activities with the childminder. For example, they learn about their local community by visiting the library and shops and about the wider world through activities around festivals such as Diwali to give them an insight into a culture which is different to their own.

The childminder demonstrates, through discussion and her practice, a positive attitude to providing care which is appropriate to children's individual needs. She communicates with parents each day, exchanging information about the children so that both parties are aware of any specific needs, for example, whether the baby has slept well. She is very clear about making sure that all children are included in whatever is happening, this sometimes means adapting activities to enable this to happen. She observes children's progress informally and maintains a photographic record of them which is shared with parents on a regular basis. The childminder makes sure that parents are kept informed of her practice through a range of policies which she makes available to them. She regularly reviews agreements to ensure that they continue to be relevant. Parents know through the childminder's written complaints procedure that the childminder is required to maintain a record of complaints and are told by her how they can make a complaint. This transparency seeks to reassure parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder makes her home welcoming and comfortable for the children by displaying their artwork, having their toys readily available and by the effective use of space to meet their needs. For example, children are able to move around freely between the different rooms and there is a separate room where babies and young children can have an undisturbed sleep. The childminder organises and plans activities for the children before they arrive, keeping this flexible so that they can take advantage of spontaneous events such as an impromptu visit to the park. She maintains required adult:child ratios which enables her to offer appropriate support to the children. The childminder attends training such as Birth to three matters and has implemented the recent changes to the National Standards. These actions enable her to update her knowledge and keep abreast of current practices for the benefit of the children.

The childminder maintains all of the necessary documentation required to promote the children's welfare. She reviews this with parents on a regular basis to make sure that information remains relevant. She is mindful of confidentiality issues and keeps the children's personal information securely stored. The childminder's suitable policies and procedures support her in her role and provide a framework for the care she provides for the children.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to ensure that the contents of the first aid box are checked frequently and replaced as necessary and make sure that sharp implements in the kitchen are inaccessible to the children.

She has addressed these issues to ensure that children's health and safety is not compromised by: making sure that she checks and updates the contents of her first aid box regularly; she now stores knives out of children's reach.

Complaints since the last inspection

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

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):

- ensure that hazardous objects and substances in the kitchen and garden are not accessible to the children

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