



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	505675
Inspection date	13 September 2006
Inspector	Lisa Toole
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 1998. She lives with her husband and two children aged 15 and 12 in Uckfield, East Sussex. The whole of the ground floor and a first floor bedroom of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding seven children under eight on a part-time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local parent/toddler group. The family has a cat.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are gaining independence in their self care skills and learn about the importance of being healthy and the need for good hygiene through regular routines. These include washing hands, wiping runny nose and covering their mouth as they cough. The childminder positively promotes the children's good health through effective nappy changing procedures and by maintaining a clean, hygienic and tidy home. Children are well cared for should they have an accident or be taken ill while in the childminder's care and she maintains an up-to-date first aid certificate so that she can tend appropriately to accidents. Children's own routines are followed regarding sleeping and eating, to help ensure consistency of care between home and the childminder. Sleeping children are routinely checked for safety. Children clearly have a warm and close relationship with the childminder and she is responsive to their emotional and physical needs, whether it is for a cuddle, to have a drink and a snack or to go down for a nap.

The childminder has a good understanding of healthy eating for young children and this means children receive snacks of fresh fruit and regular drinks to ensure they remain hydrated throughout the day. Snack and meal times are sociable times of day; children are well nourished and they have opportunities to learn important table manners.

Children benefit from daily physical exercise and get plenty of fresh air as they play in the childminder's garden or go on outings and trips to the local park. Children can climb and use the slide in the garden, practise their ball skills and engage in sand and water play. Younger children are encouraged to develop their physical skills appropriate to their stage of development. They crawl and gain independence as they learn to walk because there is sufficient space for them to do so safely.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very warm, welcoming and extremely child friendly environment where they can feel comfortable, secure and safe. Children are warmly greeted by the childminder on arrival and have name sticks, which they have created, on display, and this helps foster the children's sense of belonging. There are interesting and stimulating posters around the ground floor; children's birthdays are also detailed on a poster and this enhances the environment and makes it even more child friendly. Children have easy and safe access to an extensive range of toys and resources appropriate for their age and developmental needs. The childminder sets equipment out in the morning before children arrive, enabling them to begin playing as soon as they arrive. Equipment is regularly checked to ensure it is clean, safe and suitable for the children's use.

The childminder is extremely vigilant about the children's safety and protection while they are in her care. Children are able to play safely because any hazards have been meticulously identified and minimised by the childminder. The children also learn about the importance of keeping themselves safe, as the childminder teaches them about fire safety and what the sound of the

smoke alarms mean. On outings, children learn valuable lessons about how to cross the road safely and how to stay close to the childminder. She supplements this through the use of wrist tags with her telephone number on and ensures that she always has children's emergency contact details with her, as part of her safety precautions to protect the children.

The childminder has a comprehensive understanding of her duties in the protection of children. She has an excellent knowledge and understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of child abuse and the procedures that should be followed where a possible cause for concern is raised. The childminder provides parents with written information about her duty to report any concerns and has a wealth of written information in her childminding file for easy reference. All these measures greatly contribute to the children's safety and welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy, relaxed and confident in the childminder's care. They enthusiastically participate in the interesting and stimulating range of activities provided. The childminder shows skill in challenging children and extending their learning, which enables them to make progress. The childminder is extremely warm, friendly and affectionate with the children, making them feel secure and valued; they approach her for support and cuddles with ease. She spends long periods of time sitting on the floor with the children, encouraging their learning, offering support when needed and engaging in worthwhile conversations, which help all the children develop their communication skills.

The comprehensive range of equipment provides children with numerous play opportunities and they are able to make their own choices about what they do and play with. Children show considerable independence, including the youngest children, as they decide for themselves what to do and move confidently around the childminder's home. Activities such as picking sunflower seeds from the plant and then using them in a creative activity provide children with valuable first hand learning experiences; while activities such as hand painting enable toddlers to learn about texture and having messy fun.

The childminder makes effective use of the Birth to three matters framework with the younger children and carries out informal observations and assessments to monitor the progress that they are making. The under threes learn new words quickly because the childminder talks to them all the time and responds appropriately to their vocalised sounds. Activities such as story time are used to extend children's learning, for example, after reading a story about a train, children then go on to make their own train using play dough. These kinds of activities help consolidate the children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are able to feel good about themselves because the childminder treats each child with respect and this fosters their self confidence and esteem. All the children are well cared for and the childminder spends time with the parents to find out about each child's particular

individual needs. She has a good understanding about how to promote equal opportunities and there is a good range of resources available to the children with reflect positive images of equality. Children are also able to learn about the cultural world around them, as they celebrate festivals such as Chinese New Year.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included and activities adapted to meet each child's need and stage of development. The childminder's assessment records are used to monitor what progress each child is making. If the childminder is at all concerned about a particular child's development she would not hesitate to have a private discussion with the parent, to ensure that the child's needs are being fully met.

Children's behaviour is good and they benefit from consistent praise and encouragement from the childminder. Any negative issues are dealt with in a sensitive manner, according to the child's age and level of understanding, helping them learn right from wrong.

Parents are fully informed of the childminder's practice, ensuring their continued support and considering the welfare of the children. She provides daily verbal feedback to the parents and uses a written care diary for younger children that goes back and forward between the childminder and parents for continuity of care. The childminder also supplements her practice with written policies and procedures, which are easily accessible to parents and include the recent changes in legislation regarding complaints. These policies ensure that there is a clear understanding between the parents and childminder and contribute towards the children's safety and welfare.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All of the required documentation that contributes towards the children's health, safety and wellbeing is in place and is being accurately maintained. However, there are a number of entries in the register, accident and medication records that have been entered using pencil and this impacts on the children's welfare. The childminder supplements her practice with a comprehensive range of policies and procedures. She also attends regular training courses to keep her up-to-date with current childcare practices and is working on quality assurance to further develop her practice in the care of children.

Children benefit from the very well-organised space, time and resources and they receive very good adult support to help them feel secure and confident. The childminder has a secure knowledge and understanding of her role and responsibilities and is committed to providing good quality care for all the children.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was set two recommendations. These related to making policies more available to parents and obtaining guidance on notifiable diseases. Since the last inspection the childminder has re-organised her childminding file and her policies and procedures

are now easily accessible to parents. The childminder now has written guidance on infectious and notifiable diseases, which are kept in her childminding file.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- ensure that all documents relating to the safety and welfare of the children and in line with current legislation are recorded in pen.

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