



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	141044
Inspection date	26 June 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 for approximately 16 years. She lives with her two teenage sons and her baby aged under a year, in a house in a residential area of Blandford Forum, Dorset. Minded children use all ground floor rooms of the house, except the study. A first floor bedroom is available for sleeping. There is an enclosed rear garden for outdoor play. Currently the childminder provides part-time care for three children aged under five years. She is not caring for any children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. There are two dogs that are sometimes present when children are being minded.

At times, the childminder works with another registered childminder on the same premises. At these times, they may care for up to five children under the age of five years, of whom only one may be aged under one year at any one time. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The children's good health is supported by the childminder who has a sound knowledge and understanding of ways to minimise the spread of infection. The premises, toys and equipment are clean and hygienic. She takes effective hygiene precautions, for example, she has a suitable policy for excluding children who are ill or infectious, outside shoes are not worn in the house, and there are suitable nappy changing procedures. The childminder ensures that there is no risk to the children's good health from her dogs by providing a separate area for them within her garden. She provides individual towels for hand drying and a step to help children develop independence with their personal care. However, children do not consistently learn good hygiene routines because the childminder does not always ensure they wash their hands before eating. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate and has a suitable first aid kit readily available.

Children receive a suitable healthy diet. The parents provide baby feeds and packed lunches for their child, which are stored appropriately in the refrigerator. The childminder provides extra suitable snacks for the children, which sometimes include fresh or dried fruit. She takes care to respect any specific dietary requirements and the parents' wishes for their child. Children have drinks available to take when they are thirsty. They start to learn about the importance of a healthy diet through discussions with the childminder who encourages them to sample a range of foods.

The children have daily opportunities for exercise. They play in the childminder's garden where there is suitable equipment including a small slide, balls and wheeled toys. They regularly visit local parks and a play centre where they use a range of more challenging equipment. This helps them to develop their physical skills and control and coordination of their movements.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children feel secure and settle quickly with the childminder because she creates a welcoming environment for them using posters, photographs and examples of the children's artwork. Toys and resources are stored in boxes and low cupboards so they are readily available for the children to see and select independently. This allows them to make choices about their play. The childminder makes good use of the space in her home to meet children's needs. For example, she has a separate playroom and she uses a first floor bedroom so children can sleep undisturbed.

There is a good range of furniture, toys and equipment to support children's developmental needs. Toys and resources are of good quality and are safe and suitable for children to use. The childminder checks these regularly and keeps small items out of the reach of young children to whom they may pose a hazard.

The premises are tidy, secure and well maintained and have clear space for the children to play and move around freely. The risk of accidental injury to the children is minimised by the

childminder who has a good understanding of safety issues. She has appropriate equipment in place to reduce risks to their safety. For example, she has stair gates, cupboard locks and socket covers to prevent children accessing hazardous areas, and ensures that any low glass is toughened. The children are well supervised at all times by the childminder who also uses a closed circuit television system to monitor children if they are playing in another room out of her sight. Children's safety is protected when out because the childminder uses appropriate car seats and ensures they stay close to her on walks. Children begin to learn how to keep themselves safe by talking with her about road safety and by practising the fire evacuation procedure.

The children's welfare is well supported because the childminder has a sound knowledge of child protection issues and understands the action she should take if she concerned about the welfare of a child in her care. She provides parents with written information about her child protection responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are happy and settled, and have a relaxed relationship with the childminder. There is plenty of conversation between them and this supports the children's language development well. The childminder becomes involved with children's play and is interested in what they have to say. She supports their learning, helping them develop independence. For example, she carefully explains to a child that she needs to find pieces with a straight edge to complete the puzzle and shows her what she means. There is a wide range of toys and activities to keep the children well occupied and children are able to follow their own interests, for example, asking to draw. They are interest the resources and enjoy what they are doing. The children often show good concentration and persistence with the activities, for example, when completing puzzles or using blocks to construct towers. These activities help them develop good hand-eye coordination. The children use their imaginations, for instance, when talking about the model they have made or when engaging in pretend play, making 'cups of tea' for the childminder.

The childminder plans a weekly routine of activities, which includes outings to local venues and parks. During visits to toddler groups, the children play with others their own age and this helps them begin to develop good social skills. The children understand the routines of the day, readily helping the childminder tidy away toys or getting ready to go to collect others from pre-school, and this helps them feel secure and settled. The children develop a good self-esteem and the confidence to attempt new tasks because they receive praise and encouragement from the childminder.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children behave well and play cooperatively together. The childminder has a good understanding of positive ways to manage the children's behaviour and gives them gentle reminders and explanations so they understand what she expects of them. They receive praise and encouragement for good behaviour and this helps them know when they have done well.

There are many toys, including dolls, small figures and dressing up clothes, which reflect positive images of diversity and are readily available for the children to use during their play. This familiarity helps the children learn about others and to develop an accepting attitude towards others in society.

The children benefit from the effective partnership between their parents and the childminder. She is flexible where possible to meet parents' work patterns, so there is continuity in the child's care. There is a suitable settling in procedure for new children. The childminder gives parents information about the service she provides and gathers information about the child so that she can follow their usual routines. She encourages children to bring comforters or favourite toys so that they feel confident and secure. The children's individual needs continue to be met because the childminder talks with their parents daily, sharing information about their care. In discussion, the childminder described how she supports children who have any additional needs or learning difficulties effectively. She works closely with their parents, and adapting activities to ensure they are included. The childminder informally monitors all children's development, bringing any concerns about this to their parents' attention so that they can obtain further advice if appropriate.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder makes good use of her premises and plans and provides activities to support the children's development well. She maintains all the necessary records and written parental consents required to support the children's care and learning. She has written policy and procedure documents about her childminding service, and every parent receives a copy of these so they understand what is provided for their child. However, the complaints procedure they receive does not reflect the current legislation concerning how any written complaints will be addressed.

The childminder keeps to the required ratios so that children receive suitable levels of attention and support. She ensures that children are not unsupervised with persons who have not been vetted. She often attends training to extend her knowledge and understanding of childcare issues, for example, on providing play activities for younger children, and this enhances the care the children receive. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the childminder agreed to develop her knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, to ensure that resources reflecting disability are available for children to use, and to keep more detailed accident and medication records.

Since then, the childminder has taken suitable action and this contributes well to safeguarding the children. She has attended a child protection awareness course and understands the possible indicators of abuse and neglect and the action she should take if she is concerned about a child in her care. She maintains suitable accident records and keeps parents fully informed of any

incidents involving their child. She obtains suitable details and written consent from parents before administering any medication to a child, and informs parents when this has been given.

Small world figures depicting people who have disabilities, for example, a wheelchair user, are readily available for children to play with and this helps to raise their awareness and acceptance of others.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 2005.

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):

- ensure that the children consistently follow good hand hygiene routines
- revise the procedure for addressing any written complaints from parents in line with the current legislation.

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