



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	252125
Inspection date	21 June 2006
Inspector	Alison Edwards

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?

This childminder registered in 1996. She lives with her husband and three children aged 13, 11 and five years of age in a village in the north of Nottinghamshire. She is registered to care for five minded children under eight years. There are 13 children on roll on a part-time basis, of whom six are aged under eight. The ground floor of the premises, including the ground floor bathroom, is used for childminding. There is an enclosed garden for outdoor play. A cat and two guinea pigs are kept as family pets. The childminder holds a recognised childcare qualification at level 3.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and well-maintained family home where sound hygiene arrangements help promote their good health. Easy access to a ground floor bathroom enables children to develop growing independence in simple self-care routines such as washing their hands. Clear written policies help ensure appropriate exclusion arrangements are in place to minimise risks from contagious illnesses. Accessible records help ensure that children's individual health and care needs can be met, for example, with regard to any allergies. Effective arrangements are in place to enable the childminder to deal with any medication needs or accidents, so helping to ensure children's welfare is promoted.

Sound arrangements are in place to help promote children's physical development. For example, use of inter-connecting ground floor rooms enables younger children to sleep or rest quietly according to their needs within the childminder's sight and hearing. Activities regularly enable children to develop their large muscle skills in the fresh air, for example, through use of a variety of equipment in the childminder's garden, or through walks and outings in the local neighbourhood. Children enjoy many activities helping them develop their dexterity, for example, as they handle different construction materials and puzzle pieces, or make collages with a wide range of creative and craft materials.

Arrangements with parents regarding the provision of meals and snacks help ensure children receive balanced meals suited to their own and family preferences. Children are often encouraged to try a variety of different fruits and vegetables, such as kumquats, helping them develop healthy eating habits.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are relaxed and at ease in the secure and comfortable family home. Appropriate use of the ground floor of the house provides sufficient easily supervised space for them to safely participate in varied activities. For example, use of a low table and chairs in the kitchen enables younger children to eat and play comfortably, whilst older children safely use smaller items, such as creative materials at the dining table in the playroom. Direct access to an enclosed lower garden with a variety of play equipment enables children to safely access a range of outdoor and physical play activities such as use of swingball or spacehoppers. Fully accompanied use of a further upper garden, with a separately fenced pond, enables children to explore aspects of the natural world and help with simple activities such as growing tomatoes. However, children's safety is not fully promoted in this area because garden debris and stored building materials present some potential hazards.

Children are able to safely and independently use a wide range of good quality equipment and resources which help support their development. For example, activity toys for babies and toddlers are accessibly stored in low crates, whilst a wide range of good quality books, board games and construction are well-organised on shelves for older children's use.

A range of established precautions, such as secure storage of household chemicals and safe siting of kitchen equipment, such as kettles, helps maintain children's safety. Children begin to learn how to act responsibly to maintain their own and others safety, for example, when younger children are taught what to do if the smoke alarm goes off, or when older children draw pictures of fire evacuation procedures and routes.

The childminder has a sound awareness of what child abuse and neglect mean and is clear on her responsibility to follow relevant local and national procedures with regard to the reporting of any child protection concerns. This helps her to take appropriate action to safeguard children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and relaxed in the caring and affectionate environment where they experience a broad range of activities inside and outside the home, so helping to support their overall development. These activities are informally organised to take account of individual routines, such as variable sleep times, and to include use of local facilities such as toddler groups, so helping children socialise with others and become familiar with their local community.

Within the home children are able to make simple choices from a variety of resources and activities such as construction, mark-making, simple pretend play or use of books. They often show enjoyment in their play, as when a baby shows interest in looking at a simple picture book with the childminder. Everyday household routines and activities are used effectively to help promote children's skills and knowledge, for example, when children are encouraged to use a selection of recipes in baking activities, or when the childminder encourages their interest and awareness of the different types of birds that feed in the garden or involves them in gardening activities such as growing seeds. The childminder is aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework giving guidance on provision for younger children and is beginning to make use of this to promote development and learning for this age range.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Sound arrangements are in place to enable the childminder and parents to work in partnership to support children's welfare. For example, photographs of children's activities and a well-presented portfolio of information about the childminding service are readily available to prospective parents, helping to establish shared expectations for children's care. Children's individuality is recognised because the childminder takes account of relevant information from parents about their specific care and health needs, and of children's own expressed likes and dislikes, enabling these to be met. Regular discussion with parents, for example, on arrival and collection, helps ensure on-going information regarding children's daily activities, routines and experiences is shared. The childminder recognises the importance of good liaison with parents to establish the care requirements for any child with identified special needs.

Children respond positively to consistent expectations and to positive methods such as praise and explanation. This helps them feel valued as individuals and learn to show care and concern for each other and their surroundings, for example, as the childminder helps them negotiate over sharing and taking turns in use of toys. The childminder has some resources such as books, reflecting different religions and cultures. However, experiences, activities and play materials are not yet used to full effect to help children recognise and respect diversity in culture, lifestyle or ability.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are secure and relaxed in an environment where available space and resources are used effectively to enable them to participate in a worthwhile range of activities. The childminder makes good use of clear written information and policies to help ensure she and the children's parents have a shared understanding of how the childminding service promotes children's care and welfare. A recognised level 3 early years qualification helps ensure the childminder has relevant knowledge of good practice to underpin children's care and development. Relevant records and documents, such as contact details and information on children's individual care needs, are methodically maintained and readily accessible to support children's welfare. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to ensure Ofsted is informed of all changes relevant to the childminding service, obtain a copy of the local child protection procedures, and make a written statement available to parents providing details of the procedure to be followed in the event of a complaint. Arrangements are now in place regarding these issues, so helping to underpin children's safety and welfare.

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 all 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 more effective use of resources and activities to promote children's awareness of diversity
- ensure the upper garden is suitably maintained to minimise hazards to children when they have access to this area.

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