



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	139242
Inspection date	28 June 2006
Inspector	Brenda Joan Flewitt
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 2000. She lives with her husband and three children aged 15, 13 and 10 years in the village of Longburton, near Sherborne, Dorset. Minded children have use of a conservatory which is a designated play area, with the lounge offered as a room for quiet activities. Sleeping facilities are provided on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time. She is currently caring for six children under the age of five years, on a part time basis. The childminder supports children with special needs. There are no children being cared for overnight. She works with one, of two assistants at various times. The family have a dog to which the children have supervised access.

The childminder holds an NVQ III qualification in child care and education. She is a member of the Dorset and Poole Childminding Association network and the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's healthy life style is well promoted at all times. They are cared for in a clean and tidy family home where the childminder gives high priority to maintaining a hygienic environment. Children develop independence in good practices for their own personal hygiene. They always wash their hands after using the toilet and before handling food. Children are protected from the spread of infection through the childminder's routine procedures. These include providing individual resources for hand drying, regular cleaning of food surfaces and a hygienic system for nappy changing. There is a clear policy which is shared with parents, that excludes children with infectious illnesses.

Children enjoy fresh air and exercise each day and take part in regular activities that promote physical development. Garden play includes riding wheeled vehicles, running, jumping, and bouncing on a trampette. Pre-school-aged children practise 'sports day events' like an egg and spoon race. They often visit play parks or soft play areas where they develop skills in using large equipment to climb, swing and slide. Children are offered drinks regularly and they make choices from healthy snacks and meals provided by the childminder or parents. For example, all children enjoy a selection of fruit at mid-morning, and four-year-olds butter their own bread and choose a nutritious filling for their sandwich at lunch time. They learn about which foods are good for them through planned activities and discussion.

Children's medication and accidents are managed well. There are first aid resources readily available, both at home and on outings. The childminder and her assistants all have up to date training. Records are completed accurately and signed by parents to acknowledge.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in safe and secure, well maintained premises where hazards and risks are identified and minimised. The childminder completes a daily risk assessment of all areas used by children, to ensure the environment is safe. She puts measures in place to help prevent accidents that include the safe storage of hazardous substances and a safety gate to prevent access to the kitchen. The good security system means that children are protected from uninvited visitors and they cannot leave the building unsupervised.

Children move around in safety as they choose activities and during their play. The space available is organised well and generally child orientated. Children play in a conservatory which is dedicated to children's play and learning. The childminder is vigilant in her supervision, she accompanies the children in all their activities, and there is good visibility of the play area from the kitchen. Children use a variety of well maintained equipment to keep them safe while

sleeping, eating and travelling, and choose from play provision which is kept in good condition. However, the high breakfast bar chairs do not always provide the safest option for young children.

Children are kept safe on outings through the childminder's routine procedures. These include using reins and harnesses for the younger children, choosing suitable venues, and making sure that contact numbers are readily available. Children start to learn to keep themselves safe. They are encouraged to help look for traffic when crossing roads, and are made aware of their surroundings by the childminder when visiting somewhere new. They learn what is expected if they must leave the home in an emergency as they are involved in regular practices and discussion. This contributes towards their safety in a real situation.

The childminder's good understanding of child protection issues and the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures contributes towards the children's safety and welfare. She has attended a child protection course to keep her knowledge up-to-date, and supplies clear information to parents by way of a written policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and secure. They enjoy the time they spend with their childminder and her assistants. They are cared for in a friendly, welcoming environment where they make good relationships with adults and each other. They are confident to make their needs known as they can be sure of a kind and caring response. Children are developing independence in some practical skills such as managing their own clothing and washing hands. The childminder encourages these skills particularly with the children who are about to move on to school, to help them feel confident in a new environment.

Children are involved in a broad range of interesting activities that promote learning in all areas of development. These include construction, role play, puzzles, books and stories, art and craft, cooking, messy play and small world toys. The childminder offers a good variety of activities and experiences, sometimes connected by a theme such as 'Under the sea'. For example, four-year-olds enjoy experimenting with paint as they mix colours to paint cut out shapes of sea creatures. One child extends his creativity by sliding his painted fingers across paper, then drawing, with the handle of the paintbrush, a picture of a tractor he remembers seeing during a previous outing. Children benefit from the childminder's positive interaction as she supports their activities. This helps develop their vocabulary, and their understanding of the world around them. For example, a toddler is practising her talking skills as she learns new words on a daily basis. She likes to repeat the name of familiar objects she sees in books, such as 'shoe' and 'bath'. The childminder has attended information sessions about the Birth to three matters framework. She makes sure that the younger children experience some messy activities, where they use their senses to investigate a range of materials. This includes playing with jelly, foam, sand and water.

Children choose from an extensive range of play provision, which is well organised and stored to allow children to select for themselves. For example, the storage boxes are labelled with words and pictures which enables young children to identify the contents. There is a good

variety of books which are displayed attractively in a wall rack, however they are too high for children to select safely for themselves.

Children's days include a good variety of visits outside the home where they explore their local environment, meet other people and use a wider range of equipment. For example, they enjoy regular visits to a toddler group where they develop social skills, and walks in the countryside where they observe changes in nature and harvesting. A child remembers watching apples being collected in a trailer. This helps children develop a positive attitude to the world around them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from the childminder's excellent relationship with parents which are friendly yet professional. The childminder provides comprehensive information about the setting. This includes a prospectus and written policies and procedures. Notice boards display up-to-date certificates, a clear complaints procedures and contact details for Ofsted. She offers regular opportunities for exchanging information verbally, which is supported by a daily diary for each child. The individual journals provide a record of children's activities and achievements during the time they spend with the childminder. Together, this is an effective system for meeting individual needs and making sure any additional needs are addressed.

Children are respected as individuals. The childminder knows each child well through purposeful support in their activities and constant communication with parents. Children with additional needs are well supported. The childminder works closely with parents, using information from connected professionals, to ensure that each child is fully included. Children develop an open attitude to people's differences through planned activities, discussion and as they see positive images within their play equipment.

Children behave very well. They respond favourably to clear explanations for requests offered by the childminder. They are cooperative, often helping to tidy away toys, and learn to display good manners. The consistent praise and encouragement for effort and achievement offered by the childminder, helps build children's self-esteem. Children develop a strong sense of belonging. They are involved in celebrating the childminder's, and each other's birthdays. They delight in seeing photos of themselves and their friends displayed in the childminder's home. For example, a toddler persists in finding familiar faces included in the childminder's portfolio. Pre-school-aged children eagerly recall their recent trip to the beach, as they look at photos, remembering how they laughed at 'Punch and Judy' and enjoyed an ice cream together.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children gain from the childminder's commitment to developing her role through training. She regularly attends courses and workshops to update her knowledge of various aspects of child care. She is proactive in obtaining information about changes by reading relevant publications and contact with her network co-ordinator. The effective organisation of the premises and structure of the day leads to children being active in a safe environment, resting as individual

needs require, as well as enjoying activities outside the home. The childminder's regular contact with other childminders means that children gain confidence with other familiar adults. Therefore, in the event of sickness or holidays, children settle more easily with an alternative childminder they already know.

All the required documentation and records are in place, well organised, completed accurately and stored confidentially. Policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of the children. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides. She keeps documentation to show that the people working with her are suitable to work with children. However, the permission form for leaving children with an assistant does not include the names of both assistants.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection recommended that the good practice in safety checks was enhanced by including a formal risk assessment system to monitor and address arising issues.

The childminder has compiled a comprehensive list of risks and hazards which she uses daily to ensure the environment is safe for children.

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):

- review the use of furniture and storage of books to fully promote children's safety and independence
- make sure that the name of each assistant is included on the permission form for being left in sole charge of 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