



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	313615
Inspection date	08 September 2006
Inspector	Kathleen Snowdon
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 1996. She lives with her husband and two children aged 17 and 14 in Consett, County Durham. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The childminder's house is close to all facilities including schools, nurseries and parks. The family has a pet dog.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time. She is currently minding six children at staggered intervals, two of whom are under five. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect the older children. She attends local toddler groups with the youngest ones.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are developing a healthy approach to food and eating through the range of meals and snacks provided for them by their parents and the childminder. For example, they enjoy nutritious dishes, such as soup, salad and pasta and appetising snacks, such as toast, fruit and sandwiches. On special occasions, birthdays for instance, the children relish treats, such as chocolate and cake. These arrangements ensure that the children receive the nourishment that they need in order to grow and develop.

All the children wash their hands before they eat and after using the bathroom. The youngest children show their increasing independence when they carry out this task, which introduces them to basic personal hygiene and encourages the development of self-help skills. This, alongside the sensible arrangements in place to deal with children who are ill, prevents the spread of infection and common illnesses.

Beneficial routines are in place to boost the children's overall fitness and stamina levels. For example, every day all the children walk to and from school. They run around or play ball games in the local park too. Younger children practice a range of movements, such as rolling, jumping and sliding when they use soft play equipment during regular outings. These opportunities encourage the children to be active and show them that exercise is fun.

During quieter times the younger children settle down in their buggies while the older ones sit on the childminder's comfortable sofa and chairs. This enables the children to rest and relax when they need to.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children move around freely in the childminder's very well organised home. This helps them to negotiate space safely. The children's security and wellbeing is promoted on a day to day basis through the high priority that the childminder gives to safety matters. For example, she ensures that external doors are kept locked to prevent unauthorised access to and unsupervised exit from the house. This, alongside the childminder's good awareness of child protection issues, protects the children from unsuitable people and harmful situations.

Effective use of safety equipment protects the children from potential hazards in the immediate environment. For example, safety covers are used in electric sockets, which prevents the children from hurting their fingers. The ready availability of a fire blanket and frequent checks of smoke detectors reduces the risk of fire and further promotes the standard of safety in the home.

There are sufficient toys and resources. These are appropriate to the children's developmental stages and are cleaned and checked at least weekly. Good routine practices like these ensure that the children handle items that are clean and in good condition.

Sensible guidance from the childminder teaches the children how to stay safe in a variety of situations. For instance, the children like to greet the childminder's pet dog but they understand that they must only do so when the childminder is present. Similarly, all the children, including the younger ones, understand that they must stay next to the childminder when they walk from one place to another. This teaches the children the importance of adult supervision and increases their awareness of potential hazards around them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

A satisfactory range of equipment helps the children to make progress in all areas of their development. It includes role play props, building blocks and jigsaws. The children have easy access to this, which helps them to make choices and keeps them sufficiently occupied and challenged. The children take part in activities, such as drawing and colouring in. While these tasks are adequate they do not present children under three with enough opportunity to develop creatively or intellectually.

The children have strong bonds with the childminder, which equips them with the skills that they need to form good relationships with other people. Visits to local toddler groups offer the children the chance to mix with other children and to play in a group setting. This encourages the development of effective social skills. The children benefit from other interesting outings. For example, they take plastic bowls to the local park and pick raspberries, which they later wash and eat. They visit horses in a nearby field and like to watch them eat the carrots that they have brought them. These opportunities help the children to become acquainted with the local community.

All the children particularly enjoy trips to the local library, where they borrow fiction and factual books. Consequently, there is an extensive range of good quality texts available to the children, such as 'Dear Zoo'. These help the children to understand that writing and illustrations carry meaning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children learn acceptable ways to behave through the sensible guidance that the childminder gives to them. For example, they understand that they must not jump on furniture or go in to areas that are out of bounds, such as bedrooms. They are expected to apologise when they upset someone. Establishing boundaries and rules teaches the children right from wrong and helps them to understand that their actions have consequences.

Seeing varying images of diversity helps the children to develop positive views of culture, ethnicity, disability and gender. For example, when the younger children look through lovely books like 'Full, Full, Full of Love', they see pictures of people who live in other countries and people of varying abilities. The children listen to the childminder speaking with respect about other people. Good role modelling such as this teaches the children to value individuality.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Contracts are used, which set out clearly the expectations of both the parents and the childminder. Daily discussions keep both parties fully informed about the children's recent experiences and achievements. This helps to ensure that the needs of the children are met as fully as possible.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All essential records are in place, readily available and well organised. They are stored securely to ensure that only parents and the childminder are able to see them. Documentation is reviewed regularly to maintain accuracy and relevance. The childminder shows good understanding of not exceeding registered numbers, which contributes to the children's overall safety. The registration certificate is not displayed prominently.

The childminder has ensured that all members of the household who are aged 16 and over have been vetted to establish their suitability. In addition, she has firm arrangements in place with parents and carers to ensure the safe arrival and collection of the children. Several children have been looked after by the childminder since they were babies, which demonstrates how satisfied parents are by the service provided.

The childminder takes part in courses that are relevant to her practice, such as behaviour management. She has plans in place to take part in others. Her awareness of child development and her knowledge of the children as individuals enables her to plan a well balanced daily routine, which takes in to consideration the children's needs and preferences.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to develop the range of resources that reflected images of diversity. Children now have access to a very wide range of books and play with items like jigsaws and small world equipment. These depict people who have varying abilities and who come from countries different to theirs. In addition, during trips to the local library the children see wall displays celebrating festivals from other cultures. These influences encourage the children to appreciate and form positive views about difference.

Complaints 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. 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 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):

- extend play opportunities for children in their earliest years, for example by referring to the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- display the registration certificate.

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