



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101246
Inspection date	01 August 2006
Inspector	Miriam Sheila Brown
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 since 1993. She lives with her adult son in a semi-detached, four-bedroom house in the Pittville area of Cheltenham. The ground floor of the house is used as the main play area and the first floor and front room for sleeping only. There is a fully enclosed rear garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding six children at varying times throughout the week. She also offers after-school care and collects children from the local school. The childminder regularly attends local playgroups and drop-in groups. Children are taken on outings to the nearby play park, soft-play and other places of interest.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene as they are reminded and encouraged by the childminder, to clean their hands prior to eating and after playing in the garden or using the toilet. Routines are used effectively to assist in children's potty training without putting pressure on the child, and these are discussed and agreed with parents. Other aspects of individual health care such as diet, are clearly recorded. Accident and medication records are shared with parents and they have clear information about the childminder's approach to caring for children who are unwell.

Children enjoy a well-balanced range of home cooked meals and snacks. Dietary needs are recorded and sample menus offered to parents. Meals for babies under twelve months are provided by parents and these are stored appropriately. Drinks are offered regularly to children throughout the day, although fresh drinking water is not freely accessible to them.

The well-resourced and secure garden provides children with daily opportunities to develop their large muscle control and physical skills, using a range of equipment which include, wheeled toys, imaginary play equipment, balls and rackets. They enjoy regular trips to the library, park and toddler group. The childminder provides times for children to rest and relax, helping them to become aware of their bodies' physical needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, well maintained and welcoming home where good use of basic safety equipment minimises risks for children, enabling them to play safely. For example, the childminder ensures that main doors are secure at all times and that areas not used by children, are inaccessible to them. However, free play space in the main play room is restricted due to the current organisation of household furniture. The garden and main play area are easily supervised and displays of current themes of play help to create a stimulating and child orientated environment. Resources and toys are readily accessible to children and are at ground level. They are appropriate to the ages of the children cared for and meet safety standards and regulations.

The childminder has an effective and clear emergency evacuation plan in place which she shares with parents at the start of an arrangement. This, together with basic safety equipment such as smoke detectors, stair-gates and a fire blanket, help to maintain children's safety in her home. Younger children wear safety harnesses when out walking and use appropriate seating when travelling in a vehicle.

The childminder demonstrates a good awareness of the signs of abuse or neglect and knows the procedures to follow should concerns arise. She regularly updates her training to enhance her knowledge. This assists in ensuring that children are well protected and cared for.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the childminder's home. She works to a outline plan for each day which provides a good balance of free and adult-led play opportunities to extend children's knowledge and assist in their development. For example, children enjoy identifying farm animals from models on a tray and then guess which is missing when one is removed by the childminder. This activity is further extended using songs and stories about farm animals. Plans are developed according to children's own ideas such as making bonnets from craft products and recycled materials. Throughout activities children learn about colour, number, shape and size as the childminder instinctively includes these aspects into their play. Older children have opportunities to cook, play table top games or just relax after a day at school.

Children learn to share and take turns as they play and are beginning to form positive relationships with each other. They are clearly very at ease with the childminder, asking for assistance and including her in their play, for example, asking her to read favourite stories. Babies play safely and enjoy a mixture of individual and group activities, which help them to increase their awareness of their sense of 'self' as individuals and as part of a group. Children's social and physical skills are enhanced by regular trips to soft play sites, the library, and mother and toddler group, where they meet with other children and adults.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals and their needs met effectively through the childminder's knowledge and understanding of young children. They are assisted in developing a positive attitude to others and gain a good understanding about the wider world through their play with a range of resources and toys. These include books, and small world toys which are used as an integral part of their everyday play. All toys and resources are equally and easily accessible to all children. Their knowledge of the immediate community is enhanced through regular trips to the library and walks to local places of interest such as the park. The childminder has a clear understanding of how to care for children with special needs, although none currently attend.

Children are encouraged to think of others as they tidy their toys before meal times and help to care for the visiting rabbit. They listen to the childminder and follow instructions, for example, when getting ready for lunch, and seek her assistance with personal care. Positive behaviour is encouraged as children are given clear explanations why certain things are not safe or appropriate, for example, putting a play spoon in the baby's mouth. They are gently reminded if behaviour is inappropriate helping them to learn to manage their own behaviour.

Parents are given clear information about all aspects of care offered, some of which is in the form of written policies. All parents have good opportunities to speak with the childminder at the end of the day. The childminder discusses aspects of care with parents to ensure continuity for the child and personal details are regularly updated. Parents are given individual photograph albums of their children at the end of each year and a folder containing examples of art work, providing them with a pictorial record of their child's development.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder has many years experience in childcare and has extended her knowledge by attending further training. All adults associated with the registration have appropriate clearance and adult to child ratios are met at all times. All recommendations from the last inspection have been successfully addressed.

Children are relaxed and at ease within the homely environment. A wide range of resources, well planned activities and efficient supervision allow children to be confident and develop their play and learning.

Policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare, care and development of children. They are shared regularly with parents to keep them informed of their child's progress and the service offered.

All required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well being is in place, clearly set out and regularly reviewed. Children benefit from the childminder's dedication and commitment to continuing training and development. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to ensure all required documentation was retained to meet legal requirements, obtain parental permissions for some aspects of care, and to provide parents with information on how to contact Ofsted. She also agreed to develop some aspects of her behaviour management strategies.

The childminder has made excellent progress with each of these recommendations. All records and documentation are in place and retained in line with legal requirements. Parents are provided with clear information about how to contact Ofsted, and behaviour management is consistent and supportive. This helps to provide parents with clear expectations of, and information about, the service provided, and offers children care, play and development in a setting in which they feel secure.

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):

- provide children with free access to fresh drinking water throughout the day
- consider ways of providing children with more free play space

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