



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	141051
Inspection date	05 September 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 satisfactory. 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 1992. She lives with her husband and two children aged 16 and 10 years, in a village near Blandford, Dorset. Their home is within walking distance of the local school and a park. The childminder is registered to care for four children aged under eight years at any one time. She is currently providing part-time care for three children, two of whom are aged between one and three years, and one is of school-age.

Most area of the childminder's home are used for childminding purposes. There is currently no garden available for outside play. The childminder regularly attends the village toddler group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

There are satisfactory procedures in place to protect the children from illness and to support their good health. The childminder has a sound knowledge and understanding of ways to minimise the spread of infection. For example, she provides individual hand towels and flannels for each child; she keeps the premises, toys and equipment clean and does not care for children when they are ill or infectious. There is a suitable first aid kit readily available if children require treatment and the childminder holds a current first aid certificate. The children learn appropriate hygiene routines and always wash their hands before eating and after playing in the garden.

The children's nutritional needs are suitably met. They have ready access to drinks and take them independently when they are thirsty. Their parents provide all their food but the childminder gives them additional items if required. The children have regular opportunities for exercise and fresh air. For example, they walk to local amenities such as the toddler group and the school. They show developing control and coordination of their movements; they push doll's buggies competently in the childminder's home and use other wheeled toys during the weekly toddler sessions they attend.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are comfortable, well maintained and secure. There is space for the children to move and play safely. The childminder has a sound understanding of safety issues and takes precautions to reduce the likelihood of accidental injury to the children. Low glass is covered in safety film, socket covers are in place and hazardous items are kept out of the reach of the children. The children are well supervised at all times. There is a satisfactory range of toys and equipment to support their development appropriately. These are safe and suitable for the children to use and the childminder checks them regularly, removing any that are damaged. The children begin to learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, when the childminder explains to them why they should not climb on a chair as they may fall and hurt themselves.

The childminder does not have a secure knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, for example, the indicators of possible abuse and neglect. She does not have copies of relevant local or national guidance. This poses the risk that concerns are not identified or that suitable action is not taken to protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are happy and settled. They are confident and have a warm relationship with the childminder who treats them with kindness and consideration. They seek assistance as necessary, for instance, asking for her help to dress a doll. There is plenty of conversation between them and this promotes the children's language development well. Their understanding of number is increased by the childminder who makes good use of natural opportunities in their play. For

example, she counts out the jugs and spoons as the children set the table for their pretend meal.

There is a satisfactory range of toys and activities to support the children's learning and enjoyment. However, few items are stored in the playroom so that the children can select and use them easily. This restricts their freedom to choose activities independently and to follow their own interests. The childminder does not plan specific activities for the children but sets out toys and activities for them to use. She takes them to group sessions, including a crèche and toddler group, weekly. Here, they socialise with others and take part in creative activities, such as collage, and have wider opportunities for physical play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The children generally behave well. They are beginning to learn to share fairly and play cooperatively together. The childminder makes good use of distraction with younger children to divert them from unwanted behaviour and helps to negotiate a fair outcome if they argue over a toy. There are age-appropriate limits for the children's behaviour which they are helped to understand through reminders and explanations from the childminder. There is an adequate range of toys and books that show positive images of diversity to help children find out about others in society. However, these were not available for the children to use.

The children benefit from the satisfactory partnership between the childminder and their parents. The childminder is flexible to parents' work patterns, providing care when required. The parents talk with the childminder daily, sharing information about the children. This helps to ensure that their individual needs and routines are respected so there is continuity in their care. There is an effective process to encourage new children to settle quickly. They come to meet the childminder so they are familiar with her and their new surroundings. They are encouraged to bring a comforter or toy to help them feel secure and comfortable.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children benefit from the satisfactory organisation of the childminder. She makes suitable use of her home to support their needs, for example by providing a quiet room where children can sleep undisturbed. However, children are not able to access a wide range of toys and activities easily because they are stored in a room they do not use. The children receive suitable levels of support and attention because the childminder always meets the required adult to child ratios.

The childminder maintains many of the required records to promote the children's welfare and safety but has not obtained the required information and consents for all children. There are suitable procedures in place, for example, for the safe administration of medication to children. However, the childminder is not familiar with recent amendments to the National Standards, including those relating to how she must address and record any written complaints or concerns from parents.

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 give children opportunities to practise the emergency evacuation procedure, to address safety issues in the garden, and to review the information shared with parents.

The children do not use the childminder's garden at present because ongoing building work makes the area unsafe for them. The childminder has given consideration to an emergency evacuation plan. She has discussed this with the children although they have not had the opportunity to practise it. This has contributed towards raising their understanding of how to act in an emergency. Some of the issues highlighted in the previous report to enhance the partnership between the childminder and the parents have been addressed. For example, she asks parents to update contracts and information about the children. However, she does not always ensure that completed records are returned promptly which poses the risk of compromising children's safety in an emergency. No written parental consent has been obtained to take children on public transport, although consent to take them in the childminder's car is in place.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 2004.

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 satisfactory. 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 organisation of toys and activities to allow children access to a wider range of resources so they have more opportunities to make choices about their play
- increase your knowledge and understanding of child protection issues

- develop your knowledge and understanding of the amendments to the National Standards (October 2005), including those relating to the investigation and recording of any written concerns or complaints from parents
- ensure that the required records of information are maintained for all 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