



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	208829
Inspection date	31 October 2006
Inspector	Susan Hoult
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 2000. She lives with her husband and two children aged 19 and 15 in the Brant Road area of Lincoln, Lincolnshire. There are schools, nursery, pre-schools, shops and parks within walking distance. The whole house is available for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The family has a pet turtle.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and currently looks after three children aged under five years.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and holds a Certificate in Childminding Practice.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming, warm, clean home. They learn about good hygiene practices and personal care through daily routines and clear explanations. Children wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals and baking activities. They know the colour of their individual towels and help themselves to tissues which they put in the bin after use. The childminder has good procedures in place to prevent infection through cross-contamination. For example, she wears gloves when changing nappies and uses antibacterial spray and wipes to ensure surfaces and toys are kept clean. The childminder makes sure that parents understand she cannot look after ill children and has good procedures in place should a child become unwell or have an accident whilst in her care. She fosters children's emotional well-being by developing warm relationships with them.

Children enjoy plenty of exercise and fresh air throughout the year as they walk to and from pre-school, visit the park and play in the garden. They use a variety of resources such as slides, pedal toys, see-saws, a ball pool, a tent, a play house, sand and water. Children further develop their large muscle skills and body control through dance and music and movement activities in the home and occasional visits to a soft play area. Children's good health is additionally promoted by the childminder encouraging children to clean their teeth after meals.

The childminder discusses children's dietary requirements, likes and dislikes and any allergies with parents. Currently all children bring food from home for meals which is stored and served appropriately. The childminder actively promotes healthy eating through discussions and activities. Children enjoy a variety of snacks including fresh and dried fruit, rice cakes, chopped peppers, carrots and cucumbers and occasional biscuits. Drinks are readily accessible and are offered regularly to children, especially in the warm weather or after physical exercise, to ensure they do not become thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure environment, where space is used well to enable them to enjoy different activities at the same time. The childminder is vigilant about children's safety. For example, although young children can see who is at the front door, a safety gate across the lounge door prevents them from reaching it until the childminder decides it is safe. Children move freely between the playroom, conservatory and in the warmer weather the garden. Children are always in sight or hearing of the childminder both inside and outside. This means they are able to move around independently which increases their confidence. Children enjoy table top play, craft activities and meals sitting on child size furniture. They choose from a wide range of toys and resources which are in good condition and are stored safely; this helps develop children's independence.

The childminder makes sure children understand safe practices when going on walks and outings by reminding them of what is expected and reinforcing road safety. A young child describes

how they have to 'look both ways' before crossing the road. The childminder and children practise fire drills monthly. This helps ensure that children understand how to evacuate the home quickly and safely. Children sleep in a travel cot upstairs, when a baby monitor is used, or on a settee or sleep mat downstairs. The childminder checks them all regularly to ensure their safety.

Children are protected, and their welfare safeguarded, because of the childminder's good understanding of signs and symptoms of abuse and her knowledge of child protection procedures. Although parents are made aware of the child protection policy and confidentiality policies they are not fully consistent with each other and therefore may cause some confusion. The childminder records who can collect children and parents are clearly informed about the action she would take in an emergency to ensure children are never left with unvetted persons.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and very settled in the childminder's comfortable home. They have fun and laugh together whilst enjoying a wide range of activities. Children relate well to the childminder who is enthusiastic and has a good understanding of child development and how children learn through play. This enables her to offer purposeful activities and play opportunities for children. She refers to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage when she plans activities to ensure they are suitable for all children. Children initiate much of their play as resources are easily accessible; this promotes their awareness of positive choices and increases their confidence and learning.

Children develop their imaginative, investigative and creative skills well through taking part in a variety of activities that are based on weekly topics. In addition they take part in baking activities at least once a fortnight. After watching squirrels playing in the garden children spend time making brightly coloured 'sausages' from playdough on which they imprint patterns. They then play with various shape sorters and thread coloured cotton reels. The childminder supports their play well, extending their thinking skills and learning by asking open ended questions and using mathematical language well, particularly about shapes which is the current topic. A young child describes their thread of cotton reels as being long and a slightly older child names the colours. The childminder fully involves the children whose ages range from 15 months to three years in looking at books and listening to stories taking into account their ages and stages of development well. The children have great fun taking turns to lift flaps to reveal different animals in a book about a zoo. Two children play happily with a variety of toys whilst the other asks the childminder to close her eyes and gives her a wooden peg out of the 'treasure basket'. She has to guess what it is before giving the child an object which after feeling they describe accurately as a bean-bag ball.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel a sense of belonging as the childminder understands their differing needs and respects them and their parents as individuals. Children choose which of their art to take home

and which they wish to display in the playroom. Children learn about our diverse society through a variety of toys, books, activities and discussion. They learn about their local community through outings to museums, local shops, the park, the library, feeding the ducks, a parent and toddler group and meeting with other childminders and the children they care for. The childminder has a positive attitude to caring for children with special needs. She has recently attended a course where she has learnt sign language. She has introduced this method of communication to the children she minds and they all enjoy trying it. One child proudly shows how to sign 'guinea pig' and a young child signs 'more', without prompting to indicate they would like extra grapes at snack time.

Children play harmoniously together and behave well helped by the childminder being calm, a very good role model and having realistic expectations of individual children. They know the house rules and learn to care for, and respect themselves and each other supported by the childminder's skilful use of praise, encouragement and explanation which also develops children's self-esteem. Distraction is used very effectively to manage the behaviour of young children.

Children are cared for according to parents' wishes and the childminder develops positive working relationships with them. This enhances children's well-being, development and progress. Parents write positively about the care the childminder provides. They say their children enjoy attending and one parent describes the childminder as 'wonderful'. Parents learn about what their children do each day through regular chats and daily diaries. The portfolio, including many written policies, gives parents detailed information about the setting and what they should do should they have any concerns. The childminder offers a gradual introduction to new children to help them settle happily.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder has a high regard for the well-being of children. She listens to them, is interested in what they say and do and is sensitive to their feelings which helps raise their self-esteem. Children's care is enhanced by the effective organisation of the space available in the house and the happy, homely, stimulating atmosphere created by the childminder. This contributes to children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and their ability to take an active part in the setting.

The childminder keeps up to date with current trends in childcare through meeting with other childminders, attending relevant training and reading National Childminding Association publications. The organised documentation provides a good framework for children's care. It is up to date, stored confidentially and is available for inspection.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to increase her knowledge and skills to better manage some challenging behaviour. She has done this through attending a behaviour management course.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 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 confidentiality policy giving consideration to child protection guidelines.

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