



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	209060
Inspection date	23 October 2006
Inspector	Christine Hands
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 1991. She lives with her husband and teenage daughter in the village of Cranwell, Lincolnshire. There are schools, a nursery, pre-school, shops and parks within walking distance. The whole house is available for childminding, however children mainly have access to the ground floor. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and currently looks after 10 on both a full and part-time basis.

The family has pet rabbits and fish.

The childminder has an NVQ level 3 in child care and education. She attends local childminding group meetings.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminder has a good understanding of the importance of promoting children's health and ensures that all areas of her home are clean and hygienic. Babies play on carpets that are steam cleaned on a weekly basis and in a home where shoes are taken off at the door providing them with a clean and hygienic area to play. Children follow good hygiene procedures after using the toilet and are encouraged to flush it and then wash their hands. They also wash their hands before handling food. Discussions take place regarding germs and how these can make people feel poorly. The childminder does not care for children who are obviously unwell and any that become so whilst she is caring for them are reassured, made comfortable and parents are called.

Children eat a variety of healthy snacks which include fruit and vegetables as well as the occasional biscuit and cakes they have helped to make. They eat and drink whilst sitting at a table which helps them to be fully aware of what they are eating as well as encouraging discussions. They are able to access drinks throughout their time at the childminder's and are reminded especially during the summer months and after they have been exercising that it is important for them to keep drinking. Children's dietary needs are met because the childminder obtains both written and verbal information from parents. If children have severe allergies regarding food she informs, and works with other parents to ensure that they do not put any of that particular food in their child's lunch box. This is an area she has had to consider in the past with regard to a child who had a severe peanut allergy.

Children and babies are well cared for and have developed strong relationships with the childminder, coming to her for cuddles and reassurance. Young babies follow the same routines with regard to eating and sleeping, promoting their feelings of security and reassuring parents and carers.

Children spend time in the fresh air on an almost daily basis, either walking to and from school or going on nature walks around the local area. The childminder sees being outside as an important part of keeping children healthy and provides activities that they enjoy, giving them a love of the outdoors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a homely environment with ample space to move around safely. The rooms are welcoming and well organised to ensure that children have a separate area for messy activities whilst still being able to see what is happening in the other room. Tables and chairs are all child sized, and in the other room there is comfortable furniture for the children to snuggle down providing a home from home experience. All equipment used by the children is checked regularly for safety and any that is showing signs of damage is removed thus protecting children from injury. There is ample space both inside and in the garden for children to participate in a range of activities which promotes their development. The garden is fully secure

and provides an exciting environment for children where they have good opportunities to develop their physical and imaginative skills.

Children learn about road safety and are aware of the rules they must follow when away from the home. The childminder explains the importance of following her instructions and encourages the children to tell her when it is safe to cross roads, which promotes their understanding. All documentation is in place enabling the childminder to contact parents and to obtain emergency medical advice or treatment in the event of an emergency. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate ensuring she has up to date knowledge with regard to the action she would need to take in the event of an accident or incident.

Children are further protected because the childminder is aware of her responsibilities and current child protection procedures and knows what to do if she has any concerns regarding the welfare of a child in her care. At no time are children left alone with any person who has not been vetted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in this family home and are enthusiastic about the activities on offer, for example when playing with the play dough they are eager to explain the different colours they have available and which one is their favourite. They happily roll, shape and cut it into interesting shapes enjoying the tactile experience and commenting on the different smells that each colour has. The childminder knows the children well and is, consequently, aware of the types of activities that interest them. One child particularly enjoys matching puzzles and was delighted when she saw that there were some new ones for her to complete. The other children joined in and worked well together. Children are encouraged to share and to take turns and are supported and guided in this with explanations when necessary. Children are learning about number, weights and differentiation when taking part in activities such as baking and discuss how things change when they have been cooked. Imaginative play is encouraged and children have a wealth of different dressing up clothes and pop up tents to develop their imaginations. Children's emotional needs are met as they snuggle up on the settee with the childminder for story times especially when they are feeling tired. She has a good understanding of child development and how she can provide the activities needed to support children, however the excellent selection of toys available are not freely accessible to the children at all times which limits their free choice. On walks children collect leaves and other natural objects and use these for collages and leaf rubbings once they return.

Children have wonderful opportunities for activities away from the home and have visited such places as Chester zoo, Twin Lakes, Beamish, Cadbury World and the beach. During all these visits children are absorbing a wealth of knowledge about how things are made, care of living things and history as well as enjoying physical activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for as individuals and have their needs met because the childminder knows the children well and spends time talking to, as well as observing the children. They are becoming aware of difference through stories, role play and also outings when they are meeting with people of varying backgrounds and nationalities. Children are encouraged to respect every-one and to be aware of not only their own needs but also the needs of other people, for example saying sorry if they have hurt someone. The childminder leads by example and encourages older children to hold the hands of those younger ones explaining that they are not as capable as them and need to be helped and cared for. The childminder has attended a disability awareness session and is knowledgeable with regard to where support can be obtained. She is aware that she may need to access further training in specific areas as well as obtaining different equipment and reconsidering the layout of her rooms. Before caring for a child she would talk to parents in order for her to have a greater understanding of the needs of the child and how she could meet these in a way that will support the child and enable them to develop.

Children behave well due to the childminder's ability to understand why a child has behaved inappropriately. She spends time talking to the children enabling them to see why their behaviour is not acceptable and enabling them to change. The childminder has certain house rules which she carefully explains to the children and continually uses praise and encouragement to develop children's self-esteem.

Parents are respected as being the primary carers of their children and the childminder works closely with them to ensure that the care she gives is in line with their wishes. She has developed an environment where parents feel they can talk to her at any time both during the time she is caring for their children as well as later in the day. The relationship she has developed is such that parents feel they are able to phone her in an evening or weekend for extra support.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a home where any person who has regular contact with them has been vetted to ensure that they are suitable to be in close proximity to the children. Children receive very good levels of supervision because at certain times the childminder also works with an assistant. The childminder continually looks for ways in which she can develop her childminding practice and has undertaken a recognised child care qualification as well as attending a variety of short courses and seminars. This enables her to develop her knowledge and understanding of young children and the opportunities she can provide for them.

All the required documentation is in place and held confidentially. Children's records are updated regularly ensuring that all phone numbers and doctor's details are correct as well as obtaining any new written permissions from parents that she considers to be important. The childminder keeps up to date with new legislation, for example those regarding restraints for children in cars and puts these into practice immediately.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection there were two recommendations, both relating to policies and procedures. The childminder has written and verbal policies and procedures in place which provide parents with information about her childminding practice and enhances the care she is able to give to the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

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 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):

- promote children's independence by enabling them to make their own selection from the toys and activities available.

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