



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	257358
Inspection date	05 October 2006
Inspector	Ann Austen
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 2001. She lives with her husband and one child aged seven in the West Hunsbury area of Northampton. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding, including toilet and sleeping facilities. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding two children under five whose times vary and three children over five after school and during the school holidays. The childminder drives to local schools to collect the children. She attends toddler groups, takes children to the local library and park. The family has a pet dog, cat and hamster.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association. She is working to the Northamptonshire Childminding Association Quality Standards in the Children Come First Scheme, and has been assessed suitable as part of the Northamptonshire Childminding network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, warm and comfortable childcare environment. They gain a good understanding of hygiene practices and personal care through daily routines and become increasingly independent in their personal care. For example, children readily wash their hands after using the toilet, before meals and after messy play. This sustains levels of hygiene and helps to prevent the spread of infection. Children's welfare is safeguarded because the childminder has up-to-date first aid knowledge. Clear procedures are in place in the event of accidents, for the administration of medication and if children are unwell.

Children's good health is promoted by a range of nutritious meals and snacks. For example, children enjoy spaghetti bolognaise, shepherd's pie, roast dinners and daily fresh fruit. This promotes children's healthy growth and development. Special dietary requirements are complied with in partnership with the parents, and menus are produced to give parents information about meal choices. Meal times are social occasions where children sit together to enjoy their food, each others company and to develop good table manners. Younger children are encouraged to drink from accessible beakers and older children know that they are able to help themselves to drinks throughout the day. This ensures that children remain well hydrated and comfortable.

Children participate in a good range of daily physical activities which contribute to their good health and have daily opportunities to get fresh air. They are able to rest and sleep according to their needs. Children enjoy walks, visits local parks and look forward to their regular trips to Countryside activity and adventure parks where they experience large apparatus and more challenging activities. Children manoeuvre wheeled toys, bounce on the trampoline, crawl through the tunnel, kick and throw balls, run and learn to skip with the skipping rope. This helps children to develop the confidence to enjoy moving with control, using their bodies in a variety of ways.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure, welcoming home. Risks of accidental injury are minimised during indoor and outdoor activities because the childminder supervises the children well and works hard to identify potential hazards. For example, safety equipment is used according to the ages and needs of the children attending. This enables children to explore and take risks in a safe environment. Children begin to learn the importance of keeping safe by responding to the guidelines set out by the childminder. For example, they stop, look and listen when they cross the road and learn not to touch dogs. The childminder ensures that younger children are secure in their pushchairs, and have appropriate car seats when travelling in a vehicle. Older children are taught to handle cooking utensils such as knives to cut and peel fruit and vegetables safely. Children are protected in the sun. The childminder applies sun cream in consultation with parents and ensures that children wear a hat. Children's welfare is safeguarded by the childminder's appropriate knowledge of local child protection procedures and her understanding of her responsibilities for the children in her care.

Children use a wide range of safe, good quality resources, furniture and equipment which supports their play and development. They are interested in and want to play with what is available. Outdoor space is arranged for the children's safe play and is well resourced with toys and equipment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, relaxed and settled in the childminder's care. They purposefully engage in an interesting range of activities that develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. The childminder is continuing to implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This will further enhance current good practise. Children experience warm, caring relationships with the childminder who supports their play and development. As a result children enjoy themselves, develop confidence and are helped to achieve. Children look at books for enjoyment, differentiate colours with growing confidence, and are learning to name and sound letters of the alphabet as they make puzzles. This promotes children's language and intellectual development. Children enthusiastically participate in a good range of creative activities. They sing familiar songs, enjoy role play, dress up in Chinese costumes and explore paint and other materials. For example, children paint and make prints using leaves, manipulate dough and create collage pictures. Children enjoy regular outings where they explore their local environment and learn about the natural world. For example, children collect leaves and feathers on their walks, explore the dinosaur maze and follow the tree top trail until they are high amongst the trees. Children attend toddlers groups, visit the farm and library and go blackberry picking. This broadens children's range of experience.

Older children enjoy a relaxed session at the end of the school day and during the school holidays. They are able to choose freely from the activities provided, and enjoy regular outings. Children have access to the computer, operate the play station, dance on the dance mat and complete puzzles. They plant bulbs, bake cakes and biscuits, and develop their creative skills as they make clocks and papier-mâché models.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed and valued as individuals. Children are confident in their relationship with the childminder, who acknowledges and cuddles the children. This increases their sense of well-being and promotes their emotional development. Children are encouraged to develop their independence and learn to take responsibility. For example, they learn to dress independently, to manage their own personal hygiene and to help tidy away the toys. Children have access to play resources which reflect diversity and are developing their understanding of the wider world. They meet different children and adults at toddler groups and enjoy visiting places of interest around the community. Children behave and respond well to the childminders appropriate behaviour management strategies that take into account their age and stage of development. They receive positive support, praise and encouragement. This builds children's confidence and self-esteem.

Children's individual needs are successfully met because the childminder works in close partnership with parents. A portfolio with written policies and procedures is available, and secure systems are in place to establish and exchange information. For example, through verbal discussion and the completion of daily diaries. This ensures continuity in the children's care and development. Parents speak positively about the care provided.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are comfortable and settled in the childminders care. Space and resources are organised well to meet the children's needs. Children have opportunities to engage in a good range of activities both indoors and outdoors. They are able to choose activities independently as well as participating in activities which require more adult support. Children's welfare, care and learning is promoted by well-organised records, policies and procedures. Records are stored securely and confidentiality is maintained. Children benefit from the childminders caring and business like approach to childminding. The childminder is a qualified childcare professional and attends training to further develop her skills and knowledge. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to ensure that the first aid box was appropriately stocked and regularly replenished. The first aid box is up to date and kept in an accessible place out of the reach of children. This promotes children's welfare.

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 by 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):

- continue to develop the implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

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