



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY330655
Inspection date	29 September 2006
Inspector	Valerie Block
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 was registered in April 2006 and began childminding in August 2006. The childminding service is also known as, 'Pixies Den'. She is a qualified nurse, midwife and early years teacher. She was a registered childminder in another county for a year.

She lives with her husband, father and two children aged four and 12 years in a rural location on the outskirts of Cockermouth in Cumbria. The childminder educates her four-year-old son at home. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding apart from an office, a second lounge, a laundry room and a granary. Children also have the use of two upstairs bathrooms. 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 four children, aged from 10 months to seven years, at variable times throughout the week. The childminder drives to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends local groups for young children.

The family have one cat that lives mainly outside and comes into the porch in poor weather. There also are two rabbits that live outside. The childminder obtains parental consent for the children to be in the proximity of the animals.

She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a satisfactory range of activities which contribute to their good health. Each day, weather permitting, there are outdoor walks or time playing in the garden. Children enjoy collecting leaves on a walk along country lanes. Children benefit from being taken to parks and other local places of interest on a weekly basis. This helps the children to learn physical skills and confidence and they enjoy being in the fresh air.

Children's needs for regular drinks are satisfactorily met and children learn to take drinks when they are thirsty. Children's nutritional needs are met by the childminder who provides a diet that is planned to encourage some healthy eating options. Written menus, that are shared with parents, describe snacks including fruit and vegetables. The children, as a treat, have biscuits for a snack.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean home where they begin to learn the importance of hygienic practices and personal care. They are reminded of the need to wash their hands before a cooking activity and the childminder explains to them that the cooking bowls must be kept clean so that the food is safe to eat.

Children's emotional needs are well met as the childminder is very warm and loving to the children in her care. She carefully nurses a child when giving a bottle of milk so ensuring that the child feels loved and nurtured. This fosters the child's sense of self-worth.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a home where risks are, in the main, identified and minimised. Children benefit from the childminder's attention to ensuring that her risk assessment is updated regularly. She also has clear procedures to ensure safety. For example, there is a written procedure shared with parents regarding use of the trampoline in the garden. The risk assessment needs to be further updated as there are two hazards to children's safety in the home that not currently addressed. The kitchen cooker's doors are hot and accessible to children and the window in the kitchen can be opened by children.

The children learn about keeping themselves safe as the childminder explains to them about the danger posed by strangers. She encourages them to not admit strangers to the home without an adult ensuring that they have adequate identification. The childminder has taken

reasonable steps to ensure children's safety when outside. For example, she has ensured that all children have adequate seating when in the car.

Children independently select activities from a good range of clean, appropriate toys and equipment, which meet safety standards. The childminder monitors and supervises children's choice of toys to make sure they are safe and appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Children's welfare is insufficiently protected as the childminder does not completely understand the procedures to follow in the event of a child protection concern and is not aware of the government booklet, 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is being Abused-Summary'. She has arranged to attend further training in this area and has a statement of intent that a child's needs will be met and the appropriate procedures followed in the event of a child protection problem.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children make themselves at home and are relaxed at the childminder's home. They confidently help themselves to toys and make up their own imaginative games. The children show confidence and self-esteem as the childminder values them and shows them affection. Children become independent and enjoy new experiences and learning as they choose from a variety of toys, books and activities which appeal to all. The childminder is in the early stages of using the 'Birth to three matters' framework; using this to plan suitable activities and assess children's development. She also plans activities for pre-school children using the Foundation Stage early learning goals. She understands the needs of school aged children returning from school and organises a good choice of age-appropriate activities for them whilst recognising their need to relax after school.

Children become competent learners as the childminder has introduced a good method of planning and assessment to ensure that activities are suitable, well-organised and well-presented for all ages of children. The childminder's main activities for the day include collecting leaves to support a theme about Autumn and a cooking activity in the afternoon. Children learn to measure and mix ingredients. They use kitchen scales and begin to recognise numbers and amounts. A child recognises that oiling the oven trays will prevent the mixture from sticking. The child therefore begins to explore the effect of heat.

Children's confidence is reinforced as they suggest imaginative games that are supported by the childminder. The children play pirates, making up a story as they go along and so their lingual and social skills are enhanced.

The childminder is well tuned in to the needs of the children and recognises their need for quiet activities and sleeps when they become tired. She understands their normal patterns and plans her day around the children's needs and routines, therefore meeting children's needs. Children form warm relationships with the childminder that contribute to their sense of belonging and self worth.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder provides a good range of interesting play resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others. Children begin to learn about their own environment and community as they visit places of interest and attend local social groups.

Children show care and concern for each other and play together harmoniously. They behave well. Children learn about social cooperation. The childminder reminds them of the importance of showing consideration for each others' needs and feelings. She encourages them to apologise if they hurt each other. She clearly explains why some behaviour is not acceptable in an age-appropriate, kind way.

Children benefit from the positive working relationships developed with parents. The childminder obtains relevant information about children's specific needs and works closely with parents. The required documentation is clearly in place and well organised. A booklet is given to each parent outlining the childminder's procedures and policies. Children are looked after according to the wishes of the parents as individual sleep routines and daily routines are followed. Parents are fully informed daily about their child's routine and play activities. Children's individual needs are therefore met and parents are reassured about their care.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder has organised the available space well to ensure that children are usually on the ground floor and within her sight or hearing to ensure their safety and well-being. Children's needs are met as the childminder is mindful of the need to ensure children are supervised appropriately and that they are in the company of suitable persons.

The current risk assessment does not take account of some hazards to child safety. The childminder's lack of knowledge of child protection procedures could lead to a child being unprotected.

The childminder ensures that her documentation is well-organised and well-maintained so making sure that she is aware of children's needs. She has produced a good amount of written information for parents so ensuring that they are reassured about their children's care and know about their children's daily activities and development. However, children's needs may not be fully met as the childminder is unaware of the information in the update to the National Standards in October 2005.

Children benefit from the childminder's childcare experience and qualifications as well as her commitment to ongoing training. She has completed the 'Introduction to Childminding' course and a relevant first aid course and has made plans to attend other relevant training to increase the quality of her childcare.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 records 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):

- assess the risks to children in relation to the accessible window in the kitchen with unrestricted opening as well as the accessible hot cooker in the kitchen and take action to minimise these risks
- ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- ensure that the regulations and modifications in the, 'Addendum to the National Standards', are known and put into practice as required.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk