

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	311750
Inspection date	13 November 2006
Inspector	Kathleen Snowdon
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 2000. She lives with her husband and one adult son in Crawcrook, Gateshead. Her home is close to all facilities, including shops, schools and nurseries. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The childminder has a pet dog, which does not have access to minded children.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time. She is currently minding seven children under five at staggered intervals and three children over five before and after school. Children aged eight and over also attend. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. She attends the local toddler group.

The childminder supports children with learning difficulties. She is a member of the National Childminding Association and receives support from early years advisors from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

While they are at the childminder's, the children enjoy appetising meals, such as traditional roast dinners, prepared for them at home by their parents. As well as these, the children eat nourishing snacks, such as raisins, apples and carrots. This kind of food benefits the children's overall physical development and establishes healthy eating habits.

Good routines encourage the development of good personal hygiene. For example, before they eat and after they use the bathroom, the children wash and dry their hands. Practical and effective arrangements help the children to gain increasing independence while they carry out this task. For instance, a plastic step enables them to reach the wash basin, soap and towel. These measures, alongside the sensible approach which deals with children who are ill, minimise the spread of infection and common illnesses.

Daily walks to and from school ensure that all of the children benefit from fresh air and gentle exercise. As well as this, the children learn that it is fun to be active when they play energetic games of football in the local park or visit nearby soft play facilities. In the childminder's home, the children enjoy playing with highly useful pieces of equipment. The 'Funny Footprints' mat, for example, encourages the development of co-ordination and balance.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

On a day to day basis, the children are well protected through the childminder's vigilant supervision. As well as this, the childminder's awareness of child protection procedures keeps the children safe from unsuitable people and dangerous situations. The children learn useful routines, such as 'The Green Cross Code', as they walk to and from school. This teaches them to be alert to potential hazards in the environment.

There is ample, clear floor space in the childminder's comfortable and very well organised home. This enables the children to play and move around easily. They learn to negotiate space safely as they walk from one place to another to choose from a huge selection of very good quality and developmentally appropriate toys. These are stored in boxes around the perimeters of the room, which allows the children safe access.

Risk is minimised through good use of safety equipment. For example, a safety gate restricts the children's access to the kitchen. A secured fireguard protects children from exposed flames and a lock on the bathroom cupboard prevents them from reaching potentially harmful items. Smoke detectors are situated on both floors of the childminder's home. However, these are checked only twice a year. The children take part in fire drills. Very good practices like these equip them with important knowledge to help them to cope in emergencies.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children have easy access to an excellent range of toys and equipment. It includes colourful role play props, sturdy building blocks, a wealth of craft materials and fascinating activity toys. These items help the children to make progress in all areas of their development. When the

children play in the childminder's large garden, they ride bikes and push barrows and prams. They pretend and imagine in the Wendy house. These opportunities give the children ample scope in which to enjoy themselves and have fun.

Interesting activities keep the children well motivated. For example, they ice buns, search for mini-beasts, make chocolate crispies, use play dough and paint. The children particularly enjoy going on outings. They visit the city quayside and watch boats and ships on the river. They like to have breakfast in a local department store and make regular trips to local farms and the coast. These highly beneficial experiences increase the children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

The children have excellent relationships with the childminder. They acquire good self-esteem when she tells them how special they are. The children receive the childminder's complete attention during the time that they spend with her. Consequently, they are happy, secure and very well focussed. Positive early experiences such as these, help the children to form strong, later relationships with other people.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Very good quality toys, such as jigsaws, small world figures and dolls, show bright and colourful images of culture, disability, gender and ethnicity. The children learn to respect and understand difference as they play alongside children with differing abilities. In addition to this, the children like to look at illustrations in lovely books, such as 'All Kinds of People' and 'All Kinds of Bodies'. These influences help the children to celebrate and form positive images of diversity.

Excellent behaviour management helps the children to understand rules and boundaries. For example, they understand that they must not jump on furniture or fight. Positive personal qualities, such as kindness, cooperation and helpfulness, flourish through taking part in very good routines. For example, the children tidy up their toys and ensure that they are complete and in good condition before they are put away. As well as this, the children learn essential social and effective communication skills when they sit together at the table to eat their meals and snacks.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents have very positive views of the childminder. They describe her as 'honest, trustworthy, friendly and popular'. One parent states how much the children miss the childminder when they are not with her. Another parent particularly values 'the comfortable, loving environment' that the childminder provides for the children. Parents are kept very well informed. Daily discussion with the childminder keeps parents abreast of their children's recent experiences. In addition, wall posters give parents the information that they need should they wish to make a complaint. Contracts are used. These set out clearly the expectations of both parties and form a sound basis for effective working relationships.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Documentation is very well organised. Records are readily available and stored securely to protect confidentiality. The childminder reviews them regularly to ensure that all information is up to date and accurate. The registration certificate is prominently displayed so that parents and other interested parties can scrutinise it.

The childminder is experienced and skilled. She holds a valid first aid certificate to ensure that children receive appropriate attention following accidents. She has strong awareness of not exceeding registered numbers, which contributes to the children's ongoing safety and well-being. The childminder works extremely well with parents, carers and sometimes other professionals, to ensure that the needs of all the children in her care are met as fully as possible.

The childminder has looked after most of the children since their babyhood. Her sound understanding of child development and her knowledge of the children as individuals enables her to plan worthwhile activities in which all of the children participate. The children enjoy their time with the childminder. They describe her as 'the best in the world'.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to make improvements to documentation. Up to date information about local child protection procedures is now in place. This ensures that the childminder has essential information to help her to protect children from danger and possible abuse.

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:

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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):

- ensure that smoke detectors are checked frequently enough to establish that they remain in working order.

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