



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	100808
Inspection date	14 December 2006
Inspector	Angela Cole
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 1997. She lives with her husband and twin sons aged 11 years in a semi-detached, four-bedroomed house in a rural setting about six miles from Gloucester. The playroom, hall, kitchen, downstairs cloakroom and the children's bedroom are available for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden with patio and grassed areas. The family has a dog, two cats and a rabbit as pets.

The childminder is registered to care for six children at any one time. She is currently minding three children under five on a part-time basis and two children over five years before and after school. She also cares for children during the holidays. The childminder has experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The childminder's house is close to local shops, a post office, a primary school and a playgroup. There are walks in nearby open fields and woodlands. The childminder holds a Level 3 qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are suitably cared for in the childminder's warm, clean home. Their health is protected as the pets feed away from the play areas and the childminder checks the garden before children go out to play. Procedures, such as the childminder washing her hands between nappy changes and her use of gloves when dealing with body fluids, sustain acceptable levels of hygiene and help prevent the spread of infection. Children gain a suitable understanding about personal hygiene as they wash their hands before eating and after playing with the cats. Children's care is consistent with that at home in case of accident or illness. Parents formally authorise accident records and give written consent for medication though are not asked to sign to acknowledge when medication is administered.

Children's physical health is satisfactorily encouraged. In the summer, they range the huge garden, climb the challenging fixed equipment, dig in the sand and enjoy playing golf. In colder weather, they have daily outings into the community, for example, to school and the local shops. Children move freely indoors around the large playroom and the hall where they have space to play with physical equipment such as a 'car' and tunnel. They handle a range of equipment including books, puzzles, crayons and threading materials with increasing dexterity. They develop competent self-help skills in toileting, dressing and eating.

Children have regular access to low-sugar squash, water or milk and their cups are left for them to access when they wish. They eat a balanced diet of varied foods, many of which are healthy and nutritious. Their dietary needs and preferences are suitably met as the childminder discusses these in detail with parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are safe in the childminder's care. She maintains the premises effectively and the spacious playroom and garden provide a suitable environment for children's play. There are vast quantities of appropriate equipment stored at babies' and children's height for them to choose. Children only play with age-appropriate resources as older ones are supervised closely when they are using small pieces. Children use quality toys and equipment and the childminder continually monitors these for safety and cleanliness.

The children are kept safe from harm as the childminder is well aware of potential dangers through constant, informal risk assessment. They arrive and depart safely. The childminder secures doors, fences and gates to make sure that children cannot leave the house or garden unsupervised. Children are kept safe indoors and outdoors as they are closely supervised. The childminder has contingency plans, for example, to protect young ones from the step between the patio and grass. Children sleep in the hall or playroom and the childminder checks them every time she passes. Children learn to be aware of potential hazards as they are asked to sit while eating and learn about different aspects of road safety.

The childminder safeguards and promote children's welfare and has all the required procedures in place. She holds a current first aid certificate and has previously attended relevant training to develop her understanding of how to protect children and respond to any child protection concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play happily at the childminder's house. Their care needs are suitably met within an informal day that includes active and quiet times as required. Young children's own sleeping and care routines are closely followed. The childminder plans a basic routine around school runs, picnics and shopping outings. At home, she informally observes the toys that children are interested in and goes with the flow of their play to develop their concentration. The children access a range of activities that helps them to make satisfactory progress in all areas of their development.

The children develop effective language and listening skills in lively conversation with the childminder. They choose from the wide range of books that are stored at their level. Young children eagerly point at the pictures and the childminder extends their use of single words in interesting sentences. They develop their mathematical thinking as they play with shapes and decide, for example, whether they want a container lid 'on' or 'off'.

Children freely select resources from toy boxes and use their imagination to create scenes with puppets and small-world toys such as cars. They enjoy playing imaginatively with a large cardboard box, using this as a den or a doll's house. Children create as they draw with pencils and wax crayons though they have limited access to other craft materials. The children have some opportunities to investigate the world around them. They are interested in objects such as binoculars and a toy key ring, and explore how these work. Insects and worms fascinate them as they hunt for leaves, acorns and twigs for a school collage.

The children have effective interaction with the childminder. She is interested and responds warmly to their play, for example, by linking pictures to objects in the toy boxes and speaking on the 'telephone'. She develops children's thinking through appropriate questions that arise out of their play. For example, she asks a child to point to her eyes after noticing a teddy's eyes. Children enjoy frequent encouragement for their efforts and persistence, for example, as young ones handle a star-shaped toy and sing 'Twinkle, twinkle'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies and children settle well in the stimulating, homely atmosphere. They gain self-esteem as they have effective opportunities to make decisions about their play. They confidently choose from the many resources stored at their level around the playroom. Children relate well with each other from an early age. This is because the childminder gives them time to work out their own games and they learn to take turns and share the play equipment. Girls and boys have access to all the resources that positively represent children who attend as well as individuals

from the wider community. This helps children develop a positive attitude to others. All children, including those with special needs and challenging behaviour, receive effective support and their individual needs are well met.

The children feel comfortable as the childminder develops a strong relationship with parents. This means that they share much information about the childminding and the children at initial meetings and through daily conversation. Children benefit from the satisfactory consistency of care. The childminder fosters this through informal agreements shared in parents' letters of instructions and her record of details such as emergency contacts. Parents sign consent for emergency medical treatment and children's outings. However, when parents prefer young ones to rest in their prams rather than in cots, the childminder does not obtain written permission. Families feel welcome and relax in the child-orientated atmosphere with displays of pictures and toys to hand. This enables parents to share personal details so they receive support to develop their parenting skills and children benefit as any concern is approached jointly.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel at home in the informally organised and spacious environment. They are secure in the basic routine that takes suitable account of their care needs. The childminder holds an appropriate childcare qualification and has an effective knowledge of how children develop. She offers flexible support to families so that children feel confident in her care. The childminder organises her time appropriately so children have sufficient adult consideration and support for their development. They receive care in small groups and benefit from individual attention at certain times of the week. The premises are child-friendly, with considerable quantities of appropriate toys and equipment for the babies and children to choose. There is ample space in the playroom, hall and adjacent garden.

The childminder makes sure that she never leaves the children alone with unvetted persons. She maintains basic paperwork that includes all legally required documents. She updates this as required, though entries on the same page do not promote confidentiality. The childminder has sheets to set up a log to record any complaint and this is compliant with Ofsted's requirements. She obtains some signatures and permissions regarding the children's health and safety. The daily record of children's attendance and her diary with children's personal details are accessible from secure storage. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection required the childminder to improve procedures regarding the administering of medication and recording of accidents. She now obtains written permission from parents before administering children's medication. She ensures parents are informed of children's accidents and that they sign the accident record. In this way, the childminder has improved procedures to keep parents informed about the children's health so their care is consistent with that given at home.

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 the 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 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):

- ensure parents sign the record of administered medication
- obtain written permission from parents when cots or other suitable furniture are not used for children's rest or sleep.

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