

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	112733
Inspection date	05 June 2007
Inspector	Louise, Caroline Bonney
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

the time of the inspection there were no children in receipt of nursery education. Ofsted judges that the provider remains suitable to provide nursery education.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 2000. She lives with her husband and three children, two school and one preschool aged, in Wherwell near Andover. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder currently cares for 14 children, of which three are after school and during the holidays only. She is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time, or 10 children when working with an assistant. The childminder takes and collects children from local schools. The childminder attends the local parent/toddler group and childminding support group.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and a member of an approved network. She is not currently offering funded nursery education, although she is registered to do so. The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Her qualifications include a Certificate in Childminding Practice, which is the equivalent of a Level 3 qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs met as they settle for their sleeps, such as having a dummy or muslin. Preschool children have opportunities to rest or nap as they sit on the sofa for a story. They receive emotional support from the warm and caring approach of the childminder and her assistant, have cuddles when they need one or sit on a lap. This helps young children cope well with their day.

Children learn about good health through having nutritious meals. The childminder cooks all food from fresh ingredients, including weaning foods, which children eat enthusiastically. She takes account of children's allergies, likes and dislikes. Mealtimes are sociable when the children sit together at the table. Toddlers in high chairs develop independence as they feed themselves, with the assistant attentively interacting with and supporting them. Children have drinks available at all times and the childminder encourages after school children to have a drink as soon as they arrive home. This supports children's awareness of how to eat and drink healthily.

Children play in premises that are clean and well-maintained. The childminder ensures toys and equipment are hygienic. She cleans high chairs immediately after use and wears disposable gloves when changing nappies. She shares her sickness procedures with parents. This helps to prevent the spread of germs and infections. Children know how to stay safe in the sun. They wait to have sun-cream applied before playing outside and wear sun hats. Young children begin to recognise their body's needs and receive sensitive support as they potty train. Preschool children manage their own personal care, such as washing their hands after the toilet and before meals. This protects their health.

Children have their medical needs met through the childminder having good awareness of the appropriate action to take. She seeks written consent from parents for requesting emergency treatment. Her quick responses to emergency situations, such as anaphylactic shock, protect the children's health.

Children enjoy a wide variety of exercise. Toddlers have daily outings and run safely on the common and throw bread to the ducks. They climb and balance on equipment in the garden or park. Older children energetically climb, slide and swing in the park after school, or bounce on the trampoline and play football in the garden. They visit local toddler groups and soft-play areas where the childminder encourages them to develop new skills. This contributes to their good health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay safe through the childminder and her assistant implementing appropriate procedures. They take children out to venues they know to be safe and appropriate. They reduce most hazards through effective risk assessment and use safety equipment such as reins for toddlers. There are clear procedures to follow in case of fire and older children occasionally practise the fire drill. However, the childminder has not implemented or recorded the recommendations of the fire officer by installing a smoke alarm and means of escape in the upstairs playroom. Also, children in high chairs are not always safely restrained. This means children are not fully protected from possible injury.

Children stay safe through the premises being secure. They easily access their resources from low storage units. Children use toys that are safe and suitable for their stages of development. Older children's toys are kept upstairs safely away from younger children. The childminder maintains equipment well, removing any that is broken. She replaces worn parts promptly, such as bolts on the climbing frame. This protects the children's safety.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe. The childminder lets children know she feels breakages are inevitable and encourages them to tell her of any. Older children know how to ensure their seatbelts are correctly threaded on their car seats. They learn about water safety as they have supervised play in shallow areas of the river. They receive clear information from the provider why their actions might be unsafe, such as when trying to stop a swing with their leg. Older children know the rules, such as not picking up the babies and closing safety gates behind them when going upstairs. This helps children develop appropriate understanding of how to play safely and keep others safe.

Children receive protection through the childminder having clear understanding of how to recognise possible abuse or neglect. She shares information and her procedures with her assistants. She knows how to record any concerns and who to contact. This safeguards the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have warm and trusting relationships with the childminder and her assistant. They seek their support, such as when they want to sit on a lap or have a quick cuddle. They experience a varied range of activities which contribute well to their development inside and outside. Toddlers show curiosity as they explore a box of sensory items such as large sheets of tinfoil and rubbery-legged toys. The assistant encourages them to communicate and explore the different contents as she interacts with them. Toddlers have good opportunities to climb, run and slide in the garden. This helps them develop balance and co-ordination. They have daily outings, such as going to the river to feed the ducks. They exclaim in excitement when the fish and ducks compete for the bread. The assistant repeats their sounds and words, encouraging them to communicate as she talks to them about what they are doing. Children enjoy the freedom of running across the common. They develop confidence with sensitive support from the assistant as they stroke a friendly dog with the owner's permission. Children

attend the toddler group and childminder support group. This provides them with good opportunities to socialise with others.

Older children know the routines and are helpful and considerate, such as when asking if they can lay the table or as they draw the childminder's attention to another child's scratched face, saying 'it's sore'. The children are comfortable and appear at home in the provision. They freely access the good range of resources available, choosing whether to play indoors or outside.

Older children independently access further resources upstairs. The different age-groups are friendly together and show care as they greet each other and support each other during activities, and children enjoy the friendly atmosphere.

Nursery Education

The teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are no children in receipt of funding for early education on roll at the time of the inspection. However, the childminder shows through discussion that she has sufficient knowledge of how to implement the Foundation Stage curriculum. She explains how she observes and assesses children's progress against the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. She identifies their next steps in learning and uses these to inform planning. She describes how she provides a wide range of stimulating activities that support children's learning. Documentation and photographs show the interesting trips children go on, such as to castles, priories, cathedrals and museums, as well as to farms and activity centres. She provides a good range of resources which children can easily and independently access to initiate their own play and learning. She explains how she plans activities around themes both indoors and outdoors. She supports children's learning during both planned and their independently initiated activities. She describes how children develop awareness of reading and writing as they look at books and learn how to write their own names or use emergent writing on their pictures. Children have free access to writing and drawing materials. They develop listening skills by playing taped games and listening to different types of music together. Children develop awareness of number, shape, weight and volume as they cook, do puzzles, construct with various kits and play with sand and water. They take nature walks and observe changes in nature, such as when looking at tadpoles the childminder collects from a pond for them. Children show care as they look after their seedlings in spring and feed the birds in winter. They develop physical skills and imagination as they paint, play with dough and make models with recycled materials. They dress-up and build dens during role-play activities. They develop physical skills as they use a wide variety of apparatus, such as the trampoline, equipment in the park or during gym sessions in the soft-play activity centre. However, the impact of the provision is unclear as there are no children presently attending who receive nursery education and very little documentation is available to support these discussions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children play and relax in the welcoming environment. They confidently select their activities and their work is displayed on notice boards. Younger children know where their bags and coats are kept and where they sleep. This helps them to have a sense of belonging.

Children become aware of the wider society. They learn about each other's cultures, such as by singing Nepalese songs and visiting the Ghurkha museum. Children continue preschool themes at home, such as by having sweet and sour noodles for supper after activities at preschool about the Chinese New Year. This helps children develop self-esteem and respect for others as they share their cultures, festivals and songs.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support. The childminder promptly discusses any concerns with parents, enabling them to follow them up with doctors or health visitors. This leads to diagnosis and appropriate action being taken to support the children's needs. The childminder seeks information from parents and develops strategies to support children's development through the provision of appropriate activities.

Children play and share well together and show care towards each other. Older children support younger children, such as when a three-year-old 'reads' a younger child a story, saying 'you do this then' as she completes the puzzle on the page. The childminder and assistant are consistent in the boundaries they set the children, such as wearing reins when feeding the ducks and sun hats and sun cream on hot days. Children know the rules, such as only two on the trampoline at a time. This helps children behave appropriately. Overall the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the strong relationship the childminder has with parents. Parents provide written references which reflect how they value the service they receive, describing it as 'professional, efficient and responsible', or 'kind and friendly'. The childminder seeks information from parents about the individual needs of the children. Babies have a home diary she completes daily for the parents. Parents receive written information about the policies and procedures and share all records. They sign appropriate consents which include their permission for assistants to have sole care of their children. However, these do not show the times agreed. This could lead to a misunderstanding. The childminder ensures parents know all her bank staff and her main assistant. This supports good continuity of care.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory for the children receiving funded nursery education. Through discussion the childminder describes how she shares information with parents about the Foundation Stage curriculum during meetings. The childminder describes how she shares planning, their children's achievement records and discusses their next steps in learning during half-termly meetings. This helps parents to support their children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Although no funded nursery education is currently being provided the childminder remains registered as an early years education provider. Through discussion the childminder demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of how to organise, deliver and monitor the provision of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Through documentation the childminder shows how she continues her professional development by attending training for nursery education, such as workshops for Tactile Tales, Communication Matters and Child Development. The childminder is able to explain how this supports the development of activities to promote children's learning and development. She attends regular support groups and documentation shows that the network

co-ordinator visits to assess her practice. This helps her evaluate her provision of nursery education and to identify areas for development. However, she has found difficulty in sustaining her standards for nursery education while her setting is so busy. This led to her decision to stop providing nursery education for the time being.

Children benefit from the close working relationship the childminder and her assistant have. They work well together as they support the children's individual care needs and provide stimulating activities the children enjoy. Children benefit from the good organisation of the premises and easily accessible resources which support their play and care. The childminder promotes professional development. She and her assistant, who is a Norland Nanny, identify courses to attend over the year such as for first aid, health and safety and food hygiene. This supports the children's safety and welfare.

The childminder and her assistant implement policies and most procedures effectively. They keep records up-to-date and share these with parents. They seek written parental consents, most of which provide sufficient information. Recruitment procedures are sufficiently rigorous. While suitability checks are being carried out on assistants or students on work experience the childminder ensures they do not have unsupervised access to the children. This supports the safety of the children. The childminder seeks advice from external agencies such as the fire officer, although recommendations are not promptly implemented.

The setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the provider was recommended to seek parental consent for requesting emergency medical advice and/or treatment.

The childminder now has signed consents in place from parents. This ensures children receive appropriate support should they have an accident or medical emergency.

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.

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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 written consents show the agreed times assistants may have sole care of the children
- improve the safety of children through the use of harnesses when sitting in highchairs
- comply with and keep records of any recommendations the fire officer has made such as installing a smoke alarm and means of escape in the upstairs playroom.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop systems to support the on-going provision of nursery education.

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