



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	118392
Inspection date	10 November 2006
Inspector	Sue Davey
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 has been registered since 1997. She lives with her husband and three children aged 17, 11 and eight years, in the West Hill area of Portishead, North Somerset. The whole house is used for childminding and there is an enclosed garden with lawn and patio area for outside play. The family have a number of pets including a parakeet, dogs, rabbit and guinea pig, aviary of birds, bantam hens and ferrets. The birds and ferrets are caged securely in an area of the garden so that children do not have access to them. The house is within walking distance of community amenities including shops and parks.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children, under the age of eight years, at any one time. Currently there are five children on roll who attend on a part time basis. The childminder takes and collects children from some local schools, pre-schools and nurseries, as well as caring for younger children during the day. She attends various organised groups throughout the week, such as toddler groups, church tots, soft play, the park and the lake

grounds. Outings further afield are also organised. She uses a car to transport children when required.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association. She also belongs to a local childminding group where minders and children get together for a variety of activities and craft sessions.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean and hygienic environment, which promotes their good health and minimises the spread of infection. The childminder does not admit children if they are sick or infectious, and if taken ill while in her care she contacts their parents straight away. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene as they wash their hands before meals and after visiting the toilet or touching the animals. All pets are well cared for and a vet routinely screens the dogs. The childminder holds an up-to-date certificate in paediatric first aid and maintains a record of any accidents or incidents that occur. She obtains written permission from parents before administering medication and subsequently keeps a record of any medicines given.

Children enjoy a balanced diet in the childminder's care and have access to frequent drinks throughout the day. In consultation with parents, the childminder provides a cooked meal each day using fresh ingredients in preference to processed ones. She sensitively encourages children to eat from a wide range of foods including fresh fruit and vegetables. Consequently, even 'fussy eaters' soon enjoy a healthy diet. The childminder endeavours to follow individual home routines with regard to babies' feeding and sleep patterns. Children receive plenty of fresh air and exercise as they take part in regular outdoor activities. They often walk to the park and enjoy trips to feed the ducks. In poor weather, the childminder sets up physical activities indoors or takes children to the local soft-play centre where they can jump, bounce, balance and climb. The childminder also makes sure children have time to rest and relax. She provides a travel cot in a separate bedroom for little ones who need to sleep.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe because they are well supervised and the childminder takes positive steps to minimise dangers indoors and outside. For example, a gate prevents unsupervised access to the kitchen; car seats conform to the latest regulations; the garden is fully enclosed; family pets are caged appropriately; and children do not have unsupervised contact with the dogs. The childminder's home is warm and welcoming. Most toys are stored in suitable containers on low-level shelving, so that children can see what there is and safely help themselves. Toys and equipment are in good condition and suitable for children of different ages and stages of development. Young children do not access inappropriate materials that could cause them harm.

The childminder has thought through a suitable plan should emergency evacuation of the premises be necessary. She draws children's attention to the importance of keeping themselves safe. For example, children practise crossing the road safely and through discussion, the childminder raises their awareness of 'stranger danger'. Children's welfare is further safeguarded by the childminder's knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. She informs parents of her responsibilities and knows where to seek advice if concerns arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children clearly enjoy their time with the childminder. They happily play with a good range of toys and materials, appropriate to their stage of development. The childminder interacts well with the children and enters into the spirit of their play. For example, she pretends to eat the 'meals' they prepare, and talks encouragingly about their drawings. This helps them to focus on what they are doing and develops their concentration skills. Children learn to make decisions from a very young age by simply choosing what they want to play with or which colour paper they want to draw on. When children of different ages are present, the childminder provides a range of activities to meet their various needs and interests. She tries to ensure they all receive individual attention whenever possible. For instance, she plays one-to-one with older children when little ones are sleeping. Babies and toddlers are settled and secure in the childminder's care. They benefit from plenty of cuddles and confidently turn to her for comfort or support if needed. The childminder has some understanding of the Birth to three matters framework. However, she has not previously considered providing babies and very young toddlers with natural materials to encourage curiosity and investigative play.

Children enjoy regular excursions to the lake grounds, various toddler groups, and play sessions organised by the local childminder's group. In this way, they learn to socialise with others and extend their experience of the wider community. All children receive a good balance of activities throughout the week, whether in the childminder's home or out and about. They also benefit from the opportunity to explore new and interesting resources as the childminder frequently borrows items from the local toy library.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder has a clear understanding of equal opportunities and all children are fully included in activities. They have free access to suitable toys and materials and their choices are respected regardless of gender. Some resources show positive images of today's diverse society. Children learn about different cultures and traditions by taking part in organised group events with other minded children. The childminder has experience of caring for children with special needs. She works closely with parents and if necessary, other professionals. Her training and years of experience mean she has a good understanding of child development and effectively meets the needs of children across a wide range of ability levels.

Children behave very well and enjoy a positive relationship with the childminder and each other. Little ones learn to share and take turns and older children learn to consider the needs of those

younger than themselves. Children develop a sense of responsibility as they help tidy away the toys before finding something else to play with. They learn to resolve squabbles and disputes through discussion and negotiation, responding well to the childminder's fair and consistent approach. If necessary, she removes children from the situation, explains why their behaviour is not acceptable and gives them the opportunity to calm down and make amends. This helps children to feel secure as they quickly learn what the boundaries are. Their overall sense of security is further developed as the childminder also builds effective relationships with parents. Prior to placement she invites parents into her home to discuss requirements and make sure she can meet the needs of their child. She sets out the terms and conditions in a contract and includes information so parents know how to make a complaint if dissatisfied with her service. However, there is currently no complaints log as to date no complaints have been made. Parents receive daily feedback on their child's wellbeing and, over the course of the placement, a photographic record of their achievements and activities. The large number of thank you cards and letters demonstrates parents' appreciation of the care the childminder provides.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder follows effective policies and procedures to make sure children are well cared for at all times. She sets up appropriate routines and organises her home to maintain a suitable environment that meets health and safety requirements. She keeps up-to-date records of children's attendance and holds family contact details on file. The childminder notifies Ofsted of significant changes and from time to time she attends training for her own professional development. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, there were actions and a recommendation made to help the childminder meet regulations and improve her practice. She was asked to obtain prior written permission from parents before administering medication and to keep a record of any medicines given. It was also recommended that she provide more home based activities to encourage children's all round development. Since that time the childminder has updated her system of record keeping. She now asks parents to complete a permission form before she agrees to administer medication to children. She also keeps a detailed record of any medicines given throughout the day, which parents countersign. This contributes to children's good health and meets regulatory requirements. With regard to activities, the childminder now organises her day so that children spend more time with her at home. Consequently, they have longer periods of uninterrupted play, which helps to improve their concentration skills, and allows the childminder to focus on and encourage different areas of their development.

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 complaint 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 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):

- formulate a log in which to record complaints if they arise
- further develop activities with babies to include heuristic play through natural materials

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