



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	112437
Inspection date	06 March 2007
Inspector	Deborah Jaqueline Newbury
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 registered in 1990. She lives with her four children aged 12 (twins), 14 and 21 in a residential area of Farnborough in Hampshire. Three of the children live permanently at home. The home is within walking distance of local amenities.

The ground floor of the property is used for childminding and children only go upstairs to use the bathroom. The childminder's garden is not currently included in the registration but she provides alternative opportunities for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children under eight at any one time. She is currently caring for a total of eight children whose ages range from one to 10 years of age. Days and times of attendance vary and three of the children attend on an ad-hoc basis only.

The childminder takes children to and from local schools and nursery groups. Children are taken to a toddler group and have opportunities to go to the park.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a home that is maintained in a satisfactory state of cleanliness and repair. The childminder implements generally suitable procedures to ensure hygiene and to minimise the potential for the spread of infection. For instance, those children who use the bathroom have their own towel and the minder provides separate changing mats and wears gloves when she is changing children's nappies. However, children are not helped to develop an understanding of the importance of good personal hygiene routines as they do not wash their hands before eating and the childminder does not talk to them about the need to do this.

Children drink as and when they feel thirsty as the childminder ensures that their water bottles remain within easy reach. Parents provide food for younger children whilst the childminder caters for older children. She seeks relevant information about children's individual dietary requirements to ensure she does not supply anything that might pose a possible health risk. Since the last inspection the childminder has purchased a high chair and a small picnic table. However, she does not always organise meal times well and use the available equipment and furniture to good effect and to the benefit of the children. For instance, rather than place a baby in the high chair and encourage independent feeding, she prefers to spoon feed young children whilst she sits in an armchair with them on her lap. At lunch time, children sit in different locations to eat rather than together at the dining table to encourage social interaction and allow everyone to enjoy each other's company.

Children have some opportunities to be physically active and spend time outside in the fresh air as the childminder walks them to and from nursery and school. Outings to the park enable children to be active and explore the play apparatus available. The childminder chooses to sleep children in the main area of the home used for minding. She provides a travel cot although this is not set up ready for use and current minded children tend to sleep in a buggy when they are taken out.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are accommodated in a generally safe environment which is reasonably tidy and uncluttered. The childminder supervises children appropriately and she makes use of relevant safety features to minimise potential hazards. For instance, a stair gate at the bottom of the stairs prevents children's independent access to this area. Children cannot leave the premises unescorted. They have recently had the opportunity to practise a fire drill to develop their understanding of what they need to do should it be necessary to evacuate the home in the event of an emergency. Children's awareness of safety issues is promoted through use of situations that arise; for instance they learn about road safety when they are out and about.

The childminder has a broad range of toys that are suitable for children of different ages and stages of development. Some items are stored to be accessible by the children themselves so they can make their own selections about what they wish to play with. However, the organisation of baby toys does not enable young children to easily access items and the bag in which these are stored poses a potential trip hazard because of the long, loopy handles. The childminder checks resources for safety and cleanliness although, at the time of inspection, some toys were dusty.

Children's welfare is generally well promoted as the childminder has attended a suitable first aid course and so, is able to respond appropriately in the event of children sustaining minor injuries. She has some awareness of issues relating to child protection and has put together a written policy statement with regard to this. However, she has not attended any child protection training and does not have access to relevant documentation such as the booklet "What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused" and local social service contact numbers for easy reference and to guide her in the course of action she should follow in the event of any concerns she may have. The childminder keeps a written record of existing injuries although she does not ask parents to countersign this to acknowledge the entry.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are content in the company of the childminder. They have the freedom to explore the toys available to them and generally, remain occupied. They especially enjoy the input of the childminder when she becomes involved in their play and chats to them. For instance, by seeking the input of an older child as she plays with the "My little pony" toys and asking questions about the different colours of the ponies she has chosen to play with. Babies enjoy playing "peek-a-boo" and "walkie round the garden" which results in lots of laughter. However, young children's interest is not always especially well maintained and their skills are not always extended in a challenging way or with more stimulating items. The childminder is unaware of the 'Birth to three' matters framework of good practice as a means of extending the range of opportunities and experiences she is able to offer young children. Play materials do not include any natural or everyday items for children to explore and they have little opportunity to take part in messy play.

Children have some opportunities to mix with other children and develop their social skills as the childminder makes use of a local toddler group on some occasions and invites friends with children to visit.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are at ease, both with one another and with the childminder and her family. Babies look to her for reassurance, which adds to their sense of security and they enjoy the closeness of cuddles. Older children enjoy an element of choice, for instance, in the choice of sandwich fillings and the type of bread they would prefer. They have the confidence to express their needs as they indicate that they do not want any more to eat. Children have access to some

resources that reflect positive images to help them begin to learn about the wider world in which we live.

Children behave generally well. They are learning to take turns and share with the support of the childminder and their self-esteem is fostered through her use of praise.

There is an informal exchange of information between the childminder and parents on a daily basis. The childminder has put together some written policies and she provides parents with a photocopy of these so they have an understanding of the way she organises her service. Letters from parents, available for viewing at inspection, indicate that they are happy with the quality of care provided.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are at ease in a home which is organised in a generally satisfactory way. They have sufficient space to move around.

The childminder maintains appropriate documentation although some aspects of this are not fully complete for all children. Records relating to childminding activities are organised in a satisfactory way and stored securely.

Overall, the childminder meets the needs of the range of the children for whom she provides

Improvements since the last inspection

The outcome of the childminder's last inspection, which took place in October 2006, was inadequate. Ofsted took enforcement action to safeguard the welfare of children. A monitoring visit was made in December 2006 to assess the progress made in addressing the issues identified for attention. These related to record keeping, awareness of the National Standards, health and safety, the provision of equipment and use of space and resources to meet children's needs.

The childminder has read the National Standards and Guidance booklets to develop her knowledge of what is required of her and she has made some improvement in her record keeping systems. She has attended first aid training and has improved practice, in most respects, to further promote the health and safety of children attending the setting. Additional equipment to meet the needs of minded children has been provided although this is not always used. Some aspects of the provision still require further attention and these areas have been carried forward in the form of recommendations made at this inspection.

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:

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 greater consistency with regard to hand washing prior to eating to reinforce children's awareness of the importance of good personal hygiene routines. Improve arrangements for ensuring the cleanliness of all toys
- obtain a copy of the booklet "What to do if you think a child is being abused" and ensure that relevant contact and telephone numbers for local social services are easily accessible
- improve outcomes for children under three by implementing an approach in line with the Birth to three matters framework
- obtain written consent from all parents to seek emergency medical advice and treatment and for other aspects of children's care. Ask parents to sign the record of existing injuries to acknowledge the entry
- improve existing arrangements for the organisation of baby toys to ensure that these are easily available to aid children's independent selection and to avoid the possibility of a trip hazard.

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