



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	958647
Inspection date	29 January 2007
Inspector	Deborah Jane Starr

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 shares her home with her husband and two children aged 15 and 13 years in Highbridge, Somerset. The whole of the ground floor and one designated room upstairs is used for childminding. There is an enclosed garden available for outside play. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time. She is currently caring for seven children; five of whom are under five years. All children attend on a part-time basis.

The childminder takes children to and collects from the local nursery and schools. She attends local toddler groups, family centre and local places of interest.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is effectively promoted. Children spontaneously follow well-established good hygiene routines. For example, washing hands after use of the toilet and before snacks and meals. Policies and procedures that prevent the spread of infection and risk of illness are in place. These include the exclusion of children when unwell, appropriate nappy changing procedures, the wiping of noses and daily cleaning of toys used by babies. The childminder holds a valid first aid certificate. Accidents are managed appropriately and systems are in place to support the administering of medication although they lack some detail.

Children benefit from a range of activities that contribute to their physical health and development. Baby walkers and low-level furniture support young children's emerging mobility and help develop their muscles when learning to walk. Activities in the garden and regular visits to local parks help children develop control and co-ordination of their bodies. Children develop batting, throwing and kicking skills using bats and balls, climbing skills using slides and climbing frames and balance and co-ordination when using a see-saw, sit and ride toys, space hoppers, large trampoline, bouncy castle and tunnel. Frequent walks give children plenty of fresh air. Children enjoy moving to music and attempt action songs and ring games such as, 'Wind the bobbin up' and 'Ring-a-ring a roses'. Children are able to be active and rest and sleep comfortably according to their needs.

Children develop an understanding of a healthy and well-balanced diet through snacks of fruit, raw vegetables, pitta bread and crackers. Regular cookery activities promote children's understanding of healthy foods further; for instance, they make fat-free muffins and home made biscuits decorated with fresh fruit puree. Parents provide their own child's lunch. Children's dietary needs are discussed fully with parents and taken account of. Children help themselves to easily accessible drinks from a low-level table throughout the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move safely and independently around the childminder's home where hazards are clearly identified, minimised and regularly checked; this includes plug sockets and smoke detectors. Children play with a varied range of age-appropriate and high quality toys and equipment that are regularly checked and appropriate for their individual needs, such as buggies and a high chair. Children are guided to keep themselves safe when inside the house; for instance, children practise evacuation procedures. Toddlers wear reins when walking outside and young children hold the hand of an adult. All children are encouraged to develop an awareness of road safety. Young children stay close to the childminder when playing at the park whilst older children stay within agreed boundaries when playing in open spaces and the beach. All children wear wrist bands with the childminder's details on when on outings. Older children develop a greater awareness of potential dangers through discussions about 'stranger danger'.

The childminder has all required procedures in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and protected; for example, clear procedures for the collection of children. The childminder's secure knowledge and understanding of possible signs and symptoms of child abuse and of local procedures to be followed safeguards children's welfare. Parents are well informed of her responsibilities through discussion and access to clearly displayed information about local reporting procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and interested in the toys and activities on offer to them within the childminder's home. The positive relationship between the childminder and children promotes their self confidence and enables them to explore the world around them and develop positive relationships with others. For example, babies separate happily from their parents on arrival and reach out for the childminder; whilst older children confidently approach the visiting inspector, show her how toys work and include her in their imaginative play. The childminder uses her good knowledge of the children to offer a varied range of adult-led and child-initiated activities throughout the week that children enjoy. These include stories, cookery, construction, creative and messy play and visits that reflect children's own interests. For example, children enjoy an assortment of activities arising from their interest in fire engines. They colour in pictures, read related stories, sing songs such as 'London's burning', discuss safety in their homes and visit the local fire station.

Young children respond to toys and activities that stimulate their sense of sight, hearing and touch. They gurgle with pleasure when investigating toys that make noises and play music. Older children re-enact their experiences pretending to make and eat tomato soup. Children are interested in language and the use of sign language promotes children's communication skills from an early age. Children enjoy looking at books, listen to stories and eagerly repeat new words and phrases; beaming with delight at their own achievements. Everyday experiences are used thoughtfully to promote independence and self selection and introduce number and colour recognition. For instance, children self-select bowls and plates, compare the size of apples and count wooden blocks placed one by one in a tower. Children are intrigued and excited to try new experiences. The adaptation of activities and use of differing resources enables children from a young age to be included in activities such as painting, gluing and drawing. Young children bounce up and down with pleasure at the feel of glue on their fingers and giggle whilst patting their hands on the paper; whilst older children are fascinated by the patterns dripping glue makes on the paper. Although the childminder instinctively offers children a varied range of experiences that they enjoy; as of yet she has not developed her own knowledge and understanding of how activities fully promote the next stage in children's development. Regular visits to local toddler groups, family centre and places of interest such as local farms and the beach extend children's experiences and help them develop an awareness of their local community.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are clearly identified and met. This is achieved through regular discussion with parents and a willingness to work closely with them to provide consistency and support for their children. For instance, by taking account of specific dietary needs and toilet training. To date, the childminder has not cared for children with learning difficulties and disabilities; however, she has a positive approach and if asked would discuss each child's individual needs and gain information to ensure she is well informed. Effective settling-in procedures, a flexible approach to each child's care and use of comforters promotes children's well-being and sense of security. Children gain an awareness of people who are different from themselves from a sufficient range of resources that reflect positive images. Meaningful experiences such as craft activities and dressing up clothes promotes their awareness of the diversity of the wider world.

Children form strong attachments to the childminder; each child benefits from the close attention given to them by her as she effectively balances their needs. Children receive frequent praise and encouragement that promotes their self-esteem and sense of well-being. They enjoy lots of cuddles and snuggle in close to the childminder when sitting on her lap. The childminder's calm, clear and consistent approach and use of age appropriate strategies effectively helps children understand what is expected of them. Young children are encouraged to be respectful of others, are interested in those around them and are starting to share toys and take turns. Children's sense of belonging is promoted through photographs of themselves and their friends and their understanding of the routines of the day. The display of children's own work promotes their sense of value.

Children benefit from the positive relationship between parents and the childminder. Parents are welcomed into the home and well-informed of the childminder's policies and procedures through discussion, some written statements and an information notice board. Daily diaries for children up to one year, frequent discussion and photographs informs parents of their child's daily care and experiences.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are at ease within the childminder's home. The inviting lay out of the play areas gives children space to move safely and independently. Young children easily access and self-select toys and resources that are placed at floor level in regularly rotated well organised storage containers and from low-level shelving. Child-sized furniture and fixtures such as a toilet, tables, chairs and large floor cushions; promotes children's independence and enables them to participate in activities comfortably and investigate toys at an appropriate height. Effective time management, routines and flexible planning of the day supports children's developmental needs and ensures their individual needs are met. For example, their need for sleep and the taking to and collection from nursery and school. Children benefit from the childminder's commitment to gain knowledge and develop her skills through training such as, sign language.

Children's well-being is promoted through appropriate, accurate, clearly displayed and well-organised documentation that is stored confidentially. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was requested to make the following improvements: to ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding toileting and to provide parents with information regarding a sick children's policy. These recommendations have been considered fully and steps taken to improve the provision. Children know what is expected of them and spontaneously follow well-established good hygiene routines. The fitting of a child-sized toilet for children's sole use promotes their independence. A clear written policy now informs parents of the procedures to be followed when their child is unwell.

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 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):

- obtain written parental acknowledgment when medication is administered
- develop further your knowledge and understanding of how activities promote the next stage in development by using the Birth to three matters framework.

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