



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	120738
Inspection date	06 March 2007
Inspector	Nicola Hill
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 1993. She lives with her husband and their three children, two of adult age and one aged 14. They live in a detached house in Lightwater. The property is close to local schools and amenities and there is a park nearby. The ground floor of the house is mainly used for childminding, with toilet and sleeping facilities available on this floor. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The family have two hamsters as pets.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA) and attends the local carer and toddler groups. She holds a valid first aid qualification. She is registered to care for a maximum of six children (two under the age of one year) at any one time and is currently minding five children aged between eight months and six years, who all attend on a part-time basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted by daily routines to ensure the premises and resources are clean and well-maintained. The children are well-protected from infection because the childminder is a trained nurse and is well-informed about children's health care matters. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of the importance of good hygiene and personal care as the childminder encourages them to wash their hands after using the toilet and before lunch. However, they do not consistently wash their hands before all meals in order to fully prevent cross-contamination. The childminder maintains an up-to-date first aid certificate and has appropriate permissions and records in place regarding administration of medication and treatment of injuries.

The food provided by the childminder is nutritious and freshly prepared, which promotes children's good health. They enjoy fruit and vegetables that the childminder incorporates into snacks, lunches and a hot meal at dinner. The childminder prepares food in accordance with parental wishes and the children's dietary requirements. Children have frequent drinks throughout the day in order to keep well hydrated. Older children can independently access their own cups of water and are involved in food preparation activities, such as chopping up vegetables for dinner, which develops their independence and self-help skills. The childminder talks to the children about healthy eating, and encourages them to grow vegetables in the garden such as tomatoes and runner beans.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. Regular visits to the park and play in the garden with equipment such as a small trampoline, climbing frame and wheeled toys, improves children's physical skills and helps them develop control of their bodies. Daily walks and discussion about the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, enables the children to develop a positive attitude towards exercise. Children are able to rest and be active according to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminding environment is welcoming to children and space is appropriately organised so that they can play safely and freely. Children independently select activities from a wide range of good quality, well-maintained toys and equipment, which are checked regularly by the childminder to ensure they are safe. The childminder carefully monitors and supervises children's choice of toys to make sure that they are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Children are supervised well by the childminder who also helps them to learn about keeping themselves safe. For example, she talks to them about road safety and fire evacuation. Children demonstrate a good understanding of safety issues as they talk about the fact that too many toys on the floor is dangerous and that they should not sit on the arm of the sofa in case they fall off. Good security precautions contribute to child safety, as the front door remains locked

at all times and children are only released to authorised known carers. This is supplemented by written policies for children's departure and non-collection of children. Most safety issues within the home have been addressed. However, there is one minor weakness as the rotary clothes line in the garden is not covered when not in use.

The childminder has most of the required procedures and documents in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. For example, she has the relevant insurance cover, written safety policies and all persons over the age of 16 living in the house have been vetted. The childminder has attended recent child protection training and is aware of her professional duty to safeguard children. She has a generally good understanding of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and the procedures to follow if making a referral.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and clearly enjoy their time in the childminder's care. They go about their play enthusiastically. Children initiate their own play and the childminder is very responsive to their interests and wishes. She knows instinctively when to play an active role in the children's play and when to stand back and let them play freely. The children receive lots of cuddles and meaningful praise, which increases their sense of belonging and encourages them to be increasingly independent. These close and caring relationships increase the children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self.

Young children thrive through the exciting range of activities and experiences offered to them. They are provided with an assortment of fun experiences such as role play, construction, stories, art and craft and outdoor play. Toys and resources provide sufficient challenge and interest. For example, the childminder gives children logic puzzles to try to take apart and put back together again in different ways, which they persevere with and complete with confidence. There is a strong emphasis on building children's independence as the childminder encourages them to select their own toys and activities, such as magic water painting, playing music tapes and choosing stories. Children climb onto the childminder's lap to listen to stories and enjoy using the picture prompts to join in with the reading. Children and babies are given opportunities to explore different materials and develop creativity as they take part in painting, sticking and play with sand and playdough.

The childminder is encouraging children's early education, such as helping them to write their own names and identify different shapes. Each child is also given a 'workbook' into which they can put their drawings and other art work. Children enjoy showing off their work and also enjoy looking at photographs of themselves when younger, recalling activities they have taken part in such as cooking, water play in the garden, helping the childminder to wash up and going on outings. Activities outside the setting include going for walks and feeding the ducks at a local park. Children are also taken further afield to places such as Windsor, the farm, Thorpe Park and The Look Out Discovery Centre, which promotes their learning and their knowledge of the world around them. Children have many opportunities to develop their confidence and social skills as they regularly go to local toddler groups and music groups, where they mix with different children and adults.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are helped to feel good about themselves because the childminder values each as an individual, and provides frequent positive support, praise and encouragement. The children are familiar with the routines and understand the behavioural expectations within the childminder's home. The childminder acts as a good role model and reinforces her expectations of manners by gently encouraging the children to say 'pardon' instead of 'what'. Children behave well and build a trusting relationship with the childminder which fosters their sense of belonging.

The childminder has a knowledge of different cultures and festivals. She provides an adequate range of resources to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase children's awareness of diversity. This is also reinforced as the childminder encourages children to discuss and accept differences and takes them to meet her relative who uses a wheelchair. There are no children currently attending the setting who have learning difficulties or disabilities. However, the childminder has a very positive attitude towards inclusion and ensuring children are cared for as equals.

The positive partnerships developed between the childminder and parents ensures that both are working together to meet the needs of the children. Parents are kept appropriately informed about their children's well-being and care through daily discussions and written daily diaries. The childminder collates photographs of each child over the year and places them in an album to give to each parent at Christmas, which is a nice way of documenting children's growth and development. Children's scrapbooks of their drawings and other art work also go home once complete, which again, shows children's progress. The childminder has developed well written policies and procedures for parents to ensure they are fully informed of all aspects of the business. However, the complaints policy does not fully reflect the most recent amendments to the National Standards.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder is experienced, enthusiastic and enjoys her work with the children. She is committed to her own professional development and has attended various short training courses and workshops to enhance her practice. The children are settled and at ease within this well-organised environment. The atmosphere is one that is calm and happy and where children feel welcome. Resources are of good quality and utilised well. Trips outside the home enhance the provision and extend children's play and learning experiences.

The welfare and safety of the children is very important to the childminder and correct ratios are maintained at all times. The childminder generally keeps good records and maintains confidentiality by ensuring they are secure. However, some weaknesses in the use of documentation have been identified. The childminder does not ask parents to sign the accident book to acknowledge the occurrence, and although details of existing injuries when a child arrives at the setting are discussed with parents, the childminder has not been recording these. Overall, the childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection highlighted three recommendations. These required the childminder to ensure that the fire blanket is appropriately fixed to a suitable surface, to consider developing a range of policy and procedural statements to reflect the quality of care offered and to ensure that there is a suitable means of recording any medicines administered, and prior written agreements from parents.

The childminder has now fitted her fire blanket to the wall to ensure it can be accessed easily and quickly. She has developed a number of written policies and procedures to support her practice, and each parent receives a copy of these. The childminder now formally records any medication administered using NCMA documentation, and has prior written consents from parents to administer both prescription and non-prescription medication.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- further improve written information for parents by ensuring the complaints policy is updated to fully reflect the October 2005 amendments to the standards
- improve the use of documentation to safeguard children's welfare and care by requesting that parents sign accident records to acknowledge the occurrence, and by ensuring any existing injuries when a child arrives at the setting are recorded.

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