



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	313823
Inspection date	05 February 2007
Inspector	Julie Morrison
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 1992. She lives with her husband in a bungalow near the centre of Bishop Auckland. She is able to access local groups, schools and shops from her home. The whole of the property is used for childminding; there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight and is currently minding eight children on a part-time basis, aged between one and seven years. She also minds children over eight years of age.

The family has a pet rabbit.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a clean and warm family home where they are supported in staying healthy. They are well nourished and encouraged to learn about the importance of a healthy diet. For example, the childminder cooks homemade meals and explains to the children why they need to eat fruit and vegetables. The children are reminded to wash their hands before food and after using the toilet, which helps them to understand good health and hygiene practices.

Relevant records are in place to ensure that children are well protected. For example, children's medication needs are discussed with parents and suitably recorded, including consent for medication and to seek emergency treatment. Accidents are appropriately recorded and countersigned by parents. The childminder ensures that children are protected from cross-infection as she follows a strict exclusion policy for sick children.

Children benefit from regular access to fresh air and exercise, which also contributes positively to their good health. They play in the garden, go for walks to the local play area and on trips to the beach. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the children to rest when required. This means that they can be active or rest according to their individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. For example, the doors are kept locked, socket covers are in place and hazardous materials are kept out of children's reach. The childminder has a clear evacuation procedure and she regularly practises fire drills with the children, to raise their awareness of what to do in an emergency. Children are also learning other strategies for keeping themselves safe. For example, the childminder has made lollipop signs and roundabouts which they play with in the garden and discuss road safety. Prior to an outing, the childminder discusses with the children how they keep safe; older children walk in two's holding hands, younger children wear straps or go in buggies.

The children are able to move around the house safely and freely. Toys and resources are stored accessibly in boxes and on shelves, promoting confidence and independence. The childminder has a good selection of resources to ensure that individual children's needs can be met, for example, high chairs, travel cots and toys, which are appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Children are suitably protected, as the childminder has a sound understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. She understands her role in child protection, although she is less confident about the procedures she would follow if she had a concern or if an allegation was made against her. However, she does keep written information which she can refer to if needed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children enjoy a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities provided by the childminder. They spend their time purposefully and enjoy taking part in fun activities such as arts and crafts, planting flowers, playing with construction toys and trains, and in quieter times by reading books. The childminder supports the children's development, for example, she encourages them to write their own name, recognise colours and begin to match words to pictures. She works closely with the parents to ensure that children's individual developmental needs are met.

Children's individual needs are well catered for. For example, the childminder is aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and uses this with the younger children, ensuring that they are well cared for and suitably stimulated. Learning and development needs of individual children are taken into account as the childminder plans the day's activities.

Close and caring relationships have been developed between the childminder and the children, which increase the children's sense of trust. The children call her 'Nana' and are happy and settled in her care. The childminder helps to raise children's self-esteem by providing encouragement and praise and by responding to questions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a positive relationship between parents and the childminder, and parents speak very highly of the care she provides. She works in close partnership with the parents to ensure children's specific requirements are met, taking time initially, to explain how she works and to give parents a copy of her policies. They are invited for introductory visits, so that the childminder can find out about the child's likes, dislikes and any specific needs to help children settle and ensure continuity of care. Parents are kept verbally informed about their child's activities at the end of the day or through a phone call, if the childminder wishes to discuss something confidential.

Children learn about the wider world through discussions about what they see on the television and what they have done at school is further developed. For example, making Chinese lanterns for Chinese New Year. However, the childminder has limited resources to reflect diversity. Children learn about their local community as they visit play areas and meet with another childminder. The children regularly visit a local farm where they get the chance to meet and learn about the animals, further increasing their awareness of the world in which they live.

Children are well behaved because the childminder has firm boundaries for behaviour. She is supportive, uses regular praise and helps the children to understand right from wrong. The children show a sense of belonging at the setting and are encouraged to feel like it is home. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported through close liaison with parents and the childminder's experience.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder has extensive experience of caring for children of all ages. She has a good understanding of child development and organises the day to meet children's individual needs and interests. The childminder organises resources and activities effectively to ensure that children are happy and well occupied, as well as promoting their learning and development. Children can move around freely and access resources independently.

The childminder uses policies and procedures to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. Records are well maintained, accessible and stored securely and confidentially to meet regulatory requirements and safeguard children. The childminder maintains adult to child ratios at all times, to ensure that the children receive quality care and attention. The complaints procedure is clearly displayed for parents to see and a complaints record has been introduced.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to continue with her personal development and training. The childminder has since tried to secure places on several training courses but has been unsuccessful. She will continue to try to secure training to further develop her practice.

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 develop understanding of local child protection procedures in order to effectively protect children

- increase resources and opportunities to further promote children's awareness of diversity in society.

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