

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	402988
Inspection date	10 January 2008
Inspector	Sharon, Amelia Robson

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 in a quiet residential area of Morpeth, Northumberland with her husband and 18 year old son. The premises are within walking distance of local transport routes, nurseries and schools, and Morpeth town centre. Children have access to the lounge, dining room and kitchen, and the first floor bathroom and toilet. There is an enclosed rear garden available for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years and is currently caring for six children on a part-time basis. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive because the childminder follows effective written procedures and practices, which meet their physical, nutritional and health needs. The very good adult support and guidance helps children gain a very clear understanding of appropriate hygiene routines. Children

are made aware of very good personal hygiene through positive role modelling provided by the childminder and through the opportunities they are given. For example, each child has their own towel to use after washing hands and there are discussions about why they need to wash hands and germs. A comprehensive written policy and detailed discussion with parents regarding the admission of sick children helps to minimise the risk of cross infection and therefore, safeguards children's health. Detailed accident and medication recording systems are in place which are clear, up to date and confidentially maintained. The childminder has completed a relevant first aid course and has access to first aid kits in the home and on outings.

Children enjoy an extremely healthy and nutritious diet, as the childminder encourages children to eat healthy foods at snack and meal times. Children have access to drinks throughout the day, encouraging children to help themselves and promoting independence. The childminder has detailed information about each child's dietary needs, including their likes and dislikes. Children have regular opportunities to take part in cooking activities, recipes used are appropriate to children's ages and abilities. They recently made scones for tea and healthy fruit kebabs. The childminder has completed a basic food hygiene course.

Children have daily opportunities to take part in stimulating indoor and outdoor activities. The childminder has good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and a very good understanding of each child's stage of development. She ensures children have opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities that further contribute to their good health, for example, walks in the local community and visits to the park. Physical skills are developed by playing on large outdoor equipment, playing with balls, and dancing at a music group. Children are given lots of positive encouragement by the childminder to enjoy these activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an extremely safe and secure environment. The home is well organised and maintained, giving children lots of opportunities to explore and select activities and resources safely. A very good range of equipment is available and in use, taking into account the ages of the children being cared for. A very comprehensive safety policy is in place, which includes the safe evacuation of the home. The childminder regularly practises the evacuation procedure with the children, which further promotes their safety. Through daily risk assessments the childminder ensures that all areas accessed by the children are extremely safe. She has a very good understanding of how to achieve a balance between allowing children freedom to explore and yet setting safe limits. The childminder takes the opportunity to talk to children about road safety while walking to and from school and on outings.

Children use a very wide range of good quality equipment, appropriate to their age and stage of development. It is regularly monitored to ensure it is safe and well maintained. Toys and resources are replaced, updated and added to on a regular basis. The childminder ensures she keeps up to date with any changes in legislation and is aware of appropriate safety standards.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted by the childminder who has a very good understanding of child protection procedures and her role in safeguarding children. She has completed child protection training and has comprehensive written policies and procedures to support her practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the childminder's home, they are very happy and settled. They achieve well because she is experienced and uses her knowledge to provide quality care. Children have very positive relationships with the childminder, their confidence and self-esteem is given high priority as they are given praise and acknowledgement for their efforts and achievements. Children's independence is promoted as they make their own choices and decisions.

Children's learning is developed through a very good range of stimulating activities and resources. For example, they have lots of opportunities to take part in art and craft activities, cooking and imaginative play. Children are able to select toys and activities from the extremely well resourced play areas. Daily diaries are used for younger children and parents are informed about activities and outings children have experienced.

The childminder has flexible plans for activities and has started to use her knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. She also has some awareness of the Foundation Stage. Days are organised in order to accommodate children's individual needs and to take into account how they are feeling. The childminder has started to monitor and evaluate activities to see how successful they are and how she can extend and develop them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder works very closely with parents to ensure children's individual needs are met. Close and caring relationships help to increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of belonging. Children are valued and respected as individuals and the childminder's aim is to ensure all children feel welcome, happy and settled in her care. She strives to help children reach their full potential and meet their needs. Children have access to a wide range of resources that reflect positive images of diversity and differences, including books, dolls and puppets. Children also have the opportunity to visit the library to select their own books.

Children behave well, in a very calm and friendly environment. They learn about sharing and valuing others by the very positive role modelling provided by the childminder and the consistent boundaries in place. She gently and sensitively supports and encourages children in their daily routines and activities. This enables them to develop their self-esteem and confidence. The childminder uses a very good range of age appropriate methods for dealing with children's behaviour, including distraction and discussion. She promotes positive behaviour with lots of praise and encouragement, and also has age appropriate house rules in place.

A very good relationship with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being. Parents are given a wealth of information, including written policies and procedures, and details of the service the childminder provides. This ensures parents are well informed and made to feel welcome from the onset of a placement. Daily diaries and chats keep parents up to date with their child's progress and welfare. There is a complaints procedure in place and parents are given details of this.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is greatly enhanced by the very good organisation and the effective health and safety measures in place. They have access to a wide range of resources and stimulating activities, which effectively meet their individual needs. Children benefit from a skilled childminder, who has regard for the well-being of all the children she cares for. The adult-to-child ratio positively supports children's care, learning and play.

The childminder has sound knowledge of child development and has completed a number of courses, covering a wide range of topics. She is pro-active in accessing training and ensures she keeps up to date with current practice. Children benefit from the childminder's continuing development and increased knowledge.

All required documentation is in place and regularly reviewed, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being. The recording systems in place are organised effectively, are confidentially maintained and are supplemented by relevant parental consents. The childminder has comprehensive policies and procedures in place, including detailed information for parents.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Loose cables have been made safe and drains are inaccessible to children.

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 can be seen 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:

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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):

- develop the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework when planning activities.

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