

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	100818
Inspection date	03 July 2007
Inspector	Jennifer Read
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 inadequate – notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since 1996 and may provide care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time. She currently cares for 15 children on a part-time basis from birth to 10 years all year round. The childminder walks to local schools and playgroups to take and collect children.

The childminder lives with her husband and three children of 18, 16 and 13 years in the Longlevens area of Gloucester. The ground floor is used for the childminding with the main care taking place in the play room/conservatory, open-plan dining area and living room, kitchen and downstairs toilet. Two upstairs bedrooms are available for sleeping. There is an enclosed rear garden with grass and patio surfaces for outdoor play. The family has five guinea pigs and two frogs.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children benefit from a clean premises and adequate systems to maintain the cleanliness of the toys and play materials. Children are beginning to learn about simple health and hygiene practices. For example, learning to wipe and blow their noses and wipe their hands with wet wipes independently. However, hand-washing routines are not consistent throughout the day, which heightens the risk of cross contamination and the spreading of germs. Children gain no awareness of the importance of hand washing because there is no discussion or planned activities to show how they cannot see germs and the affect this has on their health. This restricts children from learning to look after their bodies and prevent the spread of infection.

Children receive appropriate comfort and cuddles when they are unwell. The childminder monitors the children closely and takes appropriate action to telephone parents to collect when necessary. Appropriate written permission from parents to administer medication and treatment are in place to ensure they receive suitable treatment in an emergency. However, children's health care needs are put at risk because the accident and medication records are not routinely completed or their parents adequately informed.

Children enjoy many opportunities for fresh air and exercise, which contributes to their healthy well-being. For example, children are challenged to build on fitness and physical skills when playing in the garden during fine weather. They use the climbing apparatus, bats and balls, and readily practise their pedalling skills in the go-kart. When the numbers of children attending allow, they enjoy walks to or from school or playgroup. They benefit from occasional visits to the local soft play centre, play park or nature trail where they use swings, slides and move their bodies in various ways to negotiate the equipment. Young babies are also given an opportunity to have fresh air through occasional walks in the pushchair. They develop their crawling, balancing and walking as they are provided with plenty of space and encouragement from the childminder. However, the younger children are not encouraged to feed themselves their lunch, limiting their independence and opportunity to develop their co-ordination and control.

Children gain no understanding of the importance of healthy food and regular exercise on their health because there are no planned activities or discussions about healthy eating habits, or the affect physical exercise has on their body. They experience limited snack options, which consist of biscuits high in sugar with no healthy alternative available. Children are kept well hydrated through access to their individual cups during play and mealtimes. This enables children to help themselves to drinks when they are thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

The children enjoy the vast amount of space and extensive range of stimulating toys and interesting resources. They move freely and confidently through the different rooms and readily access play items they can reach for themselves to aid their enjoyment and development. However, the organisation of the toys is limiting children's ability to select play items for themselves because they are stacked in boxes on top of each other or piled in front of other toys. This means the children are unable to find what they are looking for easily and require the childminder's help to move equipment. Play materials are often strewn across the floor causing a tripping hazard and making it difficult for the younger children to walk safely.

Children's safety and security is given suitable priority by daily safety checks of the outside area and close supervision. This ensures hazards to children are effectively minimised in the garden and the childminder is able to respond swiftly to their aid, for example, when the younger children are learning to get in and out of the push along vehicles or develop their balance and walking skills. The childminder supervises the children closely, such as, often checking the children when they are sleeping to ensure they are safe. The childminder safeguards the children by working closely with parents to organise collection procedures, such as, asking to meet named persons or requesting a photograph. However, children's safety is put at risk because the childminder does not maintain a record of attendance for all children. This is a breach of regulation and means an accurate record of who is on the premises at any one time is not available.

Children gain little awareness of safety issues or learn how to keep themselves safe because explanations of safe play are inconsistent and practise and discussion of the escape plan does not take place. Subsequently, the large numbers of children attending have no understanding of how to keep themselves safe in an emergency. Children are learning how to cross the road safely when occasionally walking to and from school or playgroup. The youngest children are securely strapped into the pushchair, pre-school children know to hold onto the side and older children are asked not to go too far ahead to enable the childminder to monitor their safety by the road.

The childminder has very basic understanding of child protection issues. She completed basic child protection training a number of years ago and demonstrates adequate awareness of the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect to protect children. However, she has no knowledge of up-to-date legislation, little awareness of the procedure to follow with a child protection concern or action to take if an allegation is made while a child is in her care to safeguard their welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a broad range of stimulating activities, games and resources, which cater for the wide age range of children for whom the childminder cares. These meet their individual needs and interests appropriately because the childminder actively encourages children's decision-making skills and free choice. Children are happy and engaged because they organise their own games, becoming autonomous in their play. For example, the children ask to play with the kitchen and play food. They use the oven gloves to cook with, set out the small table and chairs, plates, and play food to create their picnic.

The childminder purposefully guides children's ideas and play to encourage their imagination and development. Children develop confidence because the childminder supports their play and offers regular encouragement and praise. Children concentrate for some time, persevering at chosen tasks and developing their awareness of shape and size. For example, a child asks to play the magnetic fish game, skilfully catching the different sized fish before spending much time sorting them and placing them in the correct position on the board.

Children make positive relationships with each other and the childminder. They respond well to the warm, relaxed environment and appropriate support. Children interact confidently with each other and initiate conversations with the childminder about their families. The younger children develop their early communication skills as they attract the attention of the childminder, who readily responds to their sounds. The children are very social, enjoying the company of all

the children and extending their experiences through regular visits to other childminder's homes, playgroups, library and other settings.

The older children enjoy regular opportunities to be creative and engage in a varied range of activities that include vigorous activity and opportunities to relax and chill out after the rigours of the school day. They use their design skills and imagination to make models with clay then choose their colours carefully to paint them. They explore different materials to stick, glue, and develop their fine motor skills as they make patterns with needlework and choose coloured pens to colour their pictures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

The childminder liaises closely with parents to obtain sufficient information to provide appropriate care. She knows the children generally well and provides experiences, care and support relevant to their individual needs. However, the childminder has basic understanding of the issues surrounding the care of children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Children gain little awareness of the wider world, having no planned activities and a small number of resources, which reflect positive images of diversity. The childminder demonstrates limited understanding of other cultures and customs to help develop children's knowledge.

Children feel secure and settled as the childminder provides plenty of reassurance and enables them to rest, and relax according to their individual needs. They are confident and know the routines generally well. Children are learning to share toys, take turns and use their manners well through useful support and sensitive reminders from the childminder. They show some awareness of the house rules but explanations are not given to help children begin to manage their own behaviour. The childminder is calm in her approach to managing behaviour and actively promotes children's self-esteem through positive praise and reinforcement. As a result, children are generally well behaved.

Children benefit from the friendly relationship and informal contact between their parents and the childminder. Parents value the safe environment the childminder provides, the social opportunities available to their children and the stimulating range of activities on offer. Parents receive little information about the day-to-day organisation of the setting and basic information about how their child has been. However, not all records or valuable information about their child is shared with parents to ensure they are sufficiently informed. The complaints log is not complete or available to parents and information on how to contact the regulator has not been provided.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children are made to feel welcome and the premises organised to allow them to play freely in the different play areas. Children make good use of the resources available to them, although ease of access to many toys, games and play equipment is limited due to the extensive range and organisation of resources. This hinders children's independent learning and play. Outside space is used well to allow children freedom to explore and move during active play. The younger children receive appropriate levels of individual attention throughout the day, although this is significantly reduced at the beginning and ends of the day when the childminder cares for many older children.

The childminder is friendly, calm and committed to ensure the children are happy and have fun in the setting and works with parents to ensure they are content with the level of childcare. She is willing to attend training to improve her professional development. However, she has sought little information about new legislation and procedures. As a result, the childminder has limited knowledge of many regulatory practices to safeguard and promote children's welfare. Documentation and records are not well organised, all in place, complete or shared with parents in line with the requirements of registration. For example, not all children have a record of attendance. This makes it difficult for the childminder to monitor her conditions of registration to promote their welfare. Some children have an individual sleeve in a folder with child record forms, written agreements with parents and written permissions to maintain confidentiality. The childminder does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection recommended, the childminder obtained written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment.

Written permission is recorded on parental contracts for each child to ensure they receive appropriate medical advice or treatment in an emergency.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted has received one concern which required the provider or Ofsted to take action in order to meet the National Standards.

In March 2006, a concern was raised under the National Standard 2 - Organisation regarding over minding. The provider was asked to investigate. The provider admitted over minding on several occasions and requested a variation to her conditions of registration. A variation to the conditions of registration was applied. No further action was taken and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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.

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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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that all records required for the efficient and safe management of the childminding are in place, accurate and shared with parents
- improve knowledge and understanding of the requirements set out in regulations

- keep a written record, signed by parents, of all accident and medicines given to children
- increase knowledge of local child protection procedures and action to take if an allegation is made while a child is in your care
- increase knowledge and understanding of other cultures and customs and provide activities to help children appreciate and value each others' similarities and differences
- collate evidence of complaints relating to the national standards, ensuring these and information on the procedure to follow with a concern are available to parents.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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