

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 141134
Inspection date 18 May 2007
Inspector Carole Argles

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 for approximately 15 years. She lives with her husband and three adult children in a house close to the centre of Gillingham, Dorset. This is within walking distance of local schools and pre-schools. All ground floor areas of the house and the main bedroom on the first floor are used for childminding. There is an enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder may care for six children aged from birth to under eight years old. There are currently 10 children on roll including seven children aged under five years. All children attend part-time. The childminder supports children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. There are currently no children who speak English as an additional language.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children's good health is well supported by the childminder and they are encouraged to develop an active and healthy life-style. The childminder has a clear understanding ways to promote good hygiene and reduce the likelihood of infection spreading between the children, for example, by having a good nappy changing and hand washing routines. Separate bedding and hand towels are provided for each child. The premises, toys and equipment are kept clean and hygienic. Children do not attend if they are ill or infectious. Sound procedures are in place in the event of an emergency, for example, a child becoming ill or sustaining an accident while with the childminder. She holds a current first aid certificate and keeps a first aid kit readily available. The children are protected from the harmful effects of the sun and use a shaded area of the garden when playing outside. They know that good hygiene is important, saying that washing gets rid of dirt and germs to stops them becoming ill. Without being asked, they hurry to the cloakroom to wash their hands before eating their snack.

The children's parents provide much of the food for their children but the childminder supplements this with nutritious snacks which usually include a variety of fruit. They have drinks readily available for them to take when they are thirsty. The children are beginning to understand the importance of eating a healthy diet and are able to talk about which foods are good for them. The childminder and parents work closely together to ensure that any specific dietary requirements are met.

The children have exercise daily and frequently walk to the local schools, parks and the town. The childminder takes them to indoor play venues where they have the opportunity to use a variety of age-appropriate equipment. This helps them gain good control and coordination of their movements. The children often play in the childminder's garden where they enjoy using balls, a slide and ride on toys; they have ample space to run around freely. These activities support their development well and help to keep them active and fit.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

A safe and welcoming environment is provided for the children. The premises are tidy, well maintained and kept secure. The childminder makes good use of space, arranging her furniture so that there is plenty of room for the children to play and move around safely. A first floor room is available for young children to sleep undisturbed. The children use the ground floor cloakroom and this allows them to manage their own personal care independently. There is a wide range of good quality furniture, toys and resources which are safe and suitable for the children to use. For example, they use a child-size table and chairs when they eat their snack together. Many toys are stored in boxes in the conservatory where they are readily available for children to see and select independently. This allows them to make choices about what they do.

The childminder takes effective action to reduce the risk of accidental injury to the children and ensures that they are well supervised at all times. Suitable safety equipment is provided, for example, socket covers are in place and a gate is used to prevent very young children accessing the stairs. The garden is well fenced and gated, and the sheds are kept locked. Appropriate fire safety measures are in place and the children practise the emergency evacuation

drill regularly. The childminder makes sure that they are safe when out and keeps them close to her when they are near to roads. Appropriate safety restraints are always used if the children are taken out in a car. The children begin to learn about how to keep themselves safe, for example, stopping and listening for traffic before they cross the road.

The childminder has a clear understanding of her responsibilities for safeguarding children and knows how to act if she has concerns about the welfare of a child in her care. The children are never left alone with people who have not been vetted. This contributes well to protecting children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are very happy and settled. They are developing good communication skills, and speak clearly and confidently to others. They enjoy singing and music and often spontaneously bursting into song. The children are developing good social skills and play cooperatively together, sometimes spending long periods in pretend play. They use their imaginations well, for example, a child talks about the 'lemon cake' she has made in the sandpit. They have a relaxed and friendly relationship with the childminder and talk readily to her about themselves. She is there to support their play but she recognises the importance of allowing them to develop their own ideas. At times, she leaves them to play happily together with little intervention, except occasionally making suggestions to extend their play, perhaps going outside to continue their game.

There is a wide range of toys and resources which support all areas of development and provide suitable levels of challenge for children of all ages. For example, there are many toys that promote good hand-eye coordination including stacking, hammering and construction toys, beads and puzzles. The childminder plans outings, for example, to toddler groups, and other activities in advance but she is flexible, allowing the children to make choices about what they do. The children are encouraged to become independent, washing their hands, putting on their shoes and sometimes cutting up their own fruit at snack time. They begin to learn about letters and how to write their names; they begin to count, learning through practical activities such as board games with dice. They take part in a variety of art and craft activities including drawing, painting and collage. The children are well occupied and enjoy their time with the childminder.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children behave well, playing cooperatively together, sharing fairly and taking turns. The childminder has clear expectations for them and uses positive strategies to manage their behaviour. The children receive plenty of praise so they understand when they have done well. They are helped to understand why sometimes their behaviour is unwanted by considering the effects of what they do on others, for example, why it is important to share or apologise to others.

The children are confident and settled because their individual needs are met effectively. Good communication is established between the childminder and the parents and they exchange information about the children daily to make sure there is continuity in their care. The childminder respects parents' wishes for their child and obtains all the required written consents. There is a good settling in process and new families visit the childminder before they start. This gives her the opportunity to ask about any special routines, likes or needs so that she can make

sure that the child feels comfortable and secure. Children who have any learning difficulties or disabilities receive good support from the childminder who works closely with their parents and others involved in their care. She ensures that she has a clear understanding of their needs allowing her to adapt activities to promote their development. She plans her minding arrangements so that she is sure that the children receive the attention they require.

There is a satisfactory range of toys and books which show positive images of diversity and the children take part in some activities to help them find out about the wider world. The childminder is careful to ensure that all children are included and that boys and girls have equal access to all activities. This helps the children begin to develop an accepting attitude towards others.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children benefit from the childminder's good organisational skills. All the required records, policies and procedures are in place to support the children's welfare and safety. Copies of policy documents are made readily available for parents to read so they understand what is available for their child. The childminder is fully aware of confidentiality issues and keeps her records secure. There is a suitable routine for the children's day and the childminder provides a varied range of experiences for them. She makes effective use of the space in her home. She always keeps to the required adult to child ratio and making sure that she can give children the support and attention they need. The childminder is committed to her personal development and is currently completing a relevant child care qualification. She regularly attends courses and endeavouring to put what she has learnt into practice. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the childminder agreed to make sure that good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing and cot linen, and to make sure that small toys are kept out of the reach of babies. She now provides an individual hand towel for each child. These are colour-coded so that each child knows which is theirs. Separate cot linen is provided for each child and this is laundered frequently. This reduces the risk of infection spreading between children. The children's safety is promoted because the childminder keeps all small items, for example, small construction toys, well out of the reach of young children and babies.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the childminder or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The childminder 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):

- continue to extend the opportunities for children to learn about others 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