

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	403138
Inspection date	19 April 2007
Inspector	Julie Larnier
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 1999. She lives with her husband and two children aged nine and 11 years, in Seaton Deleval, Northumberland. Children have access to the living/dining room, kitchen and bathroom on the ground floor. There is a rear yard for outdoor play.

The childminder is currently caring for five children under eight on a part-time, flexible basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are provided with attractively presented snacks which contribute to a healthy diet. A good selection of chopped vegetables and a sandwich of brown bread are enjoyed with enthusiasm at lunchtime by older children. Meal times are a nice social occasion for children where they all gather round the dining table and enjoy conversations with the childminder. Younger children are supported to help them begin to start feeding themselves. The

childminder's patient attitude allows babies to explore their food and drink at their own pace. Healthy drinks of milk and water are readily available for children.

Children enjoy active play both inside and outdoors. Older children enjoy singing and dancing to the songs they sing. They play in the back lane with a good variety of equipment, such as roller blades and skate boards. Trips out to the local community, such as visiting a nearby wood, allows children to exercise and walks to school and nursery are a daily occurrence which promote a healthy lifestyle. The childminder supports babies' physical development well, as she holds their hands allowing them to stand up and move around on the carpet, which they enjoy.

The children's health and hygiene is maintained well. The childminder follows consistent routines after preparing food and changing nappies to ensure this is done safely. Children are protected from cross-infection in the setting and are beginning to learn about how to take care of their own personal needs. Older children talk about why they must wash their hands after visiting the toilet, showing that they are learning about germs and hygiene. Children's individual needs are met successfully by the childminder. She checks nappies regularly and knows about the children's likes and dislikes, ensuring she takes care when wiping younger children's faces as she knows this is a task they do not enjoy.

A clear written policy regarding how to deal with infectious illnesses ensures that children's health and safety is maintained. This is shared with parents to ensure that infection can be limited due to all parties being clear on when children cannot be cared for by the childminder. The necessary records and documentation are maintained and parents are sufficiently informed of accidents to further secure children's welfare.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about how to stay safe in the setting through daily discussion about what they are doing. Children move around the areas of the premises freely and safely. This is due to the childminder ensuring the relevant safety equipment is in place, such as door stoppers, cupboard locks and a large, soft toy to protect mobile children from the fire hearth. Daily walks to school and nursery provide opportunities for children to learn about basic road safety. The childminder assesses the children's understanding of this to ensure they are safe, for example, new children are asked to hold on to the buggy or provided with reins until she assesses their understanding.

The childminder's vigilance and supervision in the setting ensure that younger children's safety and welfare is safeguarded. She ensures that she can easily supervise both children she is caring for by turning the baby's high chair around when another child requests she looks at his picnic spread in the living room area. Consistent checks on sleeping children ensure that they are safe and well cared for. Whilst older children enjoy playing in the back lane and the responsibility that this gives them, parents are not sufficiently informed to ensure that they make a decision about whether they want their child to play in this area.

Children explore a good range of toys and equipment that interests them. Some equipment is easily accessible for children to make choices about what they want to do and the childminder supports them to reach toys on higher shelves. Space is used well by children as they make decisions about where they want to play, for example, as they ask for a blanket and set up their picnic in the living room.

Children's welfare, in relation to child protection, is safeguarded adequately. The childminder shows an adequate awareness of the procedures to follow if she has concerns, which helps to keep children safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time with the childminder. Play is centred around children's interests to ensure they are motivated and persist in their play for long periods. Child-focused play allows children to explore their own ideas, for example, they look at how different shaped items roll down a box lid and talk about what they see with the childminder. This allows children to extend their learning as the childminder asks them different questions to make them think about what causes different shapes to roll in different ways.

Children are enthusiastic about imaginary play. They have a range of good equipment which captures their interests as they have picnics, buy items from the shop and ride around on their flying spoon. Children enjoy the childminder joining in with their play. Some children are very confident in the setting; they provide a lovely welcome as they introduce themselves to visitors with their name and tell them how old they are. Children's learning and development is valued by the childminder. She successfully uses spontaneous activities to further children's learning by asking what they will use the money for when they use the pretend cash register.

Children have good, secure relationships with the childminder. Younger children are successfully supported, such as holding them to stand up, and providing lots of appropriate conversation and different toys for babies, to keep them stimulated and interested.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder has a fair understanding of how to promote equal opportunities and help children to gain an understanding of diversity as she discusses issues to help them to learn about differences. However, resources that help to promote positive images of diversity are limited. All children are treated as individuals. This is due to the good knowledge the childminder has of the children in her care and ensures that their needs are met successfully.

Children behave well. Older children understand rules as they comment that they must put away the toys they have out before they play with some others. The childminder encourages and praises children for their behaviour and re-enforces positive behaviour that children tell her about. For example, when a child tells the childminder about helping his grandparents to do the dishes at their house, he receives praise to let him know that this is a good thing to do. Children are treated with respect by the childminder; she encourages manners, such as 'please' and 'thank you', and provides a good role model when she passes children equipment by responding with 'you're welcome'.

Partnerships with parents are positive. Parents comment on the childminder's patience, humour, flexibility and safety conscious attitude. Some note that their child has 'good times' at the setting. Children's needs are met due to effective partnerships with parents, meaning the childminder can gain relevant information, for example, about children's individual routines. The childminder maintains most of the relevant consents and provides parents with daily information to ensure that they are well informed about what their child has been doing at the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are safe, secure and settled in the setting. The childminder provides good support for children as she sits on the floor and takes the lead from their instructions as they roll the ball to each other. The childminder makes extremely good use of her time to ensure she is attentive to each child's needs and that they are all well cared for. This is a particular strength of the childminder's practice. She successfully ensures that children of all ages are included and stimulated in their play by giving them equal time and attention in the setting.

Children are consistently supported in the setting as the childminder asks them if they can manage with tasks and listens to whether they want her help or not. Children enjoy being involved in routine tasks to help the childminder as they listen to the rattle of the letterbox and are asked if they want to collect the letters that have been delivered or if they want to watch while the childminder makes the lunch.

The necessary paperwork and documentation is in place, easily accessible and well organised. Information relevant to the setting, such as certificates of courses the childminder has completed and information about illnesses are readily displayed. This further contributes to the children's safety and welfare.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the childminder agreed to: devise a policy about the admission of sick children; extend the construction toys and resources that promote diversity; and obtain telephone numbers to pass on any child protection concerns.

The childminder has a written policy that parents are provided with to show that all parties are aware of the procedures if a child is sick; this further contributes to ensuring that cross-infection is limited. Construction toys have been extended to ensure that children have opportunities to benefit from this area of play. The childminder has obtained the relevant telephone numbers to ensure that any child protection concerns can be quickly passed to the appropriate agencies. All of these improvements further contribute to the care and welfare of the children.

Resources to help children to gain an understanding of diversity have not been extended. This was highlighted as a recommendation from this inspection.

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):

- ensure that parents are sufficiently informed about their children playing in the back lane, for example, by gaining written parental consent
- ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to explore and learn about diversity.

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