



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	125705
Inspection date	16 June 2005
Inspector	June Fielden

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 was registered in 1997. She lives with her husband and 3 school-aged children in Dunton Green, Sevenoaks. The whole of the house is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 4 children at any one time and is currently minding 3 children part-time. The childminder walks and drives to local schools, parks and shops.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are looked after in a comfortable and caring environment that promotes their health needs. Meals are provided in accordance with parents wishes. Those prepared by the childminder are generally made from fresh ingredients and offer children a nutritious diet. Water is always available to children to ensure they are not thirsty. Younger children have their own spill-proof cups within easy reach. The childminder obtains information about children's food allergies and uses this to maintain their good health.

Children are encouraged to take an interest in their personal hygiene and the childminder ensures their hands are cleaned before and after they eat. Healthy routines are discussed with children and as a result they appreciate why it is important to clean their teeth regularly. The childminder keeps accurate records of accidents and any medicines administered, assuring the well-being of children in her care.

The childminder is not yet conversant with the guidance provided in the Birth to three matters document, but makes sure that young children are able to play outside as much as possible. They exercise regularly in the childminder's spacious garden, during walks to the park and on outings. The childminder tries to ensure that children see outdoor activities as fun and part of their play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder has the necessary paperwork and equipment to ensure children's safety on outings and inside her home. Currently, not all cleaning materials are inaccessible to children, but appropriate measures such as stair gates and smoke alarms are in place. The advice of a fire officer has been sought in producing an emergency escape plan to protect children in the event of a fire. The childminder now plans to practise this procedure with the children.

An extensive selection of toys in good condition are arranged thoughtfully around the playroom, making it cosy and inviting for children. The resources available are sufficient to interest and engage children at all stages of development. Toys are well organised in storage containers, allowing children independent access to most of them, without the need for adult intervention. Furniture and equipment are well placed, providing the maximum amount of space for children to move around safely, allowing them to freely explore the toys and their environment.

The childminder has attended courses in child protection and is able to safeguard children's well-being through her knowledge and understanding of the subject. She is aware how to seek advice if she has concerns about a child in her care and would be able to recognise signs of abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are allowed to select the toys they wish to play with, allowing them complete freedom of choice. The childminder joins in enthusiastically with children's play, helping them to find the resources they need and offering encouragement. Consequently children are happy and well motivated, persevering with activities until they are completed.

The childminder encourages children's imaginative and creative development by providing opportunities for them to be involved in a broad range of art and craft activities, including making cards or pictures for special occasions. Through role-play children develop their imagination and learn how to cope with real situations. For example, the childminder fills the water table with bubbly water and involves children in undressing, bathing and dressing their dolls. Visits to the supermarket are also used for this purpose, when children can select, weigh and compare different fruit and vegetables like adult customers.

Pre-school children develop fine motor skills by using the small figures and equipment provided. They learn by watching the childminder showing them how to slot pieces that have come apart back into place. Children's understanding of maths and their language development is promoted through play. For example, the childminder asks to be shown the smallest character in the playhouse. Assisting the child in this task by suggesting she put the figures together in pairs to help her select the smallest from each couple. Younger children are encouraged to count the steps as they go up them or the pieces of washing they help place in the washing machine. Putting together an alphabet puzzle is used as a learning opportunity to develop children's understanding of alphabetical order and to extend their knowledge of letter sounds and names.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder is always positive towards children, showing interest in what they say and acknowledging their achievements. For example, the childminder praised a child when a puzzle had been put together correctly. Consequently, children show confidence in their play and have high self esteem. They feel able to ask for help when necessary. The childminder has high expectations with regard to behaviour and good manners, laying ground rules such as not snatching. She is also willing to reinforce boundaries set by parents. As a result children respond well and she rarely has problems with behaviour.

The childminder has experience of caring for children with special needs. Her early identification of a difficulty with one child enabled the parent to seek medical advice at an early stage. The childminder therefore prevented possible problems arising, which could have hindered the child's later development.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's care through the use of

attractive baby logs. These are completed daily by the childminder, including details of children's achievements and how their day has been spent. There is a separate section for parental responses, showing that their contribution is valued and encouraging the exchange of useful information. The childminder is also available to speak to parents on the telephone about any concerns they may have. She uses this knowledge to assist her in improving the quality of her care, ensuring children's individual needs are met.

Children are all treated with equal concern by the childminder and benefit from learning more about their own and other cultures. However, resources to promote a positive image of disability are limited.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from having the use of a comfortable play-room which has been attractively arranged to meet their needs. The childminder arranges regular outings such as picnics to ensure children's physical needs are met and some activities to develop their creative skills. However, the childminder does not make detailed plans for most of the week, allowing children some control over how they wish to spend their time.

The childminder maintains her records well to ensure the safety and well-being of children. She is aware of the need to ensure documentation is kept confidential. She works in partnership with parents, regularly informing them of children's progress. The childminder has a portfolio available for new parents, providing all the necessary details about her practice, such as qualifications and references from previous parents. Overall, the needs of all children who attend are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that the childminder should have available a list of local child protection telephone numbers and ensure that parents sign the attendance record.

The childminder now obtains a signature from parents on the register at the end of each month. She has also produced a list of appropriate child protection telephone numbers, which are easily accessible as a resource to support her in safeguarding children's welfare.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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 dangerous substances in the bathroom are stored out of children's reach
- provide a wider variety of resources to promote children's understanding of disability.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk