

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	305491
Inspection date	05 October 2007
Inspector	Sharon Greener
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 outstanding. 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 children aged 12 and 15 years in the Fullwell area of Sunderland. The whole of the ground floor and two of the bedrooms located on the first floor of the childminder's house are used for childminding purposes. There is an enclosed yard for outside play. The family has two pet cats.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding eight children under eight years. During term-time, all children attend on a part-time basis, including before and after school. Some children attended on a full-time basis during school holiday periods. The childminder walks children to and from nursery and school and sometimes uses her car to transport children. She takes younger children to the local carer and toddler groups several times each week. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association, is part of the Sunderland sponsored childminding scheme and is a member of Children Come First childminding network in Sunderland.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Hygiene standards are exceptionally high throughout the home. Healthy eating is actively promoted and children benefit from a varied and nutritious diet. They are encouraged to try different foods and fresh fruit and vegetables are offered daily. Children have access to suitable drinks. The dietary needs of children are discussed in great detail with parents and carers. Relevant information is recorded on children's individual records. Menu samples are shared with parents and carers and the childminder works in extremely close harmony with them so that children's dietary needs are met effectively. The individual feeding routines of babies are maintained to ensure consistency of care.

Children's health and well-being is extremely well promoted and greatly enhanced. This is achieved through the childminder's robust knowledge and understanding of related policies and procedures and their effective use. The childminder presents as a most positive role model and actively promotes children's good health by ensuring that they adopt very good personal hygiene routines. For example, children hand wash after visiting the toilet, following creative play, before eating and on entering the house after being outdoors. They are actively encouraged to become independent as appropriate to their age and ability. For instance, older children attend to their own personal care, such as toileting and cleaning their teeth after breakfast. All children are able to rest or sleep according to their own needs. This helps promote and preserve children's health and well-being.

Weather permitting, children benefit daily from fresh air and exercise. They have access to a very good selection of physical play resources. During inclement weather, children regularly visit indoor soft play and adventure play areas and provision is made indoor for physical play and dancing. Children are frequent visitors to local parks, green areas and the beach. The childminder has an excellent awareness of children's individual stages of development and their abilities. She ensures they receive ample praise and encouragement. This allows children to test their capabilities and to further enhance and develop their physical skills within an extremely supportive environment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The supervision of all children is excellent. They are able to move freely and independently according to their age and ability whilst under the extremely close supervision of the childminder. The childminder has a robust knowledge of related policies and procedures, which she uses most effectively to enable her to promote and preserve children's welfare. Strict procedures are in place regarding the collection of children from her care and the security of the premises. Appropriate safety equipment, such as a fire blanket, fireguards, stair gates, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, is provided and regularly checked. This helps keep children safe. The childminder completes a visual risk assessment of the rooms, resources and equipment to be used each day before children arrive. A written checklist is available to assist with this process. The childminder is most safety conscious and items such as cleaning materials, medication and sharp utensils are stored securely away from children's reach. Where necessary, child locks are fitted to cupboards and drawers. This helps to ensure that a safe environment is provided for children.

The childminder carries out regular fire drills with the children and a record is kept. She presents as a very positive role model and children's safety awareness is effectively nurtured and developed from very young age. For example, they are given gentle reminders to use toys appropriately, not to throw toys and not to climb on furniture as this may result in injury. This helps children to develop an awareness of the need to preserve their own safety and that of others. They are taught road safety and of the need to stay very close to the childminder during outings, and not to approach strangers or animals. A four-year-old child proudly recalled the rules to be followed when walking to school and crossing the road. The childminder has an extremely clear understanding of safeguarding children from harm and has completed relevant training. A written policy is shared with parents and carers that explains the action the childminder would take if she had a concern about a child's welfare. A copy of the recommended literature and the contact details of the Local Safeguarding Children Board are available for reference purposes. This helps protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder uses efficient procedures to glean information about individual children's abilities and preferences. Parents and carers are asked to help gradually introduce their children into her care through a series of visits to her home. This enables everyone to get to know each other and children are able to become familiar and comfortable with their new surroundings. Consequently, children settle extremely well. The childminder consults in great detail with parents and carers about their child's abilities and needs. This enables her to pitch activities and learning experiences at the correct level and allows children to achieve at their own pace. Children are very enthusiastic and interested in the resources and activities accessible to them. They thoroughly enjoy a wide variety of play activities and are able to self-select resources as age appropriate and within the constraints of safety.

The childminder shows a genuine interest in what children have to say. She recognises and celebrates children's achievements and abilities and they receive ample praise. For example, a young child was praised readily when able to state that cars travel on roads, boats on water and aeroplanes in the sky. This helps to promote and enhance children's confidence and positive self-esteem. Independence skills are particularly well nurtured. Children are given the scope to use their initiative and become increasingly independent during purposeful and developmentally appropriate activities. For example, a child of four confidently selected pieces of wooden track to extend the train track.

The childminder has a very clear knowledge of child development. She has completed training in respect of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and implements this positively to underpin her care of younger children. Excellent use is made of the space available to accommodate a very broad range of play activities and learning experiences for the all children. This allows children plenty of opportunities to initiate their own play and make discoveries through exploration. Resources are frequently changed to constantly keep children interested and engaged. The childminder makes effective use of questions to support and extend children's thinking and learning. For example, during everyday tasks and play activities she asks questions to promote and reinforce children's understanding of concepts such as colour, shape, size, spatial awareness and time. A young child happily looked at photographs of past activities and outings and was able to freely recall the related events and name the places and people pictured. A very good balance of adult-led activities, such as singing, story telling, outings and special creative activities is incorporated into the daily routine to support and enrich children's learning and develop this effectively.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder shows an exceedingly warm and caring manner towards the children in her care. She builds and nurtures very positive relationships with them and in turn they show a sense of trust and are most at ease. Children build very good relationships with peers and interact appropriately with those less familiar to them. They are able to make choices and self-select activities readily from a broad range of resources made accessible to them.

There are regular opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the local environment and the wider world through frequent and varied outings and activities. A very good selection of resources and activities is provided to aid in the promotion of equal opportunity and to help raise children's awareness of diversity. The childminder has completed relevant training. She has a clear understanding of this area and has experience of caring for children from different ethnic backgrounds and religions. The childminder has experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and disabilities, for example, she has cared for children with autism, Asperger's syndrome and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The childminder has completed related training in speech and language. Behaviour management strategies are effectively used and the childminder manages children's behaviour in an extremely calm and consistent manner. Children respond most positively to her and are very well behaved.

Very good relationships and effective communication are established and maintained with parents and carers. They are particularly well informed about the childminding policies, procedures and other general information. Written policy statements are shared with them, such as behaviour management, complaints and safeguarding children from harm. Insurance and registration certificates are clearly displayed for their benefit. Parents and carers are kept very well informed regarding their child's progress and daily activities. This is achieved through the use of telephone calls, photographs and regular verbal feedback. Written feedback about the service and care provided is gleaned from parents and carers annually. The feedback recently obtained is extremely positive and complementary. In particular parents and carers comment upon the childminder's caring nature, her willingness to give advice and support and the wide variety of resources and activities provided for children.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides. All of the required documentation is in place and is exceptionally well organised, presented and maintained. Policies and procedures are used most effectively to promote the children's development and well-being.

The childminder holds a valid first aid certificate. This enables her to administer first aid treatment to children should this be necessary. She is highly motivated and extremely enthusiastic about the care and education of children. Relevant training opportunities are actively sought out and she shows a real commitment to the service and care she provides. Recent training attended includes 'Birth to three matters' framework, safeguarding children from harm, safeguarding vulnerable children and families, an introduction to the Early Years Foundation Stage, and promoting young children's speech and language development. This has a significantly positive impact upon all aspects of the high quality care and service provided.

Excellent use is made of time, space, resources and outings to places of interest to effectively promote and enhance all aspects of children's learning and development. Parents are actively encouraged to keep the childminder up to date with relevant information regarding their children. This enables the childminder to optimise her in-depth knowledge of individual children efficiently so as to ensure she continues to meet the evolving needs of the children for whom she cares.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection the childminder was asked to continue to access relevant training to support her role.

Since the last inspection the childminder has completed a broad range of relevant training. This has an extremely positive impact on the quality of care and service offered.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take 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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

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