



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	506920
Inspection date	17 August 2005
Inspector	Ann Marie Lefevre

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 September 1988. She is approved to mind a maximum of four children at any one time and currently has four children on her records.

The household consists of the childminder, her partner, and their three children. Their home is located in an established residential area which is a short distance from Alnwick town centre and local amenities. Minded children have access to the living room, front room, dining kitchen, and cloakroom on the ground floor. The first floor rooms are not used for minding purposes. The front garden is used for access to the

premises and the enclosed rear yard is used for outdoor activities.

The childminder takes children to local places of interest on a regular basis. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have very good opportunities to learn about health and hygiene in their daily routines and activities. They are encouraged to take responsibility, to be aware of hygiene and wash their hands before eating, after toilet or after activities such as messy play. Children are happy to help tidy away toys after play and keen to show what they can do. Children enjoy games of pretend, for example, washing up after having a tea party.

Children benefit from having a healthy diet, which includes packed lunches and fresh fruit provided by parents. Parents take responsibility for any special dietary needs. However, the childminder works closely with parents to ensure that children gain the necessary nutritional balance for positive growth in a warm and caring environment.

Children's health requirements are highlighted in individual details sheets and in the recording systems in place. The childminder is aware of ensuring that children's health needs are met; has completed appropriate first aid training, has a well stocked first aid kit and is keen to ensure that minded children benefit from being cared for in a clean and healthy setting.

Children develop their physical and emotional wellbeing in a very good range of stimulating activities. They are able to gain exercise and fresh air from outdoor play in the park, going on walks to see animals, or running around on the beach. Children are taken into the local community where they are able to benefit from socialising with other children and adults. The childminder helps run a toddler group; minded children attend and are able to have fun and exercise on a wide range of large and small play equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are very well organised, warm, welcoming and comfortable for children to use safely. Children benefit from being able to access the designated childcare areas with close, age appropriate supervision and support from the childminder. They are encouraged to be aware of safety, both in and outside the home, in daily routines and activities. The childminder ensures the premises are safe and secure for children. Many safety measures are taken, such as the use of socket covers, a nursery fire guard, a safety gate to prevent children gaining access to stairs and first floor, and a suitably positioned fire blanket. The childminder makes sure that children do not have access to any potentially hazardous areas or items. In addition,

appropriate care is taken when children are out of the home environment in the community and when visiting child activity settings.

The children are able gain safe access to a very good range of equipment and play resources. The childminder ensures that the toys, equipment and furniture are in a good state of repair for the children attending. She ensures that the toys and play resources are appropriate for the age and stage of development of each child.

Children are very well protected through the detailed written documentation which is in place in relation to the setting and the well maintained recording systems. These are used in conjunction with written parental consents to ensure consistent care for each child. Appropriate Public Liability insurance is in place. Policies and procedures are in place in relation to child safety and safety in the premises. A fire escape statement is in place, however, there is no plan of the premises to supplement this.

The childminder continues to update her awareness, knowledge and skills by participating in training such as child protection awareness. She has comprehensive child protection information in place and she has a very good understanding of what to be aware of, who to contact and what to record.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are able to enjoy a very good range of stimulating activities and projects in a calm, warm and affectionate environment. They are able to develop their awareness and skills in many educational as well as fun ways. They have many opportunities to practise their existing skills and learn new ones in lots of creative and exciting ways. They are keen to demonstrate what they can do and have a have a lovely time making models out of lots of different materials such as papier mache, paper plates and dish sponges to create pigs, octopi, flowers on stalks and many other craft activities. Children are able to make choices and can select from an excellent range of play items such as construction toys, activity games, books, musical instruments, computer games, and equipment for outdoors.

The childminder values children and has a very good understanding of how they learn and develop; this is evident in the way the childcare areas and resources are organised, and in the actual care of children. She has a sound knowledge of the minded children, and the wishes of parents, to ensure there is consistency and continuity so that each child can progress and learn effectively.

Minded children are very settled and at ease with the childminder. They are very confident and enthusiastic in the use of playthings and in the use of the play areas. The childminder encourages children to develop their vocabulary skills by using simple and clear language, and encouraging discussion in their activities and routines.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the childminder's positive attitude towards equal opportunities and respecting individual and differing needs. Children have many opportunities to develop their awareness of their local and wider communities. Books and toys reflect different backgrounds and the childminder is able to use these to help children understand about other countries and the wider community.

Children learn about sharing and valuing others from the very good role model provided by the childminder. The childminder gently and sensitively supports, praises and encourages children in their daily routines and activities which helps them to develop their self esteem, confidence and sense of belonging. The children are very happy and relaxed during play and respond well to lots of praise and encouragement from the childminder. Children are able to make choices in their play and daily routines and the childminder is adept at encouraging children to share their opinions and gain a sense of responsibility.

Parents are able to participate in planning and the exchange of information necessary for their child's care. Parents are informed of daily activities and events as well as health and other issues. The childminder has prepared an information file with a wealth of relevant details to ensure parents have a good awareness of the service provided. Children share their experience with parents as they take their work home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the very good standard in care provided. The childminder is well focussed and takes a professional approach to her work. This is reflected in the very well organised child care areas in her home, in the many safety measures taken and in the excellent range of resources and equipment provided for the children attending.

Clearly defined daily routines enable children to settle well and feel secure in the setting. A well structured and informative file is available for parents. The childminder continues to develop the file; there is a detailed list of activities which covers a wide range opportunities. Many policies are in place in relation to child safety and the provision of care in the setting. The recording systems are well organised and maintained; they are shared by the childminder and parents to ensure there is a good awareness of the children's needs. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Children benefit from steps taken to ensure greater safety. Bricks have been removed from the yard. Written parental consents have been obtained to use antiseptic wipes.

Complaints since the last inspection

A Concern was raised against Standard 6: Safety.

A visit was made by a child care inspector to investigate the concern. Actions were agreed between the child care inspector and the provider to improve standards. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- enhance fire safety precautions by having a plan of the childcare areas in the premises to supplement the existing fire safety statement

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