

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY255081
Inspection date	03 October 2007
Inspector	Katherine Powell
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 2002. She is registered to care for five children under the age of eight years. She currently cares for three children on a part-time basis. Of these, two children are aged under five years and one is aged under two years.

The childminder lives with her husband and two daughters in a rural village on the outskirts of Stamford. All areas of the premises can be used for childminding, however, the childminder mainly restricts access to all areas of the ground floor with toilet and sleeping facilities within this area. There is a fully enclosed rear garden for outside play.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and the local childminding group. She regularly takes children to pre-school groups and helps to run a local play session for young children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted as they are cared for in a clean and safe environment. Children learn about the importance of hand washing after using the toilet and before eating to prevent the spread of infection. However, hygiene practices are not always consistently reinforced with children after touching pets in the garden. Good written records are maintained to ensure children's individual medical and dietary needs are met. The childminder's secure knowledge of appropriate first aid treatment ensures children receive good care and attention.

Children benefit from a routine which incorporates lots of physical exercise and fresh air. They have regular opportunities for outdoor play in the garden and enjoy using a wide range of play equipment, such as wheeled toys, balls, a sand pit and a play house. Children are able to further develop their whole body movements during frequent trips to the local park where they are able to access large apparatus.

Children begin to understand the benefits of healthy eating as the childminder engages them in discussion about different healthy foods, such as fruit and vegetables. Children have had opportunities to make their own healthy snacks, such as fruit kebabs and benefit from visiting a nearby allotment where they can observe vegetables growing. Children generally bring meals and snacks from home but a variety of fruits are available for children to select if they are still hungry. Children can freely access drinks throughout the day. The childminder takes account of children's preferences and parental wishes regarding meals. She has undertaken basic food hygiene training so has a good awareness of how to handle and prepare food appropriately.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children learn to keep themselves safe because the childminder gives high priority to helping children understand safety. For example, the childminder discusses road safety with the children, which is then put into practice when out walking. Children learn to stop, look and listen for traffic before crossing the road. This heightens children's awareness and their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Highly effective procedures are in place for outings which ensures children's safety is fully promoted. For example, the childminder takes contact numbers with her when away from the home to ensure she is able to contact parents in an emergency, children wear wrist straps which contain basic contact details in the event of a child being lost and written procedures for outings are shared fully with parents.

Children are very well protected by the childminder who has attended child protection training. She has accurate and detailed knowledge of child protection issues and ensures that relevant supporting information is readily accessible. There are clear child protection procedures in place and these are shared fully with parents. Children's welfare is further safeguarded in the event of an emergency situation as the childminder has carefully planned and practised evacuation procedures with the children. Therefore, children are fully aware of how to evacuate the premises in the event of a fire.

The childminder's home is very warm and welcoming. The layout of the indoor play areas and the garden is extremely well organised and safe, encouraging children to move freely between different rooms and activities. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and the

childminder vigilantly carries out daily safety checks to reduce the risks from potential hazards. Very young children are able to play safely as the childminder ensures that small pieces are kept out of reach. Children confidently and independently choose from a well-organised and comprehensive range of equipment, toys and resources. This enables them to access different types of play and follow their own interests.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy the time they spend with the childminder and thrive in the stimulating and rich environment. Children are enthusiastic as they make choices about their activities. They take part in an excellent range of activities as a result of the childminder's clear understanding of how children learn and develop. The childminder uses the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance as a knowledge base for planning and extending learning opportunities for the younger children. Each child's age and stage of development is taken into account and they benefit from activities which are tailored to their individual needs and interests. The childminder provides a balanced range of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Planned activities provide a clear learning focus and the childminder carries out regular observations of children's progress and development. The childminder uses these observations to plan the next steps in a child's learning. This ensures activities are highly stimulating and challenging for the children and enables children to make very good progress in all areas of their development.

Younger children benefit from an extensive range of sensory experiences. They are excited as they crunch in a large tray of breakfast cereal and squeeze jelly through their fingers. They squeal with delight as they use a whisk to stir cooked pasta and marvel when it becomes stuck to their skin. Children's early communication skills are well supported through high quality interaction with the childminder as they discuss their activities and talk about what they are doing. Children's early reading skills are fostered very well through a wide range of high quality picture books and daily story times both within the home and at local libraries.

All children form warm and trusting relationships with the childminder and develop a strong sense of belonging. The nurturing environment and the childminder's sensitive, caring nature helps children to feel secure and promote their confidence. They happily chat together, sharing their ideas and expressing their thoughts. The childminder takes time to listen to what the children have to say and as a result they feel valued. Children are encouraged to be independent from a young age as the childminder encourages them to make choices about their play and learning and enables them to carry out daily tasks, such as washing their hands and putting on their shoes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs and characters are clearly understood and respected by the childminder. She gathers excellent information from the parents before the children start and uses this to plan activities to meet the children's individual needs. All children are welcomed and included in the provision, including those with additional needs. The childminder has undertaken a wide range of additional training so is able to fully meet the needs of a child with physical or learning difficulties.

Children develop their knowledge and understanding of differences and similarities. They have extensive opportunities to value the wider community through an excellent range of resources, positive images, planned activities, outings and discussion. They explore and learn about their own traditions and cultures, and those of other families. They participate in an excellent range of activities which link to different festivals such as Diwali, Hanukkah and Christmas. For example, children have made diya lamps out of clay and made traditional biscuits to celebrate the Jewish festival of Hanukkah.

Children's behaviour is excellent. The childminder has a clear and consistent approach to behaviour management, which means children know what is expected of them and they feel secure. Children play happily together, learning to share and take turns as the childminder uses her effective skills to encourage and help them develop their relationships with one another. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement which ensures they develop good self-esteem.

The excellent relationship with parents contributes significantly to the children's care and well-being. The childminder has developed detailed information about the service that she provides including clear, well written policies, written information about the childminding service and activity plans. She exchanges information verbally with parents each day and in writing in the children's individual progress records. This ensures that parents are well informed of their child's achievements and progress and are able to fully share in their child's care. Consequently, children's well-being and development are greatly enhanced. Parents speak highly of the setting and have conveyed these thoughts through written feedback.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are secure and confident and have their needs met because the childminder is highly effective in organising space, resources and activities. Consistent routines with kind and caring support enables children to confidently explore their environment, begin to express their needs and develop their ideas and interests.

Children benefit from the childminder's strong commitment to training to further develop her knowledge and skills as a childcare worker. The childminder has undertaken a wide range of professional courses, such as child protection, fire safety, multi-cultural awareness, food and nutrition, oral hygiene and speech and language development. This has helped to further enhance the childminder's service as she implements the knowledge she has gained from her courses into her everyday practice with the children to full effect. Consequently, children make excellent progress.

The childminder has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the National Standards for childminding and of current guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage guidance. All of the required documents and records are in place and regularly reviewed which contributes to the children's health, safety and well-being. The excellent range of written policies and procedures provide a framework to ensure that children are well cared for. These are shared fully with parents, keeping them very well informed of the care provided for their child. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were made with regard to further improving children's health and safety. The childminder now has written permission in place from parents

to seek emergency medical treatment. The childminder has further developed her knowledge and awareness of child protection procedures. This has been achieved through reading current Government guidance and attending training courses. The childminder has taken appropriate action to address both areas for improvement which has consequently had a positive impact on children's care and welfare.

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 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 consistent hygiene practices are promoted, with regard to hand washing after touching animals.

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