

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY290009
Inspection date	06 September 2007
Inspector	Carole Argles
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 satisfactory. 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 2004 and lives in Frome, Somerset, with her husband and their three school-aged children. All areas of her home are used for childminding purposes. The children use a first floor bathroom. The main bedroom is used for young babies to sleep. There are enclosed front and rear gardens that are available for outdoor play. The family have a pet rabbit.

The childminder is registered to provide care for five children under eight years. At times, when she is working with an assistant, they may care for up to seven children under eight years, including two children aged under one year. The childminder is currently providing part-time care for five children aged under five years and for four children of school age. At present, she does not care for any children who have learning difficulties or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and a local childminding group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The children have periods of exercise most days and often play out in the childminder's garden or visit local parks. They use a suitable range of equipment including wheeled toys, balls and Frisbees and, with their parents' consent, use a trampoline. They often walk to local schools rather than going by car. These activities support their physical development and help to keep them fit.

The childminder knows the importance of maintaining good hygiene to reduce the risk of infection spreading between children. For example, she cleans the table before use, provides paper towels for hand drying and adopts suitable nappy changing procedures. Children are not cared for if they are ill or infectious and they learn good hand washing practices. Although, she described effective routines to keep her home and the equipment hygienic, she does not always carry them out effectively and some toys, including those used by babies, are not kept clean. The childminder works with parents to ensure that their wishes for their child are respected and the required consents and records are maintained. Suitable procedures are in place to ensure that any medication is administered safely. The childminder holds an appropriate first aid certificate and has a first aid kit readily available if required.

The children's dietary requirements are met well and they have drinks within easy reach for them to take when they are thirsty. Parents provide meals for their children which are stored appropriately in the refrigerator. The childminder provides nutritious snacks which usually include fruit and sometimes a biscuit. The children talk with the childminder about the importance of eating a healthy diet and tell her about the different types of fruit they had eaten on a recent holiday. They often visit the shops to choose and buy fruit and vegetables which they later eat. This promotes a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are comfortable and settled in the childminder's home. She creates a suitably welcoming environment for them by displaying posters and their artwork and having a variety of toys readily available for them to use in her conservatory. Information about the childminding service is displayed for parents. The childminder makes satisfactory use of space to support the children's needs, for example, by providing areas where young children and babies can sleep undisturbed. There is a suitable range of toys and equipment which supports the children's development and the childminder checks all regularly to ensure that they are safe for the children to use. Small toys are kept out of the reach of young children to whom they may pose a hazard.

The house is kept secure and the children are well supervised to promote their safety, for example the childminder is outside with them when they play in the garden. Sleeping children are suitably protected because they are kept within the childminder's hearing and she frequently checks them visually. The childminder understands the importance of minimising the risk of accidental injury to the children, for instance by using stairgates and cupboard locks to prevent access to potentially hazardous areas. However, she does not check her house and garden thoroughly before the children are present. For example, she does not always ensure that all socket covers are in place, that tripping hazards are removed from the stairs, or that

the garden is kept tidy. Suitable precautions are taken to keep the children safe when they are out with the childminder. For example, there is a measuring chart to check that they are using the correct type of car restraint; they must stay close to her when they are walking in the street, and the importance of road safety is discussed with them.

The childminder has a sound understanding of how to safeguard children. She understands the signs that may indicate that a child is suffering harm or neglect and she knows the action she must take if she is concerned about the welfare of a child in her care. Children are never left alone with people who have not been vetted and there are sound procedures in place to ensure that they are only collected by people authorised by their parents. This contributes well to keeping the children safe from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are happy and confident and have a warm and relaxed relationship with the childminder. There is a good level of conversation and interaction between them. The childminder is interested in the children and asks them many questions. They are encouraged to talk about themselves, what they like and about what they are doing. This promotes their communication skills effectively and makes them feel valued. They receive praise and recognition for their achievements and this boosts their self-esteem. They are encouraged to become independent, for example, helping to tidy away before they get out more toys.

There is a flexible routine for the children's day and the childminder takes account of their individual needs, such as times for rest or relaxation. Although she does not make written plans, she prepares some activities in advance and has resources readily available. Activities, toys and resources are appropriate for the age of the children. For example, she offers young children opportunities to explore and investigate materials such as bubbly water or bowls of cooked spaghetti, so that they can feel different textures. She adapts other activities, such as hand painting, so that they are able to take part with older children.

The children make choices about what they do and are well occupied. They play cooperatively together in pretend play, using their imaginations well. They show sustained concentration on what they are doing. They enjoy painting pictures of spiders' webs and blowing the paint across their paper to see what patterns they can make. The childminder takes full advantage of opportunities during play to extend the children's thinking. They are keen to learn, eagerly answering her questions. For example, they talk about how many legs a spider has and what it might feel like if one crawled up their arm. They are helped to begin to think about words, letters and sounds. For example, when looking at a book together, the childminder asks a child about the initial sound of the word 'bear' and they find the letter on an alphabet poster.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children frequently go on outings with the childminder and they talk about what they see. For example, they visit the market, shops and library in the nearby town and go to a local farm centre where they look at the animals. They go to toddler groups where they mix with other children their own age. This widens the children's knowledge of the community around them. The children find out about the wider world by using a suitable range of resources which reflect positive images of diversity. This includes books, dolls and pretend play resources. They talk

with the childminder about their own festivals and traditions and those of others. This encourages them to develop an accepting and tolerant attitude towards other people.

The childminder recognises the importance of developing good partnerships with parents so that she can meet children's individual needs effectively. They talk about the children daily, exchanging information so that there is a consistent approach to their care. She keeps parents well informed about what their child does and their development. There is a suitable process to help new children settle quickly and they visit the childminder with their parents so that they are familiar with her and their surroundings before they are left. Detailed information is shared about the children's likes and routines to ensure that they are settled and comfortable. Clear information is available for parents so that they understand what the childminder is providing for their child. Suitable written agreements and consents are in place.

The children generally behave well, playing cooperatively together and learning to share fairly and take turns. They begin to learn to manage their own behaviour effectively because the childminder helps them to understand why sometimes their behaviour is unwanted and she praises them when they have done well. The childminder has age-appropriate expectations for the children and encourages them to be polite and courteous to others, for example, by saying please and thank you. The childminder and parents work together to develop a consistent approach to managing the children's behaviour. For example, children may receive a sticker from the childminder as a reward for behaving well at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides. The children benefit from her satisfactory organisational skills. She makes suitable use of her premises to provide areas so that children can take part in a range of activities. She has all the records, policies and procedures in place to support the children's safety and welfare. However, at times, she does not implement systems effectively to ensure that all potential hazards are minimised or that all toys are kept clean and hygienic. The children receive appropriate levels of support and attention because the childminder keeps to the required adult to child ratios, using an assistant when necessary. The childminder regularly attends training to develop her knowledge and understanding of childcare issues and is currently undertaking a relevant childcare qualification.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the childminder agreed: to request written parental consent to seek medical treatment or advice for a child in the event of an emergency; to record the actual times of children's attendance; and to keep accurate details of when she has worked with an assistant.

Since that time, the children's welfare and safety have been increased through the childminder's action. She keeps appropriate records of the times that the children and her assistant are present. She has obtained suitable written consents from the children's parents to seek appropriate support in the event of an emergency.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the childminder or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The childminder 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 satisfactory. 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 all toys, and particularly those used by babies, are kept clean and hygienic
- conduct a risk assessment of the premises and take any measures necessary to minimise all potential risks to children's safety.

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