

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	313425
Inspection date	13 September 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 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 childminding since 1982 and was registered in 1992 in keeping with legislation. She lives with her husband in the Seaham area of Durham. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding purposes. There is an enclosed yard for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding seven children under eight years. All of the children attend on a part-time basis. The childminder walks children to and from nursery and school. She regularly attends local carer and toddler groups and the local childminder network group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminding environment is very well maintained and hygiene standards are very good. The childminder presents as a positive role model to the children and they are encouraged to adopt suitable personal hygiene practices, such as hand washing at appropriate times. The

childminder has a clear understanding of related policies and procedures, for example, caring for a sick child, nappy changing and the administration of medication. Written policy statements are in place and are shared with parents and carers. The childminder implements these policies effectively to help to promote and preserve children's health and welfare.

The childminder shows a very good understanding of the need to ensure that children are suitably nourished and has completed a food safety awareness training course. Catering arrangements are very flexible. The childminder understands fully the importance of meeting the wishes of parents and carers in respect of children's dietary needs, whether for medical, cultural or religious reasons or their life style choices. She discusses such matters in depth with parents and carers and any relevant information about a child's requirements is recorded. Babies and very young children are fed in accordance to their individual needs and daily routine. The childminder has previous experience of catering for children with specific dietary needs, such as a child with an intolerance to cheese. Children are encouraged to eat a healthy diet. Fresh fruit and vegetables are offered daily. Children have free access to fresh drinking water and babies and very young children are offered suitable drinks at regular intervals throughout the day. This helps promote and preserve children's good health and children's dietary needs are very well met.

Children have regular opportunities for physical play both indoors and outdoors. They benefit daily from fresh air and exercise through outdoor play in the yard, walks and visits to the local parks and green areas. Each week younger children attend a twinkle-tots session, which provides them with access to various sensory activities and experiences. A good variety of equipment is provided to enable children to develop and enhance their physical skills. Children receive lots of praise, encouragement and support from the childminder. They are able to test their abilities and to develop their physical skills. All children are able to rest or sleep according to their individual needs. This helps to promote their physical development and well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder has a very good knowledge and understanding of related policies and procedures. She uses these efficiently to help remove or minimise risks to children. Childminding areas are very well maintained and used very well to accommodate children's play. Suitable safety equipment is in place, such as, socket covers, smoke detectors, safety gates, finger guards on doors and a fire blanket. The childminder has completed fire safety awareness training. Prior to children's arrival each day the childminder completes a visual risk assessment of the rooms and resources to be used. This process is ongoing throughout childminding hours and helps to maintain a safe environment for the children. Children are very closely supervised by the childminder and are able to move freely and safely from room to room within the constraints of safety.

The childminder helps to raise children's awareness of danger and the need to preserve their own safety. She does this by presenting as a positive role model to the children and through talking to them about matters, such as road safety, fire safety and safety around water. The childminder has a selection of books to help raise children's awareness and understanding of such safety issues. She sets clear, consistent boundaries for the children. Ground rules and the reasons for them are explained to the children according to their age and level of understanding. When necessary the children are given gentle reminders of the ground rules. For example, the need to use resources properly so as to prevent accidents or injury. Children respond very well

to the childminder. Visitors are not allowed unsupervised access to the children. This helps keep children safe.

The childminder shows a good understanding of her responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children and has attended relevant training. During the induction procedure she talks to parents and carers about the action she would take if she had a concern about a child's welfare. A written policy statement is shared with parents and carers. The childminder has a copy of the recommended child protection literature and the contact details for the Local Safeguarding Children Board are available for reference purposes. This helps to protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The childminder has completed training in respect of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and links this with 'Every child matters' to support her care of children effectively. She builds very close, warm relationships with the children and they are most relaxed and at ease in her care. She has a very good understanding of the individual needs and abilities of the children for whom she cares. This knowledge is obtained through her ongoing observation of the children and through talking to them and their parents and carers. Each child has their own record of achievement book. This contains photographs, examples of children's work and brief written observational statements about the children's developmental progress. This information is shared with respective parents and carers. The childminder ensures that children receive plenty of recognition and praise for their abilities and achievements. This helps to nurture and promote their confidence and positive self-esteem, which is good.

All children are able to take part in a broad range of activities and play experiences and to learn at their own pace and level. For example, they enjoy mark making with chalks, playing musical instruments, building with construction-type toys and playing with small world resources, such as, a garage and cars. Children are very active and interested in the activities and resources made readily accessible to them. Their independence skills are very well nurtured in accordance to their age and ability. They are able to make choices about their play and self-select resources with increasing confidence. A very good balance of adult-led activities is included in the daily routine for children, such as, story telling, art and craft activities and outings to places of interest. Younger children are taken to local carer and toddler groups several times each week.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder shows a good awareness of the importance of promoting equality of opportunity. A suitable selection of resources is provided to help raise children's awareness of diversity. To date the childminder has no experience of caring for children from different ethnic backgrounds or children with learning difficulties or disabilities. She demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of caring for children with such needs.

The childminder shows a very good knowledge and understanding of behaviour management. Age appropriate behaviour management strategies are used effectively in a calm and consistent manner. For example, the childminder makes very good use of distraction tactics with young children. The childminder promotes and reinforces children's positive behaviour through the recognition and praise of such behaviour. Children respond positively to her and are very well behaved.

The childminder works very closely with parents and carers to introduce children to her and her home. Parents and carers are asked to carry out several visits with their children to help all parties to get to know each other. This helps children to feel secure in the childminder's company and they settle very well. The childminder talks to parents and carers about the procedures she uses and written policies are shared with them. The Ofsted poster is displayed for their benefit along with other relevant information, such as, the registration certificate and public liability insurance certificate. Pertinent information about the children is obtained from parents and carers and recorded on each child's individual record before they are left in the childminder's sole care. Respective parents and carers have access to their child's records. They are asked to keep the childminder up-to-date with any relevant information that might impact upon the care of their child. This helps to ensure that children are very well cared for and that their evolving needs continue to be very well met.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder has a very good understanding of policies and procedures which are used effectively. The required documentation is in place and is very well organised and presented. This helps to support operational procedures. However, the childminder is not fully familiar with all aspects of the complaints procedure. The childminder shows a real commitment to the continued development of her good practice through her willingness to seek out and complete relevant training. Since the last inspection she has completed a variety of training. For example, promoting speech and language development in young children, baby massage, the use of music, rhyme, song and treasure baskets with young children and providing healthy snacks.

Space is well organised and used effectively to accommodate a very good variety of age appropriate resources and play experiences for the children. Child friendly storage systems allow the children to self-select resources and activities with ease. This helps to promote and enhance their decision making and independence skills. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection the childminder was asked to further develop systems of obtaining written consent from parents and carers.

Good procedures are in place to ensure that all of the required written consents are obtained from parents and carers. This helps to improve operational procedures, partnership with parents and carers and the care of the children.

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.

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):

- become fully familiar with all aspects of the complaints procedure.

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