

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	501077
Inspection date	17 September 2007
Inspector	Carys Millican
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 2001. She lives with her husband and three children aged 16, 14 and 11 years in Blindcrake, near Cockermouth, Cumbria. The whole of the ground floor, apart from the back lobby and back yard are used for childminding. The front and back of the house are only used for access into the premises.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding three children under five, for various sessions, and three children over five, after school. The childminder occasionally employs an assistant. When working together they can care for a maximum of six children at any one time. The childminder looks after children who are delivered to her on the school bus from the local school. The childminder attends several carer and toddler groups. The family has a dog.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a homely environment. Children observe appropriate health and hygiene routines carried out by the childminder. The areas accessed by children are clean and well maintained. Children begin to learn the importance of washing hands before their baking activity and before eating. Documents are in place for recording medication and accidents, however, parental signatures are missing for permission to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment. Children are protected from the potential risk of infection as the childminder follows her sick child policy.

Children are nourished and have their individual dietary needs met. Information, such as allergies, likes and dislikes, is obtained from parents and routines are followed. Children are provided with suitable drinking containers at snack time which aid independence. Drinks are easily accessible to children throughout the day. Children are encouraged to eat healthy snacks and homemade meals, which are provided by parents. Children follow flexible care and sleep routines according to their needs.

Children enjoy indoor and outdoor activities which contribute to their physical health and wellbeing. They enjoy walks in the fresh air and visit a number of leisure facilities and outdoor attractions. Young children benefit from weekly visits to a number of pre-school groups where they socialise with other children and adults. Indoors, children access ample floor space to develop their walking skills and to play comfortably with the resources available to them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety and welfare are met through the provision of a safe and secure environment. Safety equipment is in place and potential hazards and risks are identified and minimised. A fire blanket is available in the kitchen and smoke alarms are in place. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate and the first aid box is accessible in an emergency. Through discussion the childminder is clear on what to do in the event of a fire. Although the evacuation plan has previously been practised with older children, she has not recently completed this with the younger children in her care. The childminder has obtained written permission from parents to take their children on outings and for transporting children in her car.

Children are provided with appropriate and stimulating resources which are maintained in good condition. The childminder provides resources for young children which meet safety standards. These are regularly checked for small, broken or loose parts. Toys and activities are carefully supervised and monitored to ensure children's safety. They are accessible to allow choice and decision making.

Children are safeguarded. The childminder has a good understanding of her role in child protection matters and is aware of the procedures to follow should a concern arise. She has attended several training courses to keep up-to-date with any changes and has access to a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines. She is aware of the importance of recording concerns and existing injuries and documentation is available to do so. Children's records contain details of named persons allowed to collect the children in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children confidently engage in a range of suitable activities. They play happily and make themselves at home. Children enjoy the interaction with the childminder as they look at books together whilst sitting comfortably on the floor. Children help themselves to the boxes of toys surrounding them. They take out the wind up toys and show great delight as it makes a sound. Children develop self-esteem as the childminder listens to and values what they say and do. She constantly praises their efforts and achievement and encourages them to vocalise and make sounds. They access magic marker boards which encourage them to make marks, helping hand-eye coordination. Children enjoy regular baking activities. They thoroughly enjoy mixing the dough for the bread and rolling it into bun shapes. Children follow flexible routines that flow with their needs. These routines are discussed with parents to ensure continuity of care. Information is shared verbally, there are no progress or care records maintained. However, the childminder has a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. She is aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which is clearly seen in practice. Photographic evidence displayed on the wall show a number of activities the children take part in.

Children develop sound relationships with the childminder which contributes to their sense of belonging. They are happy and contented, they settle easily and play confidently by themselves or with the childminder's support. Children enjoy several outdoor activities. They visit the local animal farms and nature trails. They attend several pre-school groups and visit a local aquarium and beach. Children learn to become confident and competent language users. Their communication skills are encouraged and developed by the close interaction with the childminder. The childminder reinforces younger children's attempts at vocalising and she constantly asks them questions as they play. Children begin to distinguish between right and wrong, and the childminder is on hand to explain and support them. They enjoy each other's company and play harmoniously together as they play together on the see-saw rocking toy.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated with equal concern and their individual needs are met. They are confident, capable and self-assured. Young children have a sense of their own identity and their own capabilities. With support, they make decisions and have a positive self-image. Children make choices and decisions in their play and help themselves to the suitable range of toys available. Several resources that encourage children's understanding of diversity are available.

Children settle well. They benefit from the warm and caring nature of the childminder. An initial settling in procedure is in place to help children become familiar with new surroundings. Children are valued and respected. They thrive on the positive interaction they receive. They respond well to the positive ways the childminder rewards achievement, through gestures, such as smiling, praise and encouragement. Children begin to learn right from wrong through age appropriate behaviour management techniques used by the childminder.

Children benefit from the sound relationship developed with parents. Their general welfare is promoted since the childminder collects information from parents to ensure individual care is followed and children are cared for according to parents' wishes. Information is shared daily, this enables the childminder to meet children's individual needs and provides continuity of care. Most written parental consents are in place. Several detailed policies and procedures are available for parents including the complaints procedure; however, a system to record complaints

is not established. Parents express a high regard for the excellent care their children receive and the flexible service the childminder provides.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a childminder who supports and encourages them through their daily practices and play opportunities. Their care, learning and play is suitably supported as she gives them individual attention. Children feel at ease in the homely environment. The childminder has a good understanding of child development and provides suitable experiences to enable children to grow into well-rounded individuals. This is supported by the commitment of the childminder in attending several additional training courses in early years topics.

Children's health, safety and welfare are generally promoted. Most documents and procedures are in place. Written contracts containing the business arrangements are maintained and discussed with parents. Information is shared daily with parents to keep them informed about their child's routine. This contributes to continuity in the children's care. The childminder makes available a suitable selection of toys and activities for the children she cares. Children benefit from regular social experiences, such as outings to places of interest and visits to other childminders and their children.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to improve documentation and children's safety. The childminder now ensures that parents are provided with several policies and procedures, including the complaints procedure and details of how to contact Ofsted. She ensures written consent is obtained from parents to allow an assistant to be left in sole charge if required. To improve children's safety the fireguard has been securely fixed to the wall on both sides of the fire surround.

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 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):

- obtain signatures to seek emergency treatment or advice
- make sure the fire evacuation procedure is practised when caring for young children
- establish a system to record complaints.

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