

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	550143
Inspection date	19 September 2007
Inspector	Judith Ann Hodgson
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 two children aged 17 and 12 years old. The family lives in a four bedroom house in the Newton Aycliffe area of County Durham. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding as well as two bedrooms and the bathroom upstairs. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder takes children to and collects them from local nurseries and schools. She attends the local parent/toddler group and also takes children to the local park. The childminder is registered to care for six children at any one time and is currently minding seven children on a part-time basis. The family has a pet cat and two dogs.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, well-maintained home where they are developing an awareness of personal care. Children learn suitable routines as they are reminded to wash their hands at appropriate times. Children share a towel to dry their hands so are not fully protected from

cross-contamination. The childminder has a current first aid qualification, has written permission from parents to seek emergency treatment and maintains records of accidents and medication. Therefore, children are protected in the event of an emergency.

The childminder provides the children with drinks of water or fruit squash and snacks of fresh fruit suitable for their nutritional needs. Children learn about some healthy choices as they are served meals of pasta, homemade soups and noodles as well as sausages, fish fingers and fries. The children usually have appropriate opportunities for physical development as they use the patio and grassed area. Permission from parents is in place for some children to use the large equipment in the enclosed back garden, this permission has not been obtained for other children. The children are taken on walks to and from school and to the park to exercise in the fresh air as the garden is not currently in use. Babies develop muscle control as the childminder holds them to kick and stand, using an animated voice and smiles to encourage and enhance their enjoyment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into a warm, friendly environment with a wide range of stimulating toys and activities. These are stored to be accessible in the dedicated, spacious playroom that benefits from good natural light. The floor of the playroom has an area of soft surface which means that babies and very young children can crawl or lie comfortably. The children freely select from the large range of suitable toys provided which encourages them to make early choices and increases their independence. Children are able to rest as they use the comfortable furniture in the living room. Two bedrooms are also used for minding purposes. However, the small front bedroom is currently being used as a storeroom so is unsafe for children and therefore unavailable for childminding purposes.

The enclosed rear garden is normally used for outdoor play. However, the garden is not in use at the moment as it is unsafe for children due to maintenance and refurbishment. The childminder is aware of the hazards and understands the need to make the play space safe before the children use this outside facility. When the children are on outings with the childminder she ensures that they are closely supervised and kept safe.

The childminder takes effective steps to minimise the risk of accidental injury to the children. Visual checks are made of the premises, and toys are checked regularly and broken ones discarded. Fire safety equipment is in place. For example, a fire blanket is available in the kitchen and smoke alarms are fitted upstairs and downstairs. Children's safety is enhanced as the childminder has devised and practised emergency fire drills with the older children in her care. However, this has not included a practise to leave the premises with babies and very young children.

Children are well protected with regard to child abuse and neglect as the childminder understands the signs and symptoms. She has the necessary contact details for referral of any concerns and is aware of her responsibility in child protection issues. The childminder is confident in implementing her procedure should she have any concerns. All documentation is in place to support children's safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and involved in a wide range of activities which support their development. Good, warm and caring relationships are established between the children and the childminder. Children are very relaxed within the provision, they leave their carers well and are confident to approach the childminder for cuddles. The toys are stored around the room and in low-level storage drawers, which enables children to make decisions for themselves concerning the toys or materials they wish to use. For example, children decide to play with the small world tractor and then explore the baby toys set out on the soft surface. This encourages children's early independence. The childminder supports the children in their choice and extends their vocabulary as they play. Children have a positive relationship with the childminder and benefit from her involvement in their play. They talk about colours and count together, which has a positive impact on the children's learning.

Young children begin to develop their vocabulary as the childminder repeats words and phrases and praises their achievements. She has regard for the 'Birth to three matters' framework in devising some play activities for younger children, using household objects and natural materials. Children develop good imagination as the childminder provides pretend play opportunities. For example, children have access to a wide variety of dressing up clothes and small world toys. Children are taken for walks to the local park and become familiar with their local surroundings as they walk to and from school. Delightful interaction between the childminder and the children, obvious affection and bright facial expressions enable children to feel a sense of belonging. Children reward the childminder's attention with beaming smiles.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed into the childminder's home. She takes steps to get to know the children, chatting to them and their parents about their likes and dislikes. She knows and understands their individual needs and preferences with regard to such things as sleep routines, food preferences and favourite toys. As a result of this, children develop a sense of belonging. The childminder has reasonable knowledge of equal opportunities and has some experience of caring for children with learning difficulties or disabilities. The childminder demonstrates a positive attitude and states that she would be willing to undertake training to provide an inclusive environment. There are resources such as small world toys, dressing up outfits and role play toys available reflecting positive images of a wider world which means that children's developing awareness is encouraged. The children are very well behaved. A written behaviour policy is shared and agreed with parents at the onset of care so children benefit through continuity of care. The childminder encourages good behaviour through a variety of strategies such as encouragement, praise and involvement in the children's play.

An effective partnership with parents is fostered through exchange of information. They receive detailed information through a well presented policy folder and share in what their children have been doing through daily chats. This enables the parents to be aware of the childminder's procedures, the level of care offered and the activities undertaken. Children benefit as parents' views are always valued and acted upon. The childminder seeks feedback from parents through questionnaires which enables her to improve the provision.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder's home is well organised to support play opportunities and is child friendly. The large playroom is comfortable and inviting with photographs on the wall of children involved in activities. Children access toys freely as these are organised to be accessible and are kept at a low-level, this encourages their independence. The childminder organises her time well to be able to play with the children throughout the day which promotes their learning and development.

The relevant documentation is in place to support the children's well-being, for example, parents contact details and emergency contact numbers are available. The children's records are accurate and up to date and are available for inspection. These records are stored to maintain confidentiality for children but this is compromised as medication records contain multiple entries on one page. The childminder is keen to improve her practice and has undertaken training for a recognised qualification.

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 was asked to ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. Some resources have been obtained and are available for children's play, which increases their awareness of differences and a wider world.

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):

- improve hand drying facilities for children to protect them from cross-contamination
- request prior permission from parents for children to use large equipment in the garden
- make the garden and small front bedroom safe and secure for children before use

- practise the fire evacuation procedure with all children
- maintain confidentiality with regard to children's medication records.

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