

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	310050
Inspection date	06 March 2008
Inspector	Andrea, Jane Lockyer

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 1990. She lives with her husband and two grown-up children. They live in a house in the Benton area of North Tyneside. Local amenities and public transport systems are within walking distance. The whole of the ground floor area is used for childminding purposes, apart from the utility room. Access to the first floor is restricted to the use of the bathroom. There is a safe and enclosed rear yard available for outdoor play. The family does not have any pets. The childminder currently has eight children on roll.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and receives support and training opportunities from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminder follows clear, efficient hygiene routines to protect and promote children's health. Her consistent guidance and sensitive approach ensures that all children are developing a good understanding of the importance of hygiene and personal care, for example, as they

enjoy singing songs such as 'this is the way we clean our face' as they wipe their faces with their own face cloths. All children follow good daily routines for hand washing, they have access to tissues and wipes and help to clean toys. The good standard of hygiene maintained throughout all childminding areas and the effective use of policies and procedures ensure that all children are well protected from the spread of infection. In-depth discussions with parents and comprehensive records ensure that children's individual health needs are met well. Good procedures are in place for the administration of medication and recording of accidents.

Children are very well nourished. Menus are planned in advance ensuring they are offered a balanced and healthy diet. Children are developing a good understanding of the benefits of a healthy diet from an early age. They are able to make choices from a selection of fresh fruit, organic vegetables and homemade meals. They help to prepare their own snacks and meals, such as pita pockets, homemade soup, fruit smoothies and pizza, and enjoy visiting farmers markets and helping to unpack the organic vegetable delivery. The childminder talks to children about healthy food and how vegetables are grown, and encourages them to try new tastes. Children have also enjoyed growing their own lettuce. All children have easy access to their own drinks throughout the day. Children's individual dietary needs are well met through effective partnership with parents to discuss any allergies or special dietary requirements. Weekly menus are provided for parents.

All children experience a wide range of physical activities which promote their good health and help them gain increasing control of their bodies. They enjoy stimulating, fun activities both in and out of the home, such as dancing to music, hopping, jumping and balancing, riding sit and ride toys, using space hoppers and skipping ropes, playing ball games, negotiating obstacle courses, playing in the snow, climbing trees and planting bulbs and flowers outside. Daily walks, visits to parks, soft play, the beach and bounce and rhyme sessions also help to improve children's physical skills. The childminder's good understanding of the developmental stages of the children she is caring for, means that the youngest of children are confident to try new skills, ask for help and set their own limits within a safe environment. All children have good daily opportunities to take a rest according to their individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a safe home where the risks are identified and minimised. This allows all children to independently explore their environment in safety. Effective written risk assessments and procedures followed by the childminder, both in and out of the home, ensure children's safety at all times. The childminder gives high priority to helping children gain a good understanding of safety and how to protect themselves from harm. For example, they take part in fire drills, have enjoyed exploring a fire engine at a local safety day, help to pick up toys so as not to fall over them and learn to cross roads safely. The childminder talks to children about safety prior to and during trips out, for example, safety around animals on trips to the farm, safety on the beach when visiting the coast and the safe use of public transport, such as the metro and bus. Children are also developing a good understanding about how to protect themselves in the sun, by the use of sun cream and wearing sun hats. The childminder has effective procedures in place in case of an emergency, when children will be looked after by another registered childminder. However, she has not gained written parental consent for this.

Children are able to self select from a comprehensive range of safe, good quality and developmentally appropriate toys and resources, which are stimulating and fun. They have use of their own playroom which is comfortably furnished and well organised to provide independent

choice. Pictures, children's artwork, general information and posters are displayed, making the premises welcoming to both parents and children.

Children are well protected by the childminder, who is confident and secure in her knowledge of child protection policies and procedures. A good written child protection policy is in place which is shared with parents, ensuring that they are made fully aware of her role and responsibility to safeguard children. The childminder helps children to learn about how to protect themselves by talking to them about the danger of speaking to strangers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time with the childminder. They grow and develop, and are making rapid progress because the childminder has an excellent understanding of child development and how children learn. She provides a rich, exciting and stimulating variety of learning experiences for all children, which take account of their individual stages of development and interests. For example, children write their own postcards and take them to the post office to post to their parents, go on bug hunts and have created their own ant farm. They enjoy making papier mâché models and creating their own pictures from a variety of different textured, shaped and coloured materials.

The childminder plans activities in advance and these are well thought out, providing optimal learning experiences for all children. She effectively uses the 'Birth to three matters' framework to ensure that all areas of development are covered, and uses written records of children's development and observations to plan the next steps in individual children's learning. Older children are encouraged to help with the planning which encourages them to make their own decisions and express their own thoughts and ideas. 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 feel totally secure in her care. Children develop a positive sense of self as they are praised for their achievements.

Children are given scope to use their initiative and become increasingly independent during varied, purposeful and developmentally appropriate activities, such as exploring the different natural materials and textures in the treasure basket, selecting their own books, and exploring the different sounds made by musical instruments. Children are developing very good independence skills and high levels of confidence, as they busy themselves and become totally absorbed in their activities. The childminder provides good levels of support and is very aware of when to stand back and allow children to develop and extend their own learning and play.

Children's early communication skills are extremely well supported through high quality interaction with the childminder as they sing as they play, look at books and discuss their activities and talk about what they are doing, for example, as they play with the medical set and discuss with the childminder what the objects are for and how they work.

The childminder is highly motivated and inspires children with her own enthusiasm.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder has a positive approach to promoting anti-discriminatory practice and treats all children as individuals, ensuring that they feel valued and free from discrimination. She

provides children with a good range of resources that increase their awareness of diversity, such as different cultural and gender dolls, small world figures with wheelchairs, walking sticks, hearing aides and glasses, books, puzzles games, dressing up clothes, different skin tone crayons, pictures and posters. Children have enjoyed making Chinese lanterns and dragons for Chinese New Year and have made Rangoli pictures for Diwali. They have good opportunities to explore and learn about the wider world and their own community as they enjoy a wealth of trips to places of interest, such as various museums, winter gardens, the Baltic Arts Centre, the Sea Life Centre, the local lighthouse, the coast, local shops, libraries, art galleries, nature trails, farms and local shops and parks.

Children's behaviour is very good. The childminder supports younger children in sharing and turn taking. She has high expectations and sets consistent boundaries for the children, which are suitable for their age and level of understanding. Children respond positively to her calm and sensitive approach, resulting in all children gaining a good understanding of right and wrong and a willingness to help each other and the childminder. Children play harmoniously together and are gaining good social and negotiating skills. They are learning to take responsibility for themselves, which promotes a strong sense of self.

A very good partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's wellbeing in the setting. Parents are fully informed of the activities their children will be covering as well as their own child's progress, through daily discussions, written plans and children's individual progress files. The childminder actively seeks parents' views about their children's needs and interests before their child starts at the setting, and on a regular basis throughout their time in her care. Parental feedback shows that parents greatly value the care offered by the childminder. She ensures that all parents know about all aspects of the childminding practice by providing parents with a comprehensive information package which includes an extensive range of policies and procedures. She encourages a two-way flow of information and provides parents with written daily diaries which keep them informed about the daily care, learning and welfare of their children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the very good organisational skills of the childminder. Her routines are consistent yet flexible so that children quickly become familiar with what comes next in their day. This ensures that children feel secure and confident. She gives careful consideration to how many children she cares for at any one time so that she can give them plenty of care and attention. All children have good daily opportunities for rest, play, eating, social interaction and going out.

The childminder is committed to providing good quality care for children. She has an extensive range of well written policies and procedures which are effectively implemented, and attends a variety of training courses to further develop her skills and knowledge. She uses her knowledge gained to evaluate her practice and improve the care of children.

Children are cared for according to their needs because the childminder uses the information she holds effectively to promote their wellbeing. The childminder keeps her records up to date and reviews them regularly to ensure she has all the correct information about the children. All necessary documentation is completed correctly, is up to date, reviewed regularly and is well organised. 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 obtain written permission from parents to take children on outings and to seek emergency medical treatment. The childminder now has written parental consent for all outings and to seek emergency medical treatment for the children she is caring for.

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

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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 written parental consent to leave children with another registered childminder in the event of an emergency.

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