

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	310071
Inspection date	04 February 2008
Inspector	Kathleen Snowdon

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 outstanding. 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 1990. She lives with her husband in Forest Hall, Newcastle upon Tyne and her home is close to all facilities, including schools and nurseries. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to look after a maximum of six children at any one time. She is currently minding two children under five and one child over five; older children attend also. The childminder attends local toddler groups.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent priority is given to helping children understand the merits of healthy eating. For example, as they eat hearty and appetising breakfasts, such as porridge or wholemeal toast, the children talk about how these foods benefit their good health overall. At lunch and teatime, the children thoroughly enjoy delicious and nutritious meals that include pasta and curry dishes,

home-made soups and jacket potatoes. These provide the children with the nourishment they require to grow and develop as they should.

All the children have excellent opportunities to be active. When the younger children attend toddler groups, for example, they roll around, jump and bounce on soft play equipment. This encourages them to practise different movements and boosts their stamina. The children take delight in their emerging physical skills. For instance, they skip and slither in front of others and explain confidently that exercise helps them to stay fit. Older children love to play in the local park on their way back from school. They enjoy energetic games, like football or cricket, which teaches them that exercise is fun and keeps them alert and invigorated.

Meticulous attention is paid to promoting personal hygiene. For example, after the children use the bathroom, play outside and before they eat, they wash their hands then dry them on individual hand towels that are changed daily. Alongside the highly appropriate arrangements that deal with sick children, these factors contain the spread of common illnesses and infections. As well as this, the children are encouraged to brush their teeth after meals to promote their dental health. Highly effective routines like these help the children to understand how cleanliness contributes to overall good health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children move freely and easily in the childminder's welcoming, very well organised and meticulously clean home, which teaches them how to negotiate space safely. They learn simple but effective ways of staying safe through sticking to sensible and realistic house rules, such as no running indoors and no jumping on the furniture. As well as this, very good use is made of safety equipment overall, which reduces the risk of accidents in the childminder's home.

An excellent range of top quality and developmentally appropriate toys and resources helps the children to make progress in all areas of their development. Equipment is stored on low level shelving to allow the children choice while the large number of things to select from gives them plenty of variety. Items are in pristine condition through ongoing cleaning and checking that the children help out with. This introduces the children to basic risk assessment, an important life skill that contributes to personal safety.

Meaningful and highly worthwhile conversations raise the children's awareness of safety issues in general; they talk about road safety, for example, and safe people. Regular fire drills teach the children how to stay safe in an emergency while interesting visitors, such as fire fighters and community police officers, introduce the children to people who help us. The childminder speaks with confidence and wisdom about safeguarding children issues. This excellent level of awareness protects children from unsuitable people and damaging situations.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

An outstanding range of activities gives the children ample scope in which to have fun and enjoy themselves. For example, amongst several other things, they make models and masks using household junk and scraps of materials. They paint, stick, use clay and play dough and dress up and pretend that they are fairy-tale characters. These excellent opportunities allow the children to express their creativity and use their imagination.

An excellent range of highly enjoyable outings increases children's knowledge and understanding of the world. They visit farms, for instance, where they handle and feed the animals. This offers the children a very good opportunity to make first-hand observations about how nature works. They search for pebbles and interesting stones when they go to the beach, take photographs of these, then talk about and research how these are formed using reference books and supervised access to the internet. This increases the children's awareness of scientific processes and, when they talk about the places that they have been to, the children perfect their ability to recall past experiences.

Excellent relationships exist between the children and the childminder. The children benefit from the childminder's complete attention during the time that they spend with her, so consequently, they are happy, confident and settled. The children are encouraged to express their thoughts and listen to the views of others. This promotes good communication skills while mixing with other children, both at the childminder's home and in toddler groups, and teaches them invaluable social skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are treated with equal care and consideration. They have excellent opportunities to find out about their own cultural traditions and those of others when they celebrate a range of festivals, such as Chinese New Year and Easter. Unusual and fascinating trips to intriguing places, such as the oriental supermarket and the sari shop, make the children aware of the multi-cultural nature of society. Very good quality resources, like jigsaws, small world items and books, depict images of people with a range of abilities and people carrying out tasks usually associated with the opposite sex. This introduces the children to important social issues, such as disability and gender.

Sensitive and consistent guidance from the childminder helps the children to behave well. They receive clear explanations about why certain actions are not acceptable, which teaches them right from wrong. The children are encouraged to think about the feelings of others and are reminded that their actions have consequences. This promotes the development of positive personal qualities, like consideration and responsibility.

Partnership with parents and carers is excellent. Contracts are used to set out clearly the expectations of both parties and to form the basis of the working relationship. Daily diaries and discussions keep parents and the childminder fully informed of the children's recent experiences while a designated notice board displays important information for parents, such as how to contact Ofsted and how to make a complaint. Parents have highly positive views of the childminder and the service that she provides. They describe her as 'extremely reliable, competent, professional and approachable' and they rate the quality of childminding as 'fantastic' and 'second to none'.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Documentation is very well organised, readily available and stored securely to protect confidentiality. Records are kept up-to-date and accurate through regular reviews and amendments when changes occur. Parents have access to a full range of well written and clear policies that offer an insight into the work of the childminder. The registration certificate is prominently displayed to allow parents to scrutinise it should they wish to.

The childminder shows an excellent awareness of registered numbers and fully understands the importance of never exceeding these. She is vigilant in recording children's daily attendance and is aware that these are amongst documents that need to be retained for a number of years. The childminder puts exceptional efforts into further training. For example, she is currently completing a quality assurance scheme and has recently achieved a recognised qualification that is relevant to her work as a childminder.

Excellent play activities are provided for the children. The children and the childminder plan these together and use themes, such as transport or the weather, to get as much as possible from a particular topic. Top priority is given to keeping the children healthy and safe on a day-to-day basis. The children themselves are happy with the childminder, whom they describe as their 'friend'. They add that they like the fact that she tells lots of jokes and makes them laugh. Highly positive early experiences such as these enable children to form secure, subsequent relationships with others.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

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

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

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