

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	313575
Inspection date	17 October 2007
Inspector	Janet Fairhurst
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 October 1995. She lives with her husband in the village of Shotley Bridge on the outskirts of Consett. The whole of the downstairs and two bedrooms are used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed rear garden.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently caring for four children, three of whom are over eight years. The childminder takes and collects children from the local primary school.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and a member of the local childminding group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from good hygiene practices that prevent the spread of infection. For example, the childminder has very good standards for home hygiene, such as using anti-bacterial spray

to minimise germs and ensuring childcare areas are clean. Children are learning the importance of personal hygiene issues, as they wash their hands after visiting the bathroom or before they eat. They also have individual towels, which helps to prevent the risk of cross-contamination. The childminder provides a booster step and a child's toilet seat in the bathroom, enabling older children to manage their personal hygiene needs independently. A recent first aid certificate, clear written policies regarding sick children and the effective recording of all emergency contacts and accidents promote children's health and well-being.

Children enjoy a good range of fun activities which contribute to their good health. Each day the childminder plans both indoor and outdoor activities which help promote children's physical development and help them gain increasing control over their bodies. For example, visits to the local park, playing in the secure garden and soft play, as well as riverside walks help boost children's fitness levels.

Children enjoy a highly nutritious diet through the provision of meals and snacks that are healthy and balanced. Ongoing communication with parents, ensures that the childminder has a clear understanding of the individual dietary needs of the children. Children enjoy a wide range of healthy foods including fresh fruit and vegetables, home cooked dinners, salads, pasta and yoghurts and sit together at the table for this social occasion. Children are encouraged to learn about healthy eating, as they help to set menu's and to visit local shops to select and buy the produce. Children have free access to drinks throughout the day and are offered suitable drinks, such as water and sugar free juice.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a comfortable, welcoming environment, which is well-organised to meet their needs. Rooms are well set out to provide sufficient space for children, which they explore freely and confidently. Children enjoy a broad range of toys and resources, which are stored accessibly, thereby promoting children's freedom of choice and independence. The childminder check toys and equipment regularly to ensure they are suitably maintained, in a clean and safe condition.

Children's safety benefits from the childminder ensuring they are appropriately supervised and taking steps to minimise hazards. For example, low-level kitchen units have been fitted with safety catches, well arranged furniture prevents children gaining access to the stairs and a safety fireguard is fixed around the fire and hearth. Visual risk assessments have been carried out for each room used for minding purposes, which ensures that children are able to move around freely, safely and independently. There is an appropriate emergency evacuation procedure in place which is regularly practised with the children. Children learn to keep themselves safe as the childminder gives them clear guidelines, which she subtly reinforces with sensitive reminders, such as actions to take when crossing the road and picking up toys when they have finished playing with them. All children are restrained in appropriate car seats when being transported in the car. Written consent is in place for outings and the use of the car and public transport, ensuring children's welfare is safeguarded.

Children's welfare is well considered regarding matters of child protection. The childminder demonstrates a good knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse. She has suitable plans in place to ensure concerns are appropriately reported and documented, in line with the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

School age children are happy and confident in the childminder's home. The childminder's regular routine helps them to settle quickly and be familiar in their surroundings; they enjoy their leisure time and have fun. Children make independent choices about play, they select from a good range of age appropriate resources and choose activities that best suit their moods and energy levels after school. Children benefit from warm and affectionate relationships with the childminder which contributes to the children's sense of belonging. The childminder and the children show mutual respect for each other as they talk and listen to one another.

The childminder works alongside the children, encouraging them throughout their play and enhancing their social skills and learning. Children are confident when expressing their wishes and their individual ideas are valued and encouraged by the childminder. For example, the childminder was very respectful to the children's thoughts about how they should design a birthday card. The childminder used this opportunity to encourage and extend the children's learning as she sounded out letters to help the spelling of words. The childminder recognises the importance of allowing older children to develop their own ideas and imagination. As a result, the children enjoy their experiences and are forming positive relationships with both adults and peers.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are suitably valued and respected as individuals. The childminder ensures their personal needs are appropriately met. They are positively welcomed into the setting and are gaining a sound sense of belonging through being actively involved in daily routines, such as helping to set the table for lunch or helping to tidy away the toys. They are also encouraged to make choices, for example, about meals, toys and activities. Children are developing a sense of community, as a result of regular outings. Through discussion and the use of relevant resources children are beginning to learn about differing abilities, diversity and the wider world.

Children's behaviour is managed well. The childminder sets and sensitively reinforces age-appropriate boundaries. Her calm approach and clear direction help children understand what is expected of them. Children enjoy lots of encouragement and purposeful praise, thereby giving them confidence, as well as enhancing their self-esteem. Children generally behave well. They are learning to share, take turns and have respect and consideration for each other.

The childminder has formed sound working relationships with parents and carers. They are provided with appropriate written information relating to the provision, which is well presented. Parents are actively encouraged to speak to the childminder in the event of concerns or issues being raised. However, the regulator contact details are not shared with them. The childminder collates information from parents about the children to help her meet their needs. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress on a daily basis through verbal feedback.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are extremely well cared for and feel at home in a well organised environment that keeps them safe and secure. Toys and resources are organised effectively, enabling all children to access them independently and allowing them to make free choices about their play and

learning. Indoor and outdoor space is well laid out to maximise play opportunities for children. The childminder values training opportunities and has recently completed courses in Developing Childminding Practice and Early Years Foundation Stage. This ensures the childminder is kept up to date with current childcare issues.

Documentation is well organised with children's individual files in place, records up to date and some written policies and procedures in place. Children's records and other information is filed securely, ensuring confidentiality is maintained. The effective verbal discussions the childminder has with parents' means children are supported and cared for appropriately.

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 continue to provide a range of equipment to cover all areas of learning. The childminder has a wealth of play materials which cover all areas of learning. Children have good opportunities to engage in imaginative play and to develop their early reading and writing skills through books and involvement in creative activities. The childminder is very aware of the need to ensure children's interests are acknowledged and she ensures that resources are made available to stimulate their interests and ideas.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

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 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):

- ensure parents are informed of the regulators contact details.

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