

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	313696
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Eileen Grimes
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 has been registered since 1985. She lives with her husband. They live in a village outside Consett, close to schools and local amenities. The childminder uses the whole of the ground floor for childminding. There is an enclosed play area to the rear of the house. She attends the local toddler groups and takes children to the park. The family has two dogs.

The childminder is registered to care for six children at any one time. She is currently caring for twelve children at various times of the day and week.

### THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

#### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children clearly thrive because the childminder follows highly effective and robust procedures and practices. These meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. For example, children are consistently protected from cross-infection as they have individual towels, provided on a daily basis. These are identified to children through the use of pictures. They independently and enthusiastically wash their hands at appropriate times with some adult intervention. The

exceptional adult support and guidance, through daily practices, helps children gain an excellent understanding of hygiene, and a real desire to become increasingly independent in their personal care. For example, children use the liquid soap with ease and confidence.

Children enthusiastically explore, test and develop physical control in stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences, such as playing on the wheeled toys and using climbing equipment within the local park and the local environment. For example, children walk to and from school when weather permits. They take pleasure in a versatile range of outdoor games and activities, extending to the playhouse when older children require space for intricate activities.

Children thoroughly enjoy fresh fruit at snack time, which they choose and prepare. The menu clearly demonstrates that meals are well balanced and takes account of the individual and cultural needs of all children. All meals are served to children in a social setting. This provides the opportunity for children to develop social skills, such as sitting and talking about the day's events, and encourages children to taste a range of foods. This reinforces their understanding of a healthy diet. All children freely access drinks throughout the day. These are available with each child having their own cup. Children are aware of which cup belongs to which child, thus preventing cross infection.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Safe and secure premises are provided that are extremely suitable for caring for children. They have more than adequate space to move freely, and the childminder places great emphasis on making sure the environment is welcoming for children to aid their development. For example, children's work is attractively displayed, and activities are carried forward from day to day if children require. The rooms are expertly set out into defined spaces, such as a relaxing area and a play area. The children move freely from one area to another, accessing equipment and activities independently. Children move freely within these areas secure in the knowledge that the childminder is always close at hand. The childminder ensures children can easily access necessary items like their coats. This significantly enhances the children's independence and development.

Children use extremely high quality equipment appropriate to their age and stage of development, such as an excellent and well thought-out range of robust furniture that caters for children and babies. Children have an excellent range of safe toys to play with that is appropriate to their age and stage of development and that conforms to British standards. Children with learning disabilities and difficulties are fully included, in line with her inclusion policy.

Risks of accidental injury to children are skilfully minimised because the childminder is extremely vigilant and uses thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. She makes certain that safety apparatus is in place, such as monitors, and an emergency escape plan. The childminder discusses each child's individual sleeping arrangements with parents and ensures that these are provided to the highest standard. Children are monitored at all times whilst asleep and parents are kept informed of this information. She has an excellent understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and creating a safe environment. For example, allowing children to explore and experiment with a stimulating, exciting messy activity. She discusses with them about the dangers of wet floors and keeping soap away from their own and other children's eyes. The childminder works exceptionally hard to introduce children to

safety issues, such as road safety. This allows children to learn some sense of danger and knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm.

Children are protected by the childminder who has an in-depth understanding of child protection policies and procedures, due to training. She gives top priority to children's welfare. Parents are fully informed of the action that would be taken in the event of a concern.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the childminder's home. They achieve extremely well because the childminder is highly skilled and uses her exceptional understanding of early years guidance, such as 'Birth to three matters', to provide high quality care to the children in her care. She provides a pack for parents, which includes a written statement clearly outlining how she intends supporting children in their progress.

The childminder has a keen knowledge of 'Birth to three matters' and implements the framework with ease as part of her planning and assessment. This ensures that activities are planned to meet the individual needs of the children and to ensure that each child makes excellent progress. She actively involves all children in planning activities. She explains that activities must meet the needs of all the children present, and older children embrace this, thus developing their understanding and appreciation of younger children. Children's achievements are celebrated and documented in each child's individual progress file. For example, when a child is able to walk a few steps, a photograph is taken and the child's achievement celebrated within the group and with the parents. This achievement is documented, and children and parents enjoy looking at the achievements and progress in the file. Children are very proud of their files and show enthusiasm for previous activities shown in the photographs, such as playing in the house area which is outside and contains a wide range of lifelike equipment.

The childminder's understanding of each child's stage of development means the youngest children are confident enough to try out new skills, ask for help when needed and set their own limits within the safe environment. She ensures that children have an extensive range of experiences within the setting and she also takes the children to toddler groups and on trips to the park where children thoroughly enjoy exploring the large equipment.

All children arrive happy and eager to participate. The children make excellent progress because the childminder recognises the uniqueness of each child. Close and caring relationships with the childminder increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. They develop a sense of belonging through the childminder's use of each child's development folder to celebrate their achievements. High quality adult-child interactions are extremely supportive of early communication skills and the childminder echoes children's speech and supplements early speech. This ensures that children know that their communication is valued and very effectively increases their self-esteem.

Right from the start, the childminder finds out about children's skills, interests and needs and builds on this information effectively to help children achieve as much as they can. She is very sensitive to the needs of the children from a range of home circumstances. A flexible approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult-led and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. The childminder is perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and uses questions very successfully to challenge children's thinking and language skills. For example, during an activity with the treasure basket children began cooking

and baking a cake. The childminder discussed with the children ingredients for the cake, textures, safety when using the oven and predicting what the end product would look and taste like. She uses highly effective systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements in their development files, and to plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

All children are warmly welcomed and play a full part in the setting because the childminder values and respects their individuality. The children have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through themes, and outings to local places of interest. Children learn about a very wide range of cultures through activities, such as reading books, celebrating various festivals, and shopping and discussing dietary differences. All these activities are carried through on a theme linked and led by the children, with the support of the childminder. She enables children to access a wide range of additional resources through visits within the local community, such as visiting the library.

Children with additional needs are superbly supported through the practice of the childminder and her commitment to the development of each child. She works closely with parents and with external agencies to ensure that the care offered is more than adequate and this ensures that children make excellent progress. Through her fully inclusive approach, she ensures that all children have the skills to communicate with each other.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. The childminder supports younger children in sharing and turn-taking. She has high expectations and sets consistent boundaries for the children. This helps them to learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. For example, the children know what they are not allowed to do and follow the rule with confidence. She increases children's understanding of right and wrong as the children respond to gentle reminders to care for their environment, the resources and each other. She encourages them to tidy up the play areas, at the end of each session.

An excellent partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being in the setting. Parents are fully informed of all activities as well as their own child's progress. 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 response shows that parents greatly value the care offered by the childminder. She ensures that all parents know how their children are progressing and developing through verbal exchanges and through the use of the progress book. These steps ensure extremely effective continuity of care for the children.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder greatly enhances children's care by the exceptional quality of organisation. The premises are exceptionally well organised. Indoor and outdoor space is laid out to maximise play opportunities for children. Indoors, the play area is set out in areas for play and rest and the equipment is accessible to all the children. A wealth of detailed documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being, is in place. All documentation is regularly reviewed.

Children benefit from a highly qualified and skilled childminder who strives to improve her current excellent practice through attendance on courses, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework, the Early Years Foundation Stage, child safety and protection courses and ongoing childcare practitioner qualifications. She uses ideas from courses and from childminder support sessions to develop her practice and enhance the enjoyment of the children. She is a member of the accredited childminder network, and uses this time to reflect on, monitor and improve the care she offers.

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 a recommendation was raised relating to training. Since the last inspection the childminder has completed a considerable amount of training covering a wide range of topics related to childcare. This training has had a positive impact on her practice.

### **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. There are no complaints to report.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)