

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	401603
Inspection date	11 January 2008
Inspector	Julie Larnier
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 their three children aged 17, 13 and 11 years in Blyth, Northumberland. All the ground floor of the childminder's house, except the conservatory, is used for childminding purposes and the bathroom which is located on the first floor. An enclosed back garden is available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight at any one time and is currently minding four children all of whom attend on a part-time basis.

The family has two dogs.

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

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an adequately clean and hygienic environment where they play with well maintained toys and equipment. The children's individual routines and needs are adequately met with regard to sleeping, for example, the childminder takes children for a walk around the block to try to settle them for sleep or children go in a quiet room when they are asleep, where regular checks conducted by the childminder ensure they are safe.

Children benefit from some healthy foods, such as chicken with pasta and a mid-morning snack of fruit. They enjoy chocolate biscuits for their afternoon snack as a treat. The childminder ensures that food is safely prepared as she has completed a food hygiene course. This contributes to the children's well-being. Children take care of some of their own needs due to the childminder making drinks easily accessible ensuring that children can have their drinks of juice when they choose.

Children's personal hygiene is sufficiently promoted. Children are encouraged to keep their hands clean at appropriate times, such as after stroking the dog and after using the toilet upstairs, as the childminder offers them wipes to clean their hands. This contributes towards the children's health and welfare. Clear policies to ensure sick children are dealt with consistently are in place. For example, parents are contacted when their child is ill and asked to collect them, which contributes to reducing the risk of cross-infection for children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe environment, where procedures to keep them free from harm, such as ensuring the front door is locked, are mainly consistent. The childminder conducts regular risk assessments of the areas she uses, such as the living room, to ensure that children can play safely in this area. Children are encouraged to learn about keeping themselves safe on outings and indoors. The childminder makes sure that younger children hold on to the buggy when they go out for walks, helps them to learn about the green cross code to negotiate roads safely and reminds younger children to be careful on the stairs. All of which contributes to the children's overall welfare.

Children choose toys and equipment from the toy room to bring back and play with in the living room. They are interested in the toys and equipment that are available for them as they request different items, such as jigsaws, which are lifted down from higher shelves. Children enjoy building models from wooden blocks and choosing their favourite books to look at.

The childminder shows a sound understanding of child protection issues. She knows about signs and symptoms of abuse which helps to safeguard the children's welfare as concerns can be quickly identified. The childminder uses relevant documentation and information and shows a satisfactory understanding of what she would do if she had concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have very positive relationships with the childminder. They confidently approach her for support and reassurance and to read books on the settee. Good relationships ensure that children receive warm and consistent care as they enjoy sitting on the childminder's knee for cuddles and having her involved with their play while they build towers and models. The childminder shows a good understanding of the children's individual likes and skills which are valued, for example, she talks about children being very good at jigsaw puzzles and gets challenging puzzles out of the playroom for them.

Children are valued and listened to as the childminder helps children to get out toys from the playroom. She treats the children with care and concern as she makes sure that children playing downstairs are fine while she takes others to the toilet upstairs by shouting down and asking them questions.

Younger babies enjoy spontaneous games of peek-a-boo as the childminder holds a book up to her face and pops her head out from the top, which children enjoy as they smile when they see her. Children laugh with and giggle with anticipation as the childminder tries to tickle their toes and stomach, which end up in cuddles that they try to wriggle out of. These good relationships mean that children feel settled and are happy and confident in the childminder's care.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have opportunities to learn about and value diversity through their everyday play, for example, as they play with jigsaws and books depicting different cultures. The childminder shows a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities as all of the children have access to all of the toys and equipment, however, on occasion comments made by the childminder do not sufficiently promote equal opportunities, for example, by stereotyping specific behaviours, such as rough play, to boys.

The childminder encourages good, positive behaviour well as she praises children for their achievements, for example, by clapping when they have finished doing their jigsaw or thanking them for helping to put the files away in the conservatory. This helps to contribute to raising the children's self-esteem and confidence. Satisfactory strategies are used by the childminder to manage children's behaviour, however, these are not consistently tailored to children's individual needs and do not always work well. A lack of encouragement for children to share toys and equipment limits the children's learning of how to co-operate and take turns.

Partnerships with parents are positive. The childminder ensures that daily discussions with the parents inform them about their child's day, such as what they have done and had to eat. Written policies and procedures are in place to help parents understand how the childminder's service operates. Flexible strategies have been tried with parents to ensure they are fully informed, such as daily diaries and files containing children's work help parents to build a picture of their child's time with the childminder.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an adequately comfortable and safe environment. They are supported well by the childminder as she encourages older children to extend their learning, for example, as they identify colours of building blocks and count how many they have made into a tower. The childminder uses her time fairly well in the setting to ensure that children's needs, such as sleeping, changing nappies and feeding are adequately met. She plays with older children on the floor, to ensure she is on hand for support and guidance, whilst also engaging and talking to younger babies who play in the travel cot.

The childminder has developed her practice by attending courses which, in turn, further benefits the care of the children. Paperwork and documentation is maintained to a good standard and kept in a confidential manner, for example, individual accident records are maintained on each child's file. This further contributes to safeguarding the children's welfare.

Space in the setting is used adequately as the children take part in free play in the living room and collect toys they want to play with from the playroom. Overall, general organisation of the setting does not always contribute to ensuring that risks and hazards are eliminated, for example, as clothes on the floor in the kitchen can pose a hazard for children going to get toys from the playroom and coats and shoes on the settee mean that older children cannot easily relax if they are tired.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the childminder agreed to, improve the system of keeping parents informed of their child's day and routine, to further enhance the good practice already in place. The childminder has files relating to individual children with photographs that help to share information with parents. The childminder did try and maintain daily diaries for some of the children, however, she felt this did not work well as she had limited time to update these during the day whilst she was caring for children.

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):

- ensure that organisation of the premises provides a safe, well organised place for children's play
- ensure that behaviour management techniques meet the children's individual needs and sufficiently promote sharing and co-operation, to further benefit the care and welfare of the children.

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