

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	402993
Inspection date	19 December 2007
Inspector	Carys Millican
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 was registered in 1999. She lives with her husband and adult family, in Hexham, Northumberland. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding three children aged under five who attend a number of sessions, and one child aged over five, before and after school. The childminder looks after children aged over eight years. The childminder has a car to transport children on outings and to take and collect children attending the local schools. The childminder attends the local carer and toddler group.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and West Tynedale Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a homely environment. They access clean, well maintained play areas that allow children free access to toys and resources. Children begin to learn the importance of appropriate hygiene methods and personal care. The childminder encourages young children to wash their hands and dry them accordingly before eating their snack. Children are protected from the potential risk of infection through the hygiene practices demonstrated by the childminder and through the procedures in place that respect their welfare. Children follow the good role model set by the childminder, as she cleans the high chair and work surfaces using anti-bacterial wipes or spray. Policies and procedures regarding the administration of medicines and dealing with sick children have the children's health and well-being at heart. These are discussed with parents when registering. Young children follow flexible care and sleep routines according to their needs. Information is obtained from parents to ensure continuity of care.

Children are nourished and their individual needs met. Drinks are accessible at all times and children are provided with a variety of healthy snacks and meals. The contents of packed lunches are discussed with parents to ensure healthy options are included and they are stored appropriately in the fridge until required. Children enjoy eating their raisins and drink of milk whilst sitting in the kitchen. The childminder has a good understanding of what constitutes a balanced diet and consults parents for information about individual children's dietary needs and allergies, and their likes and dislikes.

Children benefit from regular exercise outdoors in the fresh air. They enjoy regular walks into the countryside where they look at the farm animals. Children visit the local parks and playgrounds when collected from school. These activities contribute to their good health. Children are naturally active. They gain control of their bodies and develop their physical skills at their own pace and in their own way. Children attend several carer and toddler sessions close by and socialise with other children. They play outdoors in the enclosed garden in milder weather and access a large grassed area at the back of the house to play ball games. Children benefit from the secure, close and caring relationship developing with their childminder. This promotes their emotional well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. They access suitable age appropriate resources in the well organised living areas. Young children use safe and suitable toys and equipment which are regularly checked for broken or loose parts. The childminder obtains resources for children which meet safety standards. Children access these resources easily aiding choice, decision making and independence. Indoor and outdoor activities are carefully supervised and monitored to ensure younger children's safety.

Children benefit from good practices and procedures that help keep children safe. Suitable safety equipment is in place and potential hazards and risks are identified and minimised. The fire evacuation procedure is in place and fire blanket is available in the kitchen. The childminder is clear on what she would do in a fire emergency and this is practised regularly when caring for children. However, the details of these fire practices are not logged. Children are protected by the childminder holding a valid first aid certificate, thus enabling her to take the appropriate

steps should an accident occur. The first aid boxes are accessible in an emergency and the contents are regularly checked. Records of any accidents are kept and are signed by parents to fully safeguard children's welfare.

The childminder has a good understanding of child protection issues. She has recently attended a child protection course and has obtained a copy of the leaflet 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'. Written child protection policies and procedures maintained by the childminder do not contain the details of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Record keeping is not established to record behavioural incidents, child protection concerns or existing injuries. Children are kept safe and their well-being is promoted through the documentation in place. These include lost and uncollected child policies, parental permission for outings and the procedures to ensure only named persons collect the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and contented. They are confident in their surroundings and settle well in the relaxed atmosphere. Children's enjoyment and achievement are promoted through the flexible play experiences created during their time spent with the childminder. She has a good knowledge and understanding of children's development and a number of years experience of caring for different ages of children. Young children develop confidence and self-esteem through the close interaction with the childminder and through the care and individual attention they receive. The childminder actively plays with the children, supporting them in their play and encouraging development. They enjoy playing with the shape sorter. They confidently manipulate the different shapes into the appropriate holes and gleefully clap to themselves when completing it. Young children snuggle into the childminder when tired or feeling unwell, which increases their sense of well-being and security. Children make choices and decisions in their play. The toys and resources are stored at low-level enabling children to help themselves. Children play with musical instruments, such as the toy keyboard. They listen to the music playing in the background as they help themselves to different toys. The needs of children of varying ages are met as the childminder provides suitable activities which follow their interests and take into account children's ages and individual ability. After school children complete craft activities and do homework, if required.

The childminder has a sound knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which is seen in practice as children play. There is no written planning in place, however, the childminder plans and provides appropriate activities for the children in her care. The childminder does not keep daily diaries recording children's development or information about the care and activities undertaken. Children engage in a wide range of activities, and several photographs show children happily engaged in a number of alternative play opportunities. Children play outdoors in the garden in milder weather where they access the sand tray and supervised ball games in the field beyond. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories with the childminder. Young children follow flexible routines that flow with their needs. These routines are discussed with parents to ensure continuity of care. Children begin to socialise with others as they attend several social groups and facilities. Children benefit from the close attachment forming with their childminder, which contributes to their sense of belonging.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are made welcome and settle easily. Initial settling in periods enable children to form a familiar, trusting, safe and secure relationship with the childminder and her family. This allows children to feel at ease in unfamiliar surroundings. Children confidently interact with the childminder as she asks them questions about what they are doing or whether they would like their snack. Children are valued, comforted well and thrive on the positive interaction they receive. They enjoy the company of others and feel safe and loved. Children respond well to the positive ways the childminder rewards achievement. This is seen through gestures, praise and encouragement. Children clap to themselves on completing an activity and show excitement at how well they have done.

Children benefit from the positive relationships developed with parents. Their general welfare is promoted as the childminder collects information from parents to ensure children's individual care needs are consistently followed. Information is shared verbally with parents on collection. There is no written information available for parents showing the care and activities provided for children or showing children's development and achievement linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The required documentation and parental consents are in place including a number of detailed policies and procedures. The complaints procedure and complaints log are established. These are explained to parents and parents acknowledge reading these documents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well cared for by an experienced childminder who supports and encourages the development of all children. Children's care, learning and play are promoted through the individual attention she provides. Children feel at home and at ease in the warm, welcoming, well organised environment. They move around freely and confidently, and initiate and extend their own play and learning. Children gain independence through the childminder's encouragement and support. Their developmental needs are met as they are provided with a wide range of toys, resources and activities. Children experience a number of opportunities to socialise with others throughout the week and they enjoy opportunities for outdoor physical exercise.

Children's health, hygiene and safety are promoted. They are cared for in a clean, safe and secure environment. Children's welfare and well-being are supported by the childminder maintaining most of the required record keeping documentation. Detailed policies and procedures are maintained and most are up to date with recent changes. Children's individual needs are recorded and parental consents are maintained. Information is shared verbally on a regular basis and this contributes to continuity in the children's care. The registration certificate is clearly displayed on the wall.

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 improve children's safety by ensuring that the premises are kept secure and children are unable to leave unsupervised. Since that inspection

the childminder has changed her practice and makes sure all exterior doors are secure, thus improving children's safety.

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 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):

- update the child protection policy with details of the Local Safeguarding Childrens Board
- establish record keeping systems to record behavioural incidents, child protection concerns and existing injuries to 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