

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	403051
Inspection date	20 December 2007
Inspector	Noreen Elizabeth Appleby
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 1996. She lives with her husband and their three adult children in a split-level house in Stocksfield, Northumberland. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding. Toilet and hand washing facilities are on the lower ground floor. Minded children do not access any other lower ground floor rooms. An enclosed garden, at the back of the house, is available for outdoor play. There are schools, pre-schools and toddler groups within the local area, as well as parks, shops, and local facilities.

The childminder is registered for a maximum of six children at any one time. She is presently caring for seven children aged from one year to seven years, as well as two children aged eight and nine years. All children are cared for on a part-time basis.

The family has a pet dog, which live indoors.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association. She takes children to, and collects them from, nursery or school. She also takes younger children to toddler groups.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy good health because the childminder has effective procedures in place. For example, written policy statements confirm arrangements for protecting children from infection and ensuring they are well cared for if they become ill. The childminder discusses issues with parents and carers so they are well aware that children do not attend when they are infectious or ill. This helps to minimise the risk of cross-infection. The childminder has completed a relevant first aid certificate which enables her to manage children's minor accidents competently. An accident log is suitably maintained, although information does not clearly verify when no treatment has been administered. Parents and carers sign to acknowledge the entries and they have also given the childminder permission to seek emergency medical treatment or advice, if the need arises. This protects children's welfare.

Children have good opportunities to take part in regular physical activity, such as walking to and from school, visiting the soft play centre or going to the park. They enjoy using the swings, climbing or balancing on other large equipment or playing with hoops, bats and balls. These activities help children to develop large motor skills and to gain confidence as they negotiate obstacles and to learn coordinate their movements. They are learning the importance of having regular exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.

The childminder ensures children receive nutritious, well-balanced meals and snacks which are suited to their dietary needs and provided in accordance with parents' or carers' wishes. Children also enjoy activities that help them to learn about healthy eating. For example, they help to prepare healthy foods for a picnic, they make healthy choices about which fruit they would like for snack and they choose from a range of healthy toppings when they make their own pizza. Drinks are freely available to keep them sufficiently hydrated throughout the day. Children sit together around the table for meals and snacks. This helps them to develop social skills as younger children learn to feed themselves and all children learn to use good manners.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a warm, welcoming and spacious environment. Play areas are used effectively and creatively so children have ample space to use floor toys, engage in table-top activities or to use the lounge for quiet activities or for rests. Children are welcomed into the childminder's home. They state that they enjoy coming to the childminder's to play with their friends and do lots of different things. They enjoy a broad range of toys, furniture and equipment suited to their individual ages and developmental stages. Resources are well set out, so they are readily accessible to children, thereby promoting free choice and independence. Children have suitable opportunities to use natural materials, such as making wooden Christmas decorations or using collage materials to design their own cards. The childminder is beginning to introduce 'treasure baskets' to enable young children to explore wooden, metal and natural materials during heuristic play. Equipment is checked daily as it is set out or cleared away to ensure resources are clean and safe for children.

The childminder is vigilant about maintaining a safe environment. Suitable equipment, such as stair gates and socket covers, ensures that hazards are successfully minimised. The childminder also closely supervises children as they move around within the premises. She accompanies

children when they use the bathroom facilities on the lower ground floor, or when they play in the garden, to ensure they are safe. Children are also learning suitable safety strategies, such as learning to stop, look all around and listen before they cross the road with the childminder. Fire safety is also given sound consideration. Smoke alarms and suitable fire safety equipment are in place and an emergency evacuation procedure has been identified. The childminder states that this is regularly practiced when children are present, although no record is presently maintained. Parents and carers provide outings and transportation consents. The childminder ensures children use appropriate car seats or restraints and she has copies of relevant car documents available to verify that appropriate insurance and test certificates are in place.

Children's wellbeing is given careful consideration in matters of child protection. The childminder has completed relevant child protection training and she demonstrates a sound working knowledge of issues. She has drafted a child protection policy statement which clarifies her plans for keeping children safe and complying with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's care arrangements are well met because the childminder takes good account of their daily routines and individual needs. This contributes towards their continuity of care. Children enjoy exploring a broad variety of toys and resources, within the home. The childminder plans and provides a good range of play and learning opportunities which build upon children's individual interests and help them to develop new skills. The children recently enjoyed making Christmas cards, calendars and decorations. Young children benefit from listening to music. They are beginning to join in with songs and nursery rhymes and enjoy performing the actions. They also use construction bricks to create a farm with the childminder, who enhances their learning by introducing the animals and promoting which noises they make. This helps children to develop language and communication skills.

All children are developing social skills as they play nicely together and help one another. Older children demonstrate good imagination and creativity as they construct a village together. They build houses and garages for their cars. They plan as they play and work cooperatively to build their project. The childminder allows them to develop their play, but is readily available to assist when the need arises. Children's activity files, written statements and samples of their work provide good evidence of other interesting learning opportunities they enjoy, such as dressing up and role play, outdoor play, using jigsaws, threading activities or books. Older children talk enthusiastically about things they enjoy most when they are with the childminder. They have regular opportunities for creative activities, such as drawing, writing or colouring in. The childminder praises them for their efforts, which boosts their confidence and gives them pride in their achievements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder fully discusses children's home routines, likes and dislikes with parents and carers. This helps her to gain a good understanding of their individual needs. Formal policy statements identify how children access resources which reflect positive images of disability, race and culture. These include books, puzzles, role play materials and small world resources which help them to learn about diversity and the wider world. The childminder has experience

of working with children who have a disability. She works closely with parents and carers to devise a care plan which meets the child's specific needs. Children are gaining a strong sense of community as well as developing an interest in the wider world. For example, they attend the local Surestart centre, go for walks or outings in the local community as well as attending toddler group, nursery or school.

Children are learning to manage their behaviour well. The childminder acts as a good role model and uses positive strategies that are well suited to children's ages and stages of maturity. For example she makes good use of body language to reinforce when children have done well. She works alongside the children, sensitively guiding them whilst setting and calmly reinforcing realistic boundaries. She provides the children with good levels of support, encouragement and purposeful praise. As a result, children know what is expected of them and they are kind and helpful to one another. They speak confidently and enthusiastically to adults and they are polite and well mannered.

Good working relationships are maintained with parents and carers. Information is effectively shared with them, through formal contracts, agreements and children's personal records. The childminder makes good use of verbal daily updates to share information about their child's care and progress. Formal policy statements identify practices within the setting, including the procedure for making a complaint. A comments book is also available in the hall for parents and carers to note their views. Through discussion, parents and carers confirm they are very happy with the service the childminder provides.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from regular, but flexible, routines and a well organised environment. They are effectively supervised and supported very well. Consequently, all children are happy and settled with the childminder.

Their care, learning and play experiences are good because of the childminder's positive attitude and commitment to her role. She is currently working towards a recognised quality assurance award and is planning to commence a Level 3 childcare qualification in January 2008. She has attended numerous training courses, including child protection, first aid, 'Birth to three matters' and the 'Early years foundation stage' curriculum. She uses her increased knowledge and experience well, to develop her child care practice. As a result, children thoroughly enjoy their time with her and they benefit from rich and rewarding experiences.

Comprehensive documentation systems have been set up in line with the National Standards. Most records are effectively maintained. Formal contracts and agreements have been drafted with parents and carers and a good range of policy statements are well used to keep them informed of practices and routines within the setting. Children's files contain photographic evidence and samples of their work. This also helps to keep parents and carers informed of children's activities, progress and achievements.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of recommendations raised at last inspection, the childminder has improved her recording systems by ensuring children's surnames are recorded on all their records and by

obtain written parental consents for transporting children in vehicles. This enhances children's care and welfare.

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

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve the accident log by clearly recording when no treatment has been administered
- devise and maintain a record to verify when emergency evacuation drills are practised.

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