

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	209060
Inspection date	12 March 2008
Inspector	Gill Ogden
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 1991. She lives with her husband and adult daughter in Cranwell, Lincolnshire. Childminding mainly takes place on the ground floor of the home with one bedroom on the first floor used for children to sleep and/or for overnight care. There is a fully enclosed garden suitable for outdoor play. Amenities such as a park, pre-school and shops are within walking distance. The family pets include a dog and rabbit.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time and all of these may be aged under five years when she is working with an assistant. She holds a relevant early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a home where close attention is paid to their health needs. Regular cleaning routines ensure a good standard of hygiene is maintained. Shoes are not worn in the areas used by the children which ensures that no dirt is brought in from outdoors and this is

especially beneficial to babies and toddlers who may spend a lot of their time on the floor. Children are well-supported to learn good personal hygiene routines. For example, the toilet leads directly off the main playroom so children are able to use it easily from an early age. Potties are not used for toilet training but a child seat is fixed on the toilet. As a result they develop an early understanding of the routine for using the toilet including flushing and hand washing. As they get older children understand from discussions the dangers to their health if they do not follow these routines. Parents are clearly informed that children who have contagious illnesses cannot attend because this would be detrimental to the good health of others.

Children have good opportunities to get plenty of fresh air and exercise because the childminder considers this to be a priority. They spend time outdoors each day. This may be visiting the park, going for walks or playing in the garden. There is a host of outdoor play equipment to help children develop strong bodies and good co-ordination. Arrangements for children's naps and rests ensure they are safe and comfortable and are in line with parents' wishes. Young children's emotional health is well-supported through appropriate hugs and cuddles.

Children's dietary needs are met well because, for the most part, parents provide food for them. This can include meat and vegetables which are cooked freshly in the childminder's home. The childminder provides occasional light meals for the children, such as beans on toast, and snacks. Children sometimes prepare food as an activity and then go on to eat it. This may include pizza, fruit salad or biscuits. Any special dietary needs are considered vigilantly. Children are encouraged to have plenty of drinks, especially in hot weather, and fresh drinking water is always available for them. A recent environmental health visit indicated that systems in place for the preparation of food are good.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a home that is safe, secure and well-maintained. All exits are kept locked with keys nearby so that the home can easily be evacuated in the event of an emergency. The garden is only used when the childminder considers it to be fully secure, so at the moment it is not being used because a fence panel blew down in high winds. Children are well-protected from potential hazards generally. For example, safety equipment such as socket covers, a safety gate, smoke alarms and a fire blanket are in place and kept in good working order. Children do not have access to the kitchen at all so are prevented from coming into contact with items such as sharp knives and cleaning materials. All the toys and play resources are in good condition and suitable for the use of the children being cared for. They are checked each day as they are used and if any are found to be damaged they are immediately removed. Baby toys are cleaned thoroughly each week. Child sized furniture is provided for the children such as strong wooden tables and chairs which they use to do table top activities or eat their meals.

Children gradually learn to keep themselves safe as a result of the childminder's routines and activities. For example, they learn about road safety when they go out for walks; how to behave safely at the seaside when they go on a trip; what to do in the event of a fire by taking part in drills; to move carefully around the home and to undertake some basic first aid during a holiday topic.

Children are further safeguarded well because the childminder has a solid understanding of her child protection responsibilities and makes sure that parents know about these as well. The childminder is fully up-to-date with current local procedures as a result of attending recent training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled with the childminder. They have warm and caring relationships with her and her family. For example, toddlers clamber confidently on her husband and lean comfortably against him when he is sitting on the floor with them and when her adult daughter is around children enjoy doing cookery activities with her. Children enjoy a wide range of activities that support their development, learning and leisure needs. Babies and toddlers have plenty of safe, clean space to explore their environment and test out the world around them. They enjoy scrabbling in a large toy box to find items that interest them such as bricks and toys that make noises. They are engrossed by toys such as telephones and love taking them to adults when they ring to have a conversation. Toddlers chuckle gleefully when they have a cuddle with the childminder and enjoy their hands being tickled. They happily potter around the room exploring and watching what is going on around them, have good eye contact with all adults present and respond with smiles and utterances when they are spoken to.

Young children's activities are planned around their care routines so they generally enjoy free play activities, singing and messy play in the mornings and have a quieter time in the afternoon which includes rest or sleep time. After school, older children do activities according to their energy levels and their parents' wishes. This might be playing in the garden, doing homework or watching a video. School holiday times are more carefully planned for. Children go out most days on visits to such places as Twin Lakes, the seaside, Chester Zoo, Rutland Water and the Eureka museum.

The childminder is aware of the incoming Early Years Foundation Stage and has attended training in order to begin to prepare for it.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are made welcome in the childminder's home. She gathers information from parents that contributes towards their individual needs being met and she builds on this with the knowledge she gains of them through their care. Children's own backgrounds and cultures are valued and respected. Activities such as introducing all children to the differing languages spoken by those being cared for enables children to learn about and celebrate differences between them. A variety of festivals are celebrated with sensitivity towards those who cannot always take part because of their own cultural demands. Children gain a sense of belonging in their local community through getting out and about regularly and attending the local toddler groups. As a result of all this, children develop a sense of self-worth. A good range of resources, such as books and play people, help children develop an understanding of the wider world on an everyday basis.

Children behave well because they are set a good example by the childminder. They learn good manners and are supported to develop self-discipline so that they will be accepted everywhere. Clear house rules, realistic boundaries and keeping children well-occupied ensures that poor behaviour is minimised effectively.

Parents are very happy with the care their children receive. They comment on the childminder's kindness, reliability and consistency. Some are particularly pleased that their children have settled in so well when they have had difficulties being cared for elsewhere. Parents receive some useful written information to take home and they also read the childminder's portfolio

so they are fully informed about the service offered. Verbal information is shared regularly between parents and the childminder. However, parents do not always give the childminder sufficient information initially to ensure that she can fully provide for children's individual needs immediately.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder's knowledge, experience and commitment to her work has a beneficial impact on the children's welfare. She is fully aware of the legislative requirements of being a childminder and has kept up-to-date with the required training. She attends additional training in line with the needs of the children she currently cares for and to prepare herself for any changes in the world of childminding.

The home is very well organised for childminding purposes. Children are mainly cared for in three interlinking rooms with an adjacent toilet. Here, they are able to access toys and play resources and take part in all their activities. In good weather patio doors are opened onto the garden so that children can move freely between the indoor and outdoor environment. Furniture is rearranged when older children are present so that safe play space is maintained for babies and toddlers. The childminder organises her time well to take into account school runs, meals and rest times. The childminder's husband works as her assistant most of the time, even if numbers do not require it, so children have plenty of attention and supervision.

All the necessary records are in place, kept accurately and stored securely. Additional documentation helps to give a clear picture of the service offered. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of the recommendation made at the last inspection children's independence is now supported effectively because they have free access to all toys and play resources.

Complaints since the last inspection

On 15 December 2006 Ofsted received concerns about the suitability of the childminder and her assistant to provide care for children. These concerns related to National Standards 1: Suitable person, 6: Safety and 13: Child protection. The concerns also raised issues about the safety of children in the care of the childminder, so on 18 December 2006, a suspension notice was served for a six week period. Whilst the childminder was suspended Ofsted continued their investigations with social services. On 27 January 2007, the suspension of the childminder was lifted as the information we had gained eliminated any concerns with regards to the safety of children in the childminder's care. We requested that the childminder and her assistant completed a health declaration booklet, and following this we received no concerns about their medical suitability to care for children. As a result of our investigations we were satisfied that the childminder continues to meet the National Standards and that no further action should be taken. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- ensure parents provide full information about their children at the commencement of their care to enable their individual needs to be met immediately.

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