

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	124853
Inspection date	28 March 2008
Inspector	Deborah Jaqueline Newbury
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 has been registered to care for children since 1996. She lives with her husband and their two children aged 16 and 18 years. The family live in a residential area of Croydon in Surrey. The home is within walking distance of local shops, parks and schools.

Childminding takes place on the ground floor of the property only. Toilet and sleep facilities are provided in this area. There is an enclosed back garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children under eight years of age. She is currently minding five children whose ages range from two to five years of age. Children attend on a part-time basis only, with days and times varying.

The childminder takes children to local schools and accompanies younger children to toddler groups. The family has a pet parakeet.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about good hygiene practices as part of their usual routine. They are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times; such as before and after eating. The childminder implements mostly suitable procedures to minimise cross infection. For instance, she does not care for children if they are suffering from a contagious illness and wears disposable gloves when changing children's nappies. She often cleans children's hands and faces using wipes although does not provide children with their own individual towels to fully prevent the potential for the spread of infection. Appropriate measures are in place to ensure the family pet does not pose a health or safety risk to children. The childminder is willing to administer medication with written parental consent although the system she uses to record details of any medicines given is not sufficiently well developed.

The provision of food is agreed between the childminder and children's parents. The childminder is aware of the importance of ensuring she is aware of children's dietary needs and any allergies they may have. She aims to provide a balanced diet that includes fruit and vegetables. Parents are informed informally about what their children have eaten during the day. Children remain sufficiently hydrated as they drink regularly; they are encouraged to choose what they would like to drink from a small selection of options.

Children sleep according to their individual need and their parents' wishes. Children either sleep in travel cots or else rest on the sofas in the lounge; they sometimes doze off there if they are feeling tired. Children are encouraged to have a period of relaxation after lunch. They benefit from opportunities to enjoy physical activity and fresh air. The childminder walks children to school each day and she takes them to the park. They are able to play outside in the garden and they are encouraged to join in with dance and exercise programmes shown on a children's television channel.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a generally safe and secure environment. The childminder takes appropriate steps to minimise most areas of potential risk to children. For instance, she prevents children's independent access to some areas of the home by using stair gates and ensuring doors remain closed. She supervises children carefully. However, at the time of inspection there were two broken fence panels and an unprotected drain in the garden and the fire blanket was not appropriately fitted in the kitchen. Smoke alarms are in place on both floors of the home and the childminder sets these off to develop children's awareness of the noise they make. She talks to older children about what they need to do if the smoke alarm goes off and she has practised evacuating the premises with children in the past, although not recently. Children learn how to keep themselves safe with the support of the minder; she teaches them how to cross roads safely and talks to them about potential dangers they may encounter. The childminder makes sure children stay close by her when they are out and about and she undertakes informal risk assessments; for instance, when visiting the park, she ensures the environment is safe and there is no-one hanging around and she checks that the equipment children wish to go on is safe.

The childminder has a satisfactory understanding of child protection issues and has recently updated her knowledge by attending a Level One Safeguarding children course. She has access to appropriate reference materials to guide her in the action she should take if she has any concerns and understands the importance of maintaining a record of any existing injuries children may arrive with. She informs parents of her responsibility with regard to child protection through informal discussion at the start of their children's placement with her.

Children play with an adequate range of resources that are suitable for their age and stage of development. These are checked regularly to ensure they are safe for them to use and do not contain any broken pieces which may be harmful.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy; they get on well with the childminder and enjoy one another's company. There is lots of laughter and giggling. Children enjoy playing with the toy cars and trains. They benefit from the childminder's active involvement in their play as she sits on the floor alongside them and joins in. She asks questions and makes suggestions. For instance, when children announce they are going to have a party, she suggests they get the toy cups and plates out and give them a wash in preparation for the party. Children enjoy helping to do this; they sit on the floor and wash everything in warm, soapy water. They notice the bubbles and delight in playing with these. The childminder encourages children to count the number of steps as they come downstairs and to join in with her as she sings songs and rhymes. This helps children practise their developing counting and language skills. Children develop their social skills through attendance of toddler groups. They have many opportunities to enjoy art and craft activities such as painting, drawing and making and playing with playdough and they use a nice selection of items. Such activities enable them to use their imaginations and explore creativity. Children gain familiarity with their local community as they visit the library and park, and go to feed the ducks, weather permitting.

Children play with age appropriate toys and play materials. Overall, the range available is fairly small, although it is adequate for the number of children present and the period of time they are present; it satisfies children's individual preferences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder displays some useful information, such as her registration and public liability insurance certificates in the hallway of her home where they can be easily seen by parents. She has put together some written information about some aspects of her childminding service in the form of a childminding portfolio which she shares with parents at the start of any placement. All other information is shared on an informal basis as are daily discussions about how children spend their time. Written consent is obtained for some aspects of children's care although not for everything and it is not in place for all the children currently in her care. Parents and childminder enter into a written agreement but the forms that the childminder is using for this purpose refer to the local authority as having responsibility for inspection and quality. This information is incorrect and may potentially be misleading. Letters from past and present parents, which were available for viewing at the inspection, are positive about the childminder and the care children receive.

The childminder supports children's developing awareness of acceptable ways to behave by encouraging them to share and take turns. She talks to them about not jumping on toys and encourages them to help her to tidy away the toys in preparation for lunch. A poster in pictorial format is displayed in the entrance hall outlining her house rules. Children's self-esteem is fostered through the childminder's use of praise.

Children are treated with equal concern. They have access to some resources within the home that reflect positive images to support their growing awareness of the wider world in which we live and the childminder is willing to take children to church or to visit a local mosque at the request of their parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children from whom she provides. Children develop confidence in their surroundings as they are permitted to move freely around those areas used for minding.

Required documentation is in place although there are some gaps in the systems used by the childminder to maintain records that promote the health, safety and welfare of children and the childminder's previous accident book was not available for inspection.

The childminder has a positive attitude to professional development; she has attended several courses since her last inspection and is currently working towards an NVQ Level 3 in Childcare.

Improvements since the last inspection

A mixture of Actions and Recommendations were made at the childminder's last inspection.

Actions relating to the completion of an appropriate first aid course, the removal of potential hazards in the bathroom and a bedroom and the improvement of some aspects of documentation were imposed. The childminder now has a valid first aid certificate in place, which means she is able to respond appropriately in the event of a child sustaining a minor injury whilst in her care. She maintains a register of children's attendance, although this lacks clarity and a recommendation to improve this further has been made following this inspection. Potential hazards identified at the last inspection have been made safe and the childminder has put in place a system to record any incident of physical restraint.

Recommendations necessitated ensuring the cleanliness of all toys and equipment, the provision of sufficient and suitable furniture and equipment to meet the needs of children present, the development of a procedure to inform parents about the procedure they should follow if they have a complaint and the maintenance of a complaints record.

Toys and equipment are maintained in a clean state and the childminder has acquired furniture and equipment to meet the needs of the children currently in her care. Parents are provided with a copy of the childminder's written complaints procedure although this does not include any information about the time-scale in which they can expect the childminder to respond to any concern they have, where this relates to a National Standard and is made in writing. This may mean that parents are not sufficiently well informed overall. This issue has been carried forward for further attention following this inspection. The childminder has put in place a system to record any complaints she receives.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- assess the risks to children in respect of the broken fence panels and unprotected drain and take steps to minimise these. Ensure the fire blanket is correctly mounted in the kitchen
- ensure parents are sufficiently well informed of the procedure they should take should they wish to make a complaint, where this relates to a National Standard and the way they can expect this to be dealt with and in what time-scale
- ensure written parental consent for all aspects of children's care is in place, including consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment and to take children on public transport
- ensure all records relating to childminding activities are complete and available for inspection; in particular improve systems for recording children's attendance and details of any medication administered to ensure greater clarity.

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