

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	161714
Inspection date	27 November 2007
Inspector	Julie Neal
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 January 2001. She lives with her husband and two children aged nine and four years. The family live in a residential area of Beacon Heath, Exeter, a short walk from local schools and facilities. Childcare mainly takes place on the ground floor of the childminder's home, with upstairs mainly being used to provide space to sleep, if needed. There is an enclosed garden for children's use. The childminder is registered to care for five children under eight years of age. Overnight care is not provided. There are currently five children on roll.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained home where the childminder has good routines in place to support children's health and wellbeing. She is very well informed regarding children's individual health requirements and acts accordingly to ensure these are supported. For instance, adjusting her routines with regard to nappy changing where there are concerns regarding allergies to latex gloves and plastic changing mats, while still demonstrating extremely

good hygiene practice. Children learn well about personal hygiene and have a good understanding of why it is necessary to wash their hands before meals and snack. The childminder provides children with clean towels daily, however they share these, presenting a possible risk of cross infection. Children's health is supported by the clear sickness policy, that the childminder shares with parents. Records of any medicines administered, and of any accidents to children, are clear and well written. Accident records are shown to parents, however on occasion these are not countersigned to confirm they have been seen.

Children enjoy very good access to the health benefits of fresh air and physical exercise. They play outside in the childminder's garden, manoeuvring bikes and cars confidently and with control. They have frequent opportunities to run, climb, and use large apparatus to stretch their muscles, on regular visits to local playgrounds and country parks. Exercise is promoted well as part of daily routines, for example, the childminder walks with younger children to collect older ones from school each day.

Children enjoy meal and snack times. The childminder provides children with healthy snacks consisting of a good mixture of fresh and dried fruits, encouraging them to try new tastes and textures. Children help themselves to drinks as needed from their individual cups and bottles, that the childminder ensures are refreshed regularly and easily accessible to them. Children either bring packed lunches or have a cooked meal, according to parents' preferences. The childminder discusses the importance of a healthy diet with parents, and encourages them to support her promotion of nutritious food with children when packing their lunchboxes. Meals provided by the childminder are very well balanced and include plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and child friendly environment. Space and resources are extremely well organised to meet the care needs of children and to create a stimulating play environment. Children particularly benefit from the bright and cheerful playroom, where an excellent variety of toys are invitingly arranged to be easily accessible in play. Children are safe and secure because the childminder conducts very good risk assessments of all areas of her home and garden and takes prompt and effective action where she identifies potential hazards. For example, she adds foam inserts to the lids of toy-boxes to ensure children are not at risk of trapping fingers as they help themselves to toys. All equipment is regularly checked to ensure it is safe for children to use. Children learn to conduct themselves safely because the childminder teaches them well. For example, emergency evacuation procedures are practised monthly in order that children are familiar with the routines to keep safe in the event of a fire; daily walks are used well to teach children about road safety and how to cross the road without risk. Children's safety is further enhanced by the childminder's very good awareness of child protection issues and her thorough understanding of the procedures to follow if she has concerns about the risk of abuse or neglect, in order to safeguard the children in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy themselves immensely as they play, enthusiastically engaging in a very good variety of activities. The childminder has an extremely good understanding of children's development and of how they learn through play, and uses this most effectively as she organises

activities and resources. She monitors individual children's progress very well as they grow and develop, and plans activities that provide high levels of individual challenge. Children have a dynamic and meaningful involvement in organising what they do, for example, planning ahead with the childminder for activities to take part in during the school holidays, and contributing to everyday routines such as menu planning.

Children have an excellent balance of planned activities and free play, and enjoy interesting trips and excursions. For example, children enthusiastically show pictures of a recent outing to a pony centre, they explore the nearby countryside and visit local attractions and country parks, and regularly visit the library to research projects and topics. Children benefit from good opportunities to mix with a larger social group through regular visits to local toddler groups. Art and craft projects are particularly well organised, providing children of all ages with excellent opportunities to use a wide range of media and materials as they express themselves creatively. For example, children use paints, glue, glitter, a variety of cards and fabrics, as they make Christmas cards, decorations, and calendars.

Children eagerly explore toys and activities and quickly become absorbed in play. For example, they use the excellent range of 'home corner' resources to make cups of tea and cook meals, talking to the childminder and each other about what they are doing, discussing what food goes well together and things they like to eat. They thoroughly enjoy singing and using musical instruments, for instance, enthusiastically beating drums to accompany themselves and marching in time. The childminder makes excellent use of opportunities to extend children's knowledge and skills through play. For example, talking to a very young child about the colours being used in a picture, encouraging the child to identify these and to describe what has been drawn; asking children 'how many' cups they need when they are making tea and encouraging them to calculate 'how many more' if they include everyone in the house such as resting children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy and content because their individual needs are met very well. Their self esteem is promoted extremely effectively, which is demonstrated in the relaxed and affectionate relationships children develop with the childminder and her family. For example, children who are tired happily cuddle up to the childminder as they settle down for a nap. The childminder is very inclusive, showing respect and concern for individual children and families. For example, meeting particular health requirements, and ensuring the specific care needs of babies and very young children are consistent with home routines. Different family cultures and traditions are respected and the childminder encourages children to learn from each other, developing their awareness of diversity in a very real and meaningful way. For instance, exploring each others different traditions surrounding Christmas and other seasonal and cultural festivals.

Children's behaviour is excellent. They interact confidently and happily with each other and the childminder. They show a very good awareness of ground rules, for instance, they know they must share and take turns. Where children disagree, the childminder involves them very well in resolving the problem, encouraging them to develop an understanding of personal responsibility. They enjoy being helpful, for example, older children help the childminder to wash some toys, and all children help to tidy up without complaint. The childminder is consistently positive, with children being given high levels of ongoing praise and encouragement, which promotes their self esteem and supports their very good behaviour.

The childminder develops an excellent relationship with parents and works closely with them to meet individual children's needs. They are provided with comprehensive information about all aspects of the provision, including the policies and procedures that underpin the care of children. The childminder gains very thorough information from parents about the individual needs of children, and provides extremely good daily feedback to them about their children's activities, routines, and achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides care. Space and resources are organised very well to support the play and care needs of children. The childminder evaluates her own practice well and ensures she regularly updates and develops her skills through training. For example, she has attended courses in developing observation and assessment of children, in child protection, and has attending training in use of the Birth to three matters framework. She has immediately implemented new skills and knowledge in order to benefit children, for example, in the very effective way she monitors individual children's progress and development, and plans activities to provide challenge for individual children.

Documentation that supports the care and wellbeing of children is well maintained overall. Registers clearly show the arrival and departure times of children, and that ratios are maintained. Information regarding the care of individual children is comprehensive and written consents are provided where appropriate, for example, to seek emergency medical treatment in an emergency, and to travel in the childminder's car. Reports of any accidents to children clearly and comprehensively record what occurred and what intervention was required. However, the system used to record accidents does not have a specific space for parental signatures, which occasionally results in records not being countersigned to confirm that parents have been informed.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, it was agreed that the childminder would practise the emergency plan with children. The childminder now has regular fire drills with children, ensuring they learn how to keep themselves safe in the event of a fire.

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 National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents that 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 children do not share towels, in order to prevent possible cross infection when washing.
- ensure parents countersign records of any accidents to children, in order to confirm they have been informed.

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