

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY271770
Inspection date	21 February 2008
Inspector	Mary Van De Peer

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 was registered in October 2003. She lives with her husband and two school-age children in the Allington area of Maidstone, Kent. The ground floor and first floor of the premises are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time and is currently minding four children. She also cares for children over eight years. Schools, pre-school, toddler group, shop and park are nearby. The childminder is able to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association. She also receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder's home is clean and well kept. A downstairs bathroom allows children to become independent in personal care. Children wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating, the older ones generally remember to do this without prompting. The childminder has an accident and medication record book but there are no entries. A sickness policy is discussed

with all parents and the childminder explains what happens if a child is unwell. The spread of infectious illnesses is minimised. The childminder has attended a recognised paediatric first aid course and has a first aid kit in the home. She is able to treat children's minor injuries effectively. Children are able to play in the garden all year round. The childminder also takes the children out for local walks and visits to parks. They get plenty of fresh air and exercise. The children are able to use their imagination in much of their play. They devise games between them and use creative play materials for their own designs. Children request that their snacks consist of crisps, sweets, fruit and squash to drink. Meals vary from pasta and vegetables to chicken nuggets and chips. The food provided is not always consistently healthy. Children are able to have a drink of water whenever they wish.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a spacious home where risks are identified and minimised. Children are able to move around freely and independently. Their safety off the premises is also given good attention. The childminder has various procedures in place covering vehicle travel, as well as when out walking. Children learn about keeping themselves safe. The childminder is clear about her safeguarding and child protection procedures and she shares these with parents. She also ensures she has the correct information for the safe collection of children, they can only be picked up by persons known to the childminder. The equipment and toys available are checked regularly for suitability and appropriateness for the age range of the children. The childminder has an emergency evacuation procedure, which she discusses with children. Fire safety equipment is in place, for example inter-connecting smoke alarms and a fire blanket. These preventative measures are helping to ensure that children's well-being is safeguarded and given good priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children really enjoy their time with the childminder. They have made themselves at home. They make good use of the resources and activities made available to them. The children get on very well together and negotiate what they want to do as a group. They have a very good relationship with the childminder and discuss any plans they have. For example, where they want to visit. Many trips are made on public transport as the children think this is a much more fun way to travel. Children's independence is promoted well as they are able to choose what they want to play with and help with preparing their snack. The childminder has a good understanding of the needs of younger children. She provides activities such as story telling and creative play to promote younger children's learning. All the children smile, laugh and interact well with her.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All the children are valued and respected as individuals and the childminder ensures she has the information to meet their needs. The younger children play alongside older ones very well. Children are aware of the childminder's house rules. Appropriate behaviour management strategies are in place and the children behave well. The childminder has discussed her behaviour management procedures with parents. Children's behaviour is very good. They make themselves at home, deciding what they want to do and helping themselves independently to resources.

There is time for the children to relax as well as be active. They communicate very well with each other and with the childminder. Although the childminder has not looked after children with special needs, she has a positive attitude about the care they would require. Parents receive relevant information via a service statement and policies. They are also able to share their knowledge about their child. The childminder has built up good working relationships with parents. They discuss the children at the end of each day. Children benefit from the continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children's welfare is important to the childminder. She ensures younger children are well supervised at all times. The childminder has attended workshops and training to enhance her child care knowledge and practices. She holds a current paediatric first aid certificate. The Ofsted registration certificate is displayed for parents and visitors to see. All adults in the household have been appropriately vetted. The childminder has acceptable levels of paperwork completed on each child. An attendance register is completed daily and any relevant paperwork is shared with parents. Complaints information is provided for parents to view on request. Written permission, emergency medical treatment for example, is also obtained. These procedures help ensure children receive consistent care that meets their individual needs. A contact book is used for the younger children being minded, and feedback regarding older children is done verbally. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The childminder received an action regarding her having effective procedures in place for checking that any assistant is suitable to work with children. The childminder has a procedure in place which means she will obtain written permission from parents to use an assistant as well as provide all relevant information to Ofsted.

There were also five recommendations arising from a previous inspection. The first one was for the childminder to ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand-washing by the provision of individual towels. She has now provided individual cloth towels for each child which are washed daily. Therefore the risk of cross contamination and infection is reduced.

A second one was to ensure that all records relating to children are readily accessible and organised confidentially. The childminder has a folder containing her childminding information, each child has their own file. These records are readily accessible.

A third recommendation was to ensure that the register of attendance is completed at the time of arrival and departure. A register is now kept and accurately records children's arrival and departure times.

A fourth one was to make available to parents written information and policies about the service provided. These should include procedures for complaints, equal opportunities, special needs, child protection and behaviour management. Written policies and procedures are not legally required to be provided by childminders. However, the childminder has written a Service Statement and several procedures which parents are able to read. Parents are kept informed about the care their children receive.

The final recommendation was for the childminder to obtain written permission from parents for transporting children in a vehicle and for playing alone outside. Although the childminding states that she rarely uses her car for the children, she now has written permission from parent to do so. Older children can play outside the childminder's home, but they are usually with other children and the childminder can always see them. Parents have provided written permission where this is necessary. Children are kept safe.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

Ofsted received a complaint relating to National Standard 1 – Suitable Person and National Standard 2 – Organisation. Concerns were raised regarding over minding and the suitability of a visitor to the premises. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit to the childminder and raised an action under National Standard 1 – Suitable Person. A satisfactory response to the action was received and Ofsted took no further action. The childminder 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 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):

- ensure all accidents and medication administered is recorded and parents sign each entry
- consider providing more healthy snacks and meals for 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