

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY289090
Inspection date	08 October 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 2004. She lives with her husband and their child, aged five years, in a house in Consett. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding. Toilet and hand washing facilities are on the first floor. Minded children do not access any other first floor rooms. A yard, 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, a library and leisure facilities.

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

The family has three pet dogs, 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.

The childminder uses effective home hygiene practices that ensure premises and equipment are clean, which contribute towards children's good health. She discusses children's individual health requirements with parents and carers to ensure issues are thoroughly addressed. There are good plans for attending to children who take ill, whilst in her care and for excluding children who have a contagious disease. The childminder has completed relevant first aid training, which enables her to manage children's minor accidents competently. The accident record and medication record are maintained in line with the National Standards and information shared appropriately with parents and carers.

Children are learning the importance of good personal hygiene in keeping themselves healthy, for example, as they wash their hands after toileting or before they eat. However, they do not use individual towels, to minimise the risk of cross-contamination. Suitable nappy changing arrangements are practised, although the childminder does not use disposable gloves to protect children from cross infection. Nevertheless, children benefit from good regular activities that enhance their health and well-being. For example, they enjoy daily walks and regular outings, such as going to the park, toddler group, or local leisure centre. As a result, they enjoy regular fresh air and have good opportunities to develop their physical skills and coordination.

Children's dietary requirements are well met. There are good arrangements in place to fully discuss issues with parents and to ensure children receive regular drinks and a broad range of healthy meals or snacks suited to their individual dietary needs. The childminder sits with the children at mealtimes, promoting self help, whilst supporting them well. As a result, young children are learning to feed themselves. All children are learning to make healthy choices, socialise with one another and use good table manners.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a warm, welcoming environment which is well organised to meet their needs. They use the comfortable family lounge and the dining area for indoor activities. These are well set out to provide a spacious and stimulating play environment. Premises are equipped with a broad range of toys and resources, which are stored accessibly to promote children's freedom of choice and independence. All resources and equipment are regularly checked and maintained in a clean, safe condition. Occasional use is made of the yard, although the childminder also takes children to the nearby park for energetic outdoor play.

Children's safety is given careful consideration. The childminder ensures children are closely supervised and she takes good steps to minimise potential hazards, indoors and out. For example, hazardous materials, glassware and sharp knives are stored out of children's reach. Safety equipment, such as socket covers and safety gates, are in place. Children are very well protected regarding fire safety. Smoke detectors are maintained on both floors and a fire blanket and an extinguisher are stored in the kitchen. A formal evacuation procedure has been identified and is frequently practised with children, so they know what to do in an emergency. Children are also learning other methods for keeping themselves safe. For example, they are learning to tidy resources away regularly so they do not trip over them and they are encouraged to walk carefully whilst going up or down the stairs. They are also learning good road safety practices

when they are walking out of doors, such as how to use the pelican crossing safely. The childminder discusses and agrees outing arrangements with parents, although there are no formal consents drafted regarding outings and transportation.

Children's welfare is effectively prioritised regarding matters of child protection. The childminder has completed relevant training and is knowledgeable of the signs and symptoms of abuse. She has sound plans in place to ensure children's existing injuries are fully recorded and that she complies with the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's care plans are thoroughly discussed and agreed with parents and carers, at the initial visit and on a daily basis, in order that their individual needs are continually well met. Daily routines are effectively planned in line with school and nursery runs, regular outings and children's routines. Activities take account of children's interests and preferences, as well as giving children good opportunities to play individually or to enjoy group activities, such as going to toddler groups, the library, the leisure centre or the park. Children are increasing their emotional capabilities as they have good opportunities to interact positively with others. As a result, they are developing good social skills and forming relationships with peers and other adults, under the close supervision of the childminder.

The childminder ensures that daily activities are interesting and varied, so they stimulate the children and extend their learning well. They are developing good imaginative skills, for example, as they use small world resources as they pretend to make lunch. They enjoy art and craft activities, which promote their creativity well. They are developing fine motor skills, for example, as they manipulate puzzle pieces into jigsaws. The childminder encourages them and allows them to develop at their own pace, yet offers help and support when required. She praises them for their efforts, which helps children to take pride in their achievements. Children are learning mathematical skills through good activities, such as action rhymes that teach them about number and shape, or as they count the stairs as they go to the bathroom. They are also developing a good appreciation for the written word through handling books independently or listening to stories. The childminder ensures children are effectively challenged across all areas of their development. She asks the children questions and responds to their questions to support and extend their learning effectively.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and their families are treated with equal respect and concern. The childminder includes effective practices in her routines to discuss and agree children's individual needs, in order to ensure children's continuity of care. Children's gender issues are promoted very well, through free choice of equipment. Children are also learning about differing abilities, diversity and the wider world as they access relevant resources or take part in multicultural activities at the local library. Regular outings to toddler group, the park, the leisure centre and the library, help children to develop a sound sense of community. They also have good opportunities to contribute towards decisions, such as talking about meals, activities and outings. The childminder takes time to listen to them and respect their thoughts and opinions. Children are given good encouragement and support, so all can be fully included.

The childminder uses positive behaviour management practices, well suited to children's levels of understanding and maturity. For example, children are closely supervised, realistic boundaries are set and sensitively reinforced and the childminder uses appropriate speech and clear explanations so children know what is expected of them. As a result, they are well behaved and show good care and concern for each other.

The childminder values good working relationships with parents and carers. Introductory visits are well used to share information about children's usual routines and the childminder's practices and procedures. This helps the children to settle in comfortably and assists the childminder in ensuring their continuity of care. Formal policy statements are well used to share relevant information consistently. Contracts and most agreements are effectively maintained. The childminder uses informal verbal updates to discuss daily issues, as well as using children's diaries and development books to continually update parents and carers about children learning and progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from regular, but flexible, routines and a well organised environment. As a result, they are happy and settled with the childminder. All children are closely supervised and effectively supported. They enjoy good learning opportunities, including adult-led activities and occasions when they are able to initiate and extend their own play and learning and to develop at their own pace. As a result, they are learning new skills and developing well.

Comprehensive documentation systems are well organised and effectively used to record relevant information and to share information thoroughly with parents. For example, formal policy statements, contracts and children's personal records ensure information is consistently shared, whilst identifying the effective practices that support children's care and well-being. Most written agreements have been drafted. In addition, the childminder demonstrates a positive attitude and strong commitment to her role. She has completed a recognised childcare qualification, as well as having attended other relevant training courses, such as child protection and first aid. She uses her knowledge and skills effectively to improve her childminding practice.

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 the last inspection, the childminder agreed to devise and implement policies and procedures to support the service being offered. She has therefore drafted a number of policy statements, which she uses to share information consistently with parents and carers, regarding children's care, learning 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

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):

- improve children's hand drying arrangements and nappy changing procedures to minimise the risk of cross-contamination
- improve safety arrangements by maintaining outings and transportation agreements with parents and carers.

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