

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	257245
Inspection date	10 December 2007
Inspector	Rachel Wyatt
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 two adult daughters in Dudley, West Midlands within walking distance of local shops and parks. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding eight children on a part-time basis. The childminder walks to a local school and nursery to take and collect children. The childminder attends local toddler groups. The family has a dog and rabbit.

The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. She is a member of the National Childminding Association, the local childminding network and a local childminder support group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are looked after in a clean and most comfortable home. The childminder creates a relaxed welcoming atmosphere and areas used for childminding are clean and suitable for children, due to the childminder cleaning equipment and surfaces throughout the day. This includes ensuring any outdoor areas used by her dog are thoroughly cleaned before children use them.

From an early age, children develop a sound understanding of matters affecting their health and well-being. Children confidently visit the child-friendly toilet area. The childminder ensures they know how to wash their hands properly, including younger children who routinely wash their hands after nappy changes or before eating. Toilet training is introduced after discussions with parents and when children are ready. During activities and discussions, children learn about features of a healthy lifestyle. They visit the dentist, take part in topics about healthy eating, and enjoy regular physical play and exercise. Children become increasingly competent at getting dressed in readiness for outside activities, the childminder ensuring they wear appropriate clothing and are protected from the sun.

Children's well-being is promoted because their health and dietary needs, and their parents' wishes regarding all aspects of their care, are clearly documented and understood by the childminder. Her robust procedures regarding medication and for dealing with any accidents or illness ensure children receive prompt appropriate treatment and that the risks of cross-infection are minimised. Parents are kept well-informed of any issues relating to their children's health whilst in her care.

Children are well-nourished and have regular suitable drinks because the childminder clearly understands the importance of a healthy diet. She works closely with parents to ensure children are provided with suitable feeds, plus snacks and meals which include healthy options such as fruit, vegetables and salad items. As a result of her recent attendance at training and good practice sessions, the childminder is monitoring ingredients to ensure she is providing children with a balanced diet. Children are protected from the risks of cross-infection during food preparation and storage as the childminder's arrangements reflect food safety requirements. Children confidently discuss healthy eating, for example, when making drinks from different fruits. Posters of healthy foods are displayed where children have their meals and during activities they find out where different items such as fruits come from. Children's independence is fostered well at meal times as they help to lay the table, and competently manage cutlery and the contents of their lunch boxes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are looked after in a most secure and safe environment. The childminder consistently monitors the suitability of her premises, toys and equipment and makes effective use of safety equipment such as socket covers, safety gates and a fire guard. Children are effectively supervised, but the childminder also ensures they are well-prepared for managing risks. Taking into account children's age and level of understanding, the childminder teaches them about different aspects of safety. During outings, such as visits to the park and walks to and from school or nursery, children develop a clear appreciation of road safety and the need to listen

and respond to the childminder's requests. Their understanding is further enhanced by carefully planned activities focusing on road safety, so that during play children become aware of the meaning of different road signs and the importance of using designated places for crossing roads.

Children use age-appropriate, good quality toys and equipment. They understand how to correctly manage physical play apparatus and tools such as scissors. They are physically very confident and competent because the childminder introduces them to different challenges such as trying out adventure play equipment in the park. During walks she ensures children make the most of spontaneous opportunities to safely practise climbing and balancing.

Children and the childminder are well-prepared for emergencies. They regularly discuss and practise emergency evacuations and the childminder sensitively prepares children for managing other situations when they might need to seek help, for example, if she was injured. Children's welfare is also provided for by the childminder's procedures relating to other incidents such as a child being lost. Parents are fully aware of the childminder's emergency plan, including her use of another registered childminder who is available to care for the children in the event of her being unable to do so.

Children are protected from harm as the childminder has a very sound understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and action to take should she have any concerns about a child. Children develop confidence in expressing their views and feelings, as the childminder creates a trusting and reassuring environment. Issues relating to their personal safety are sensitively discussed, for example, when talking about feelings or reinforcing safe behaviour when out walking or on outings. Children are also safeguarded because the childminder has robust dropping off and collection arrangements agreed with parents, and with the school and nursery children attend.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children and babies are confident, very settled and thoroughly enjoy themselves. The childminder provides them with rewarding activities and experiences. These reflect their stage of development and interests, and offer them choice, variety and suitable challenges. Children are encouraged to choose what they want to play with, and toys, games and equipment are stimulating and interesting. These include resources collected or made by the childminder, which are used effectively to support children's understanding of number and of letter shapes and sounds, and to promote their dexterity, awareness of feelings and recognition of shape, size and colour.

Children are competent learners, responding enthusiastically to the childminder's conversations and questions. They often demonstrate their confidence in recognising numbers and letters by happily and competently using games and resources by themselves. Children also benefit from the childminder's close links with the nursery attended by some of them and her involvement in a local toddler group. For example, she works with the nursery to ensure consistency in promoting children's key skills, and to build on their awareness of topics such as healthy eating. When attending the toddler group which the childminder helps to run, children access different toys and activities which extend their awareness, for instance, of aspects of other people's lives and celebrations, of disability and of road safety, and which also enhance their physical skills through using different apparatus.

All aspects of children's development are fostered very well by the childminder. Their imagination, ideas and creativity are expressed as they play with small world figures and toys, whilst dressing up and through exploring different materials such as sand, water, dough, paint and various craft resources. Children love drawing and mark-making and older children confidently recognise and form letters.

Children have very good relationships, playing well together and often assisting each other so that an older child helps a younger friend to complete a puzzle. The childminder is a positive role model. She has a very warm rapport with all children, chatting easily to them and competently supporting their understanding in practical ways through her explanations and questions, for example, about numbers, letters, colour, shape or safety issues. Children are confident and articulate speakers as the childminder encourages their conversations and discussions. She gently reinforces less able and younger children's vocabulary and speech, so that all children enjoy chatting about what they are doing and recalling important events relating to their families and other aspects of their lives. This really promotes children's confidence, as does the childminder's focus on fostering their independence in managing their personal care, eating and taking responsibility for small tasks such as laying the table or tidying away toys.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are well-cared for as the childminder seeks all relevant information in order to effectively promote their health, diet and well-being. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their needs effectively met. The childminder is confident to agree any special care, play or learning needs with parents, and to implement these in the setting. She is aware of sources of specialised toys and equipment, as well as of advice and guidance for herself and for parents. Children with communication difficulties or who speak English as an additional language have positive support because the childminder confidently uses signing and other visual aids and prompts, including some books and signs in different languages.

All children benefit from the childminder's positive attitude towards diversity. She ensures aspects of children's own background and families are reflected in her provision. They are introduced to features of other peoples' lives and roles, and to aspects of disability during meaningful activities and through using books and resources depicting positive images. For example, during Diwali, children and the childminder dress up, try different foods and make puppets to reflect the story of Rama and Sita. They make sensory toys as part of a topic focusing on visual and hearing impairments.

Children develop positive self-esteem and confidence because they make choices about what they want to play with, their interests are followed up during activities, and their efforts and achievements are readily acknowledged and praised. Children are proud of their individual 'reward' book which the childminder collates and discusses with them and their parents. Children behave well because their efforts are consistently recognised, and because the childminder has clear rules and realistic expectations which focus on promoting good relationships through sharing, taking turns, listening, following instructions, and being helpful and kind. Children demonstrate all these qualities in their interactions with each other and the childminder. Should children misbehave they understand the consequences of their actions or words as a result of the childminder's age-appropriate explanations.

Children's well-being is supported by the childminder's effective relationships with parents. From the outset families access comprehensive information about the childminder's service through discussions, visits and opportunities to look at her detailed portfolio which covers all aspects of her provision including training, policies and procedures. Basic information about the management of complaints is available to parents. However, children are not fully safeguarded in the event of their parents wishing to make a complaint as the childminder is not aware of all current requirements in order to clearly advise parents of their rights if they have a complaint. In other respects parents are regularly informed of their child's achievements, activities and routines, and they appreciate the quality of her provision for their children. The childminder keeps parents up to date with any issues affecting her childminding, for example, giving them details of new courses she has attended.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are safeguarded and their parents are reassured because the childminder ensures the ongoing suitability of herself and other household members. In particular children's care, play and learning benefit from the childminder developing her knowledge and good practice as a result of her recent attendance on many worthwhile courses and from her close links with a local nursery and the toddler group she is involved with.

Children's care is broadly supported by the childminder's documentation so that all relevant records and parental consents are in place. However, children's welfare is affected as attendance records for some children do not accurately reflect the times when they are in the childminder's care, and the confidentiality of a few records is affected as more than one child's details are retained on a page. All documents are securely stored. The childminder's commitment to developing her provision has also benefited parents who can refer to her comprehensive operational plan and portfolio. This effectively covers all aspects of her childminding, apart from minor omissions relating to parents' rights regarding the management of complaints.

Children are confident, contented and settled as the childminder ensures activities and resources are worthwhile and stimulating. She is well-organised so that sessions and routines are fun, relaxed, and run smoothly. Children know what is going to happen next, and each child benefits from the childminder's involvement in their activities and care. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to recommendations relating to emergency evacuations, obtaining parents' consents to her seeking emergency medical advice and treatment and the recording of significant issues. Children's well-being and safety are promoted as a result of improvements implemented by the childminder. Children and the childminder regularly discuss and practise emergency evacuations. In the event of a medical emergency, children receive prompt treatment as the childminder has obtained parents' consents to her seeking medical advice and treatment in such circumstances. Children's well-being is supported by the childminder's recording of any significant issues relating to their health, safety, welfare or behaviour and she ensures parents see and sign these records.

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 knowledge of requirements regarding the management and recording of complaints so that parents are made fully aware of their rights
- improve the confidentiality of some records, and the accuracy of attendance records.

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