

Inspection report for early years provision

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 403108 |
| Inspection date | 18 March 2008 |
| Inspector | Kathleen Snowdon |

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| 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 1998. She lives in Morpeth in Northumberland, with her husband and four children aged 13, 11, 4 and 10 months. Her home is close to all facilities including schools and nurseries. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed back garden for outdoor play. The family has a pet rabbit.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and she is currently minding two children under five and one child over five at staggered intervals. The childminder walks to and from local schools and nurseries to take and collect children and she attends local toddler groups. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Hearty and delicious meals, such as casseroles and shepherds pie, offer children the nourishment they need to grow and develop. Snacks include ample portions of fruit, and sandwiches with

various fillings, to encourage the development of healthy tastes and preferences while occasional treats, like crisps, enable the children to form balanced views of food and eating.

The children hear useful and discreet reminders from the childminder that help them to establish good personal hygiene. These prompt the children to wash their hands at particular times, after using the bathroom and before eating, for example. Children have individual hand towels, which are changed daily and this, along with the highly appropriate policy for sick children, minimises the spread of infection and common illnesses.

Very good opportunities are in place to keep the children active. They walk or ride bikes and scooters to and from school and nursery almost every day. Highly beneficial routines such as this ensure that the children have plenty of fresh air and keep the children fit and alert. As well as this, the children visit toddler groups, local parks and soft play facilities where they run around freely and move in different ways. This makes a valuable contribution to the children's overall good health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The excellent range of top quality and developmentally appropriate toys and resources helps the children to make progress in all areas of their development. Ongoing checks, which the children like to help carry out, ensure that items are clean and in good enough condition for them to play with safely. The children have easy access to the equipment to encourage them to make choices and decisions; this enables them to play spontaneously and resourcefully.

Very good strategies enable children to take a degree of risk and learn ways in which to keep themselves safe outdoors. For example, on bike or scooter rides, while the children must stay in the sight of the childminder, they are allowed to go so far without having her by their side. This is consolidated by the important and relevant conversations that take place between the children and the childminder, for example, when they talk about strangers and road safety. As well as this, regular fire drills teach children how to stay safe in an emergency. This highly sensible approach raises the children's awareness of how to handle danger in a range of situations.

Effective use of safety equipment reduces the risk of accidents in the childminder's very well organised and welcoming home. A fire blanket is appropriately located in the kitchen, for instance, and covers protect electric sockets. Highly practical measures, such as keeping external doors locked during the hours of childminding, protect children from unsuitable people. The childminder has sound awareness of safeguarding children issues. However, no recent training has been undertaken and this should be addressed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Relationships between the children and the childminder are excellent. The children benefit from the childminder's complete attention during the time that they spend with her; consequently, they are happy, confident and secure. They initiate scenarios, such as vacuuming the carpets, and dress up in clothes that help them to get into the role. The skilled and intuitive way in which the childminder asks them questions and talks to them as they play enables the children to use their imagination to the fullest and enriches their vocabulary.

The children are totally engaged and motivated. The exciting and interesting activities they take part in at the childminder's include sewing, making cakes and desserts, model making, singing and music. These allow the children to experiment, express their creativity and give them ample scope in which to have fun and enjoy themselves.

An excellent range of outings increases the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. They visit local farms, for example, where they can watch and stroke the animals. Similarly, they go on frequent nature rambles when they look for foliage and mini-beasts and so make first-hand observations of how nature works. Short trips in and around the local community, to the shops, for instance or for walks, increase the children's familiarity of the community in which they live. This helps the children to develop a sense of belonging and identity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children are treated with equal regard and equal consideration. They play with and look at quality resources that show vibrant images of people from other countries, people with disability and people in roles usually associated with the opposite sex. This helps the children to form positive views of diversity while celebrating festivals, such as Saint Patrick's Day, Chinese New Year and Easter, and acquaints them with their cultural heritage and that of others.

Sensitive and consistent guidance from the childminder helps the children to behave acceptably. They receive appropriate explanations about why certain actions are not acceptable and so learn to recognise right from wrong. The children are encouraged to apologise if they have caused offence and this simple, highly effective, method helps the children to develop accountability. Thinking about how their actions make other people feel fosters the growth of positive personal qualities, such as consideration and empathy.

Partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents have ready access to a full set of clear and well written policies which give them an insight into the childminder's aims and objectives. As well as this, daily discussions and daily diaries are effective in keeping both the childminder and parents fully informed of the children's recent experiences. The registration certificate is prominently displayed to allow parents to scrutinise it should they wish to, as is a poster, which tells parents how to contact Ofsted if they want to complain about or compliment the childminder.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Records are meticulous. All essential records are in place, extremely well organised and readily available for inspection. Documentation is stored securely to protect confidentiality and the childminder amends information when changes occur; records are reviewed every few months anyway as a matter of routine, and it is this attention to detail that underpins the childminder's approach to her work.

The childminder's awareness of registered numbers is excellent. She is mindful that these must never be exceeded and she is vigilant about notifying Ofsted when significant events that have an impact on her work take place. She gives due priority to further training and makes determined efforts to continue meeting children's needs effectively, for example, by making plans to complete up to date training on safeguarding children issues.

Parents hold the childminder in high regard. They describe her as 'caring, professional, flexible and trustworthy'. They are delighted at the progress their children make while they are in her care and are particularly pleased that their children feel 'happy and loved' when they are with her.

Her relationships with children are excellent. The children's welfare and happiness are of paramount importance to her and she keeps this at the heart of what she does. The childminder is an excellent role model. Through her example the children learn to respect themselves, other people and the world in which they live.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to continue updating her knowledge to enhance her very good practice. The childminder continues to provide very good quality care. This creates highly positive early experiences for young children, which enable them to form sound, subsequent relationships with others.

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):

- continue to meet children's needs effectively, for example, by completing up to date training on safeguarding children issues.

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