

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY345014
Inspection date	30 April 2008
Inspector	Deborah Jaqueline Newbury
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 2006. She lives with her husband and their three children aged eight, six and one year, in Blackwater, Hampshire. The property is close to local schools and amenities and there is a park nearby.

The ground floor of the house is mainly used for childminding, with sleeping facilities available on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time; she is currently caring for a total of five children whose ages range from two to nine years. Days and times of children's attendance varies.

The childminder walks to local schools and nurseries to take and collect children. She takes children to parks, library, childminder drop-in groups and a local carer and toddler group. Children also visit a local indoor gymnasium.

The family has three cats.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are accommodated in a comfortable home that is maintained in a clean condition. The childminder ensures that those areas used for minding remain in a suitable state throughout the day by undertaking additional cleaning as necessary; for example, by sweeping the floor after children have eaten. She takes positive measures to minimise the spread of infection and ensure good hygiene, which adds to the protection of everyone. For instance, she makes a point of informing parents of any outbreaks of illness involving her own children; thus giving them the option of deciding whether they wish to send their children or keep them at home. She supplies children with individual or paper towels to dry their hands on. Appropriate measures are implemented to ensure the family's cats do not pose a health risk to children, although their food bowls remain within easy reach of children when they are in the kitchen. Older children are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times and the childminder wipes the faces and hands of younger children, whilst talking to them about the need to do this. This approach helps them begin to understand the importance of good personal hygiene routines. The childminder maintains suitable accident records and provides parents with written details of any accident involving their children. This ensures they are well informed about any injuries their children sustain whilst in her care.

The childminder currently provides food for children and they enjoy a variety of items which have regard for healthy eating. Children also have the option of choosing some things for themselves; for instance, which type of fruit they would like to have. Children sit together at the table for mealtimes, which fosters their social skills and promotes awareness of good table manners. Younger children are encouraged to feed themselves, although the childminder willingly offers help when this is needed. Children do not become dehydrated as their water bottles remain within their easy reach and they can help themselves to these as and when they wish.

Children rest in comfortable surroundings according to their individual need and their parents' wishes. They benefit from fresh air and exercise as the childminder generally walks to and from school each day. Outings to local parks and exploring the different play apparatus available in the garden enables children to be physically active and develop control of their bodies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are able to move freely around those areas of the home used for minding as the childminder takes mostly positive steps to identify and minimise areas of potential risk. However, at the time of inspection a trailing wire in the playroom poses a possible trip hazard and the rotary washing line in the garden is easily accessible to children. Security measures are good; children cannot leave the premises unsupervised and the childminder has given some thought to the way she would manage situations should any unauthorised person come to collect children. Fire safety precautions are generally effective. There are smoke alarms on both floors of the home and a fire blanket in the kitchen. The childminder has thought about the action she would take in the event of it being necessary to evacuate the premises and has spoken to children about this. They have not, however, had the opportunity to practise this to develop their understanding further. Children learn how to keep themselves safe as they practise crossing

the road when they are out and about and the childminder uses situations that arise as part of the childminding day to draw their attention to potential dangers.

Children use appropriate equipment and play materials. Many toys are arranged to be easily accessible by the children themselves and the childminder rotates items regularly to help keep their play provision fresh and appealing. Resources are checked to ensure their ongoing safety and cleanliness.

Children are safeguarded as the childminder has a sound understanding of child protection issues and possible signs of abuse and neglect. She has recently completed a child protection awareness course to develop her knowledge further and she informs parents of her responsibility should she have any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and at ease with the childminder, who is kind and caring towards them. They form warm relationships with her and look to her for reassurance when they are a little wary; for instance, when they are in the presence of the childcare inspector, whom they do not know. Young children enjoy the freedom of pottering around, choosing where they wish to play and what they wish to play with. The childminder shows interest in what children are doing; she makes suggestions for different activities they might like to do; such as playing with the cars or getting the trains out and she sits on the floor alongside them and joins in. For instance, she helps children set up the farm set and encourages them to tell her the noises different animals make, as they place these in different locations on the play mat.

The childminder plans her day around the individual needs of the children present and their usual routines, which adds to continuity of care. Children generally go out each morning; they often attend different childminding or toddler groups where they can mix with other children and thus, develop their social skills. They have opportunities to visit the library, to go and feed the ducks and attend a local indoor gymnasium. They explore creativity and use their imaginations as the childminder provides them with such activities as painting, gluing and play dough. They make cakes and pizza and play with sand and water.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are treated with equal concern and are included in decisions that affect them; for instance, they are offered a choice of fruit for snack time and told about the need to change their nappies. Children are not restricted in their choice of play materials. These include some items that reflect positive images of diversity to help develop their awareness of the wider world in which we live, although overall, the range is not extensive. The childminder does talk to children though about things they see and answers their questions. She has no experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities although expresses willingness to consider this, provided she feels able to meet the needs of all children.

The childminder supports children's developing awareness of acceptable ways to behave by encouraging them to share and teaching them to have respect for one another, animals and her home. They are encouraged to play an active role in the setting by helping to tidy away toys they have finished playing with before getting something else out. Children's self-esteem is fostered through praise.

Parents are provided with a copy of the childminder's prospectus, which includes some written information about different aspects of her childminding service. All other information is shared on an informal basis and there is a daily discussion about how children spend their time. The childminder is happy to supplement this by completing a communication diary, if parents wish. Written consent is in place for all aspects of children's care.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children from whom she provides. Children feel at ease in an organised home and they develop confidence as they are permitted to move freely around those areas used for minding. The childminder's use of consistent routines adds to the children's sense of security.

The childminder maintains required documentation and most other records relating to childminding activities appropriately. However, she does not always keep a written record of existing injuries and does not ask parents to countersign the medication record to acknowledge entries. Paperwork is stored securely to ensure confidentiality.

The childminder has a positive attitude to professional development; she has attended first aid training and an Introduction to the Early Years Foundation Stage course since her last inspection and has identified areas for further development.

Improvements since the last inspection

The childminder received a judgement of inadequate at her last inspection and was given a notice of action to improve. Since then, she has addressed actions which necessitated the improvement of children's safety, both within the home and when on outings, the display of her registration certificate and development of knowledge in respect of how to deal with any complaints.

Specific hazards within the home and garden that were identified at the last inspection have been removed, which adds to children's overall safety. In the downstairs bathroom, building work is still being undertaken and some pipes have yet to be boxed in. The childminder has obtained written parental consent to transport children in a vehicle and she now has appropriate car insurance for the car in which children are transported. The childminder's certificate of registration is displayed in the kitchen, so parents are able to check her conditions of registration. The childminder is aware of the responsibility placed upon her should she receive a complaint about her service and she has put together a written complaints procedure. This is shared with parents; it contains information about what parents should do and how they can contact Ofsted if they wish. However, it does not include any mention of the time-scale in which they can expect the childminder to respond to any concerns they may have, where these have been made in writing and relate to a National Standard.

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 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 animal feeding bowls are stored to be inaccessible to children
- provide children with opportunities to practise fire drills
- assess the risks to children in respect of the trailing wire (playroom) and the rotary washing line (garden) and take steps to minimise these
- continue to improve the range of resources that reflect positive images and different aspects of diversity to help children gain awareness of the wider world in which we live
- ensure parents are aware of the time-scale in which they can expect a response to any written complaint they may make, where this relates to a National Standard
- maintain a record of all pre-existing injuries and ask parents to countersign medication records to acknowledge the entry.

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