



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	311625
Inspection date	21 November 2005
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 1990. She lives with her husband and two of their three adult children who are aged 18 and 23 years-old. They live in a two storey house in the Whickham area of Gateshead. There are shops, nurseries and schools within walking distance. Minded children have access to the whole of the ground floor. There is a fully enclosed back garden available for outside play. The family owns a pet dog.

The childminder is registered to look after a maximum of six children. There are current childminding arrangements for seven children, whose ages range from 4 to

10 years-old. The children are looked after on a part time basis. The childminder regularly attends a local childminding "drop-in".

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children enjoy appetising meals prepared for them by their parents, based on the children's individual needs and preferences. In addition, they eat healthy and nutritious snacks, such as fruit, which the childminder provides. This ensures that the children are well nourished and helps them to develop a healthy approach to eating. Before eating, the children are reminded to wash their hands. This helps them to make the connection between good hygiene and to understand how it contributes to their overall good health.

The children benefit from exercise when they walk to school with the childminder in good weather. After school, they sometimes visit the local park where they enjoy playing team games, such as football, and playing on the swings there. Sometimes, they accompany the childminder when she takes the dog out for a walk. Opportunities like these help the children to keep fit, increase their stamina and offer them plenty of scope in which to have fun and enjoy themselves. The children have easy access to a good range of resources, which includes items such as jigsaws and building blocks, which help them to develop their fine motor skills and hand/eye co-ordination. When they are tired, the children are able to rest in the childminder's comfortable home, to help them to relax and unwind.

The childminder takes effective measures to ensure that there is a good standard of hygiene within her home. She washes work surfaces with anti-bacterial spray, for example, and keeps the pet dog's food and drinking bowls out of the way of the children. As well as this, sensible arrangements are in place to deal with children who are ill. These steps minimise the risk posed to children from infection and common illnesses.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are well protected through the childminder's conscientious approach to health and safety matters. The risk of children having accidents is minimised by the secure, well organised home environment, which allows them to move around safely and easily. The children do not have access to the rooms upstairs. This helps to ensure that the children remain within sight and sound of the childminder. The children are encouraged to keep the environment tidy and are aware that this helps to keep them safe, by preventing them from tripping or hurting themselves.

The good quality toys that the children play with are clean and in good condition through regular checks by the childminder. This keeps the toys in good condition and

ensures that the children handle items that will not hurt them. While they walk from school, the children are expected to behave sensibly and carefully. For instance, they must hold the childminder's hand or stand close to her and they understand why. This has equipped the children with useful knowledge which helps them to stay safe from day to day.

The childminder has a good awareness of the signs and symptoms that may indicate that a child is being abused. She consolidates this through attendance at relevant courses. A good knowledge base such as this enables the childminder to seek help from appropriate agencies to protect the children from further danger. The childminder's current first aid certificate, the fully stocked first aid box and her affectionate manner towards the children ensures that they receive appropriate care and attention after minor accidents. The childminder makes sure that parents are informed about accidents to ensure that they are able to take further action should they wish to.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children play with a wide range of good quality toys to help them to make progress in all areas of their development. They have access to role play props, such as dressing up clothes and use small world equipment, such as toy trains and railway tracks, to help them to use their imagination and pretend. They use a variety of building blocks to practice constructing and designing, which acquaints them with basic mathematical concepts such as shape and size. The many eye-catching books that the children read and look through, help the younger children to understand that text and illustrations carry meaning.

The children take part in interesting activities. They go for walks and collect leaves, which they later use to make pictures or leaf prints. They bake cakes, which even the youngest children enjoy, and make Christmas cards for their friends and families. Pastimes such as these ensure that the children are engaged and motivated during the time that they spend with the childminder. In addition, it gives them the opportunity to acquire and practice new skills in cookery and craftwork, for example.

The children have very good relationships with the childminder. They approach her spontaneously and confidently when they have a query or need re-assurance. Her clear, patient and affectionate responses help the children to trust other people and assists the development of good communication skills. The children show strong interest in their surroundings and in other people, visitors for instance. The skilled childminder capitalises on their curiosity, prompting them to ask relevant questions to promote the children's social skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children enjoy sound relationships with the childminder, who has looked after

some of them from babyhood. Long term arrangements like these help the children to feel secure and cherished. The children like to help the childminder with light household duties, such as dusting or washing beakers. These opportunities make the children feel important which boosts their confidence and self-esteem. Additionally, they support the development of positive personal qualities such as helpfulness and kindness.

The children behave very well. The childminder's very effective behaviour management technique helps the children to understand right from wrong, which is essential to their moral development. The childminder encourages them to be well mannered and polite which teaches the children acceptable ways to behave around others. This is demonstrated at meal and snack times, when the children sit down together at the table where they listen to each other and exchange news. This teaches the children good social and communication skills and the importance of being considerate to others.

The good range of resources includes items like jigsaws and books, which show positive images of gender, disability, culture and ethnicity. This encourages the children to form positive views of diversity. The children regularly go for walks with the childminder. During these times they observe the effects of the changing seasons, such as when they talk about and collect leaves that have fallen from trees. This helps the children to understand the way nature works and improves their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Partnership with parents is good. The long term nature of some of the childminder's arrangements are a clear indication of the level of satisfaction that the parents have in the service that she provides. Daily discussions between the childminder and the children's parents ensure that the parents are fully informed about their child's experiences during their time at the childminders. Contracts are used which set out clearly the expectations of both parties. This contributes to the good working relationship that exists between the childminder and parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Records are very well organised and readily available. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that the information remains up-to-date and accurate. The childminder has developed effective systems to help her contact parents immediately in the event of a crisis, such as the at-a-glance sheet displayed in the kitchen. The registration certificate is currently shown at the front of a file. It must be prominently displayed during the hours of childminding.

The childminder is experienced and skilled. She has looked after at least two of the children from babyhood and she knows all of them very well. She uses this knowledge to plan interesting and enjoyable activities for the children to keep them focused and motivated. The childminder is a good role model to the children. She teaches them to respect themselves and others and she is effective in managing the children's behaviour. The solid partnership that the childminder has built with parents helps to ensure that the children's needs are as fully met as possible. Consequently,

the children are confident, settled and happy.

Overall, the childminder is very effective in meeting the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the childminder has obtained written parental permission to give the children non-prescribed medication.

In addition she has sufficient written information to advise her in the event of her having concerns about a child being abused.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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):

- display the registration certificate.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk