



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	140951
Inspection date	14 November 2005
Inspector	Mary Daniel
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since 1995. She lives with her husband and 2 children aged 12 and 5 years in a semi-detached house situated on the outskirts of Weymouth. Minded children have use of all downstairs rooms except the kitchen, and two upstairs bedrooms are used for sleeping children. There is a fully enclosed garden at the back of the house with a dedicated play area, which has safety surfacing.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children aged under eight years when working on her own. She also works with up to 4 other childminders at the same premises, and may then care for a maximum of 18 children aged under 8 years, at any one time. The childminder may also work with an assistant, whom at times agreed and confirmed in writing with parents may be left in sole charge of children. There are currently 50 children on roll, the majority of whom attend on a part-time basis.

The childminder is in receipt of Government funding for children and currently has two funded children on register. There were no funded children present at this inspection. The childminder has a qualification in play work and is currently undertaking a course in Early Years Childcare and Education. She is a member of an accredited childminding network and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's awareness of clear hygiene routines is encouraged well through established procedures. For example, children wash their hands after going to the toilet. They use liquid soap and know to put the paper towels into the dustbin. Suitable nappy changing procedures are followed and the childminder uses disposable gloves to help prevent cross-contamination. However, adults and children do not remove their outdoor shoes before walking across the play areas used for babies and toddlers, and dummies are sometimes left on the floor. Consequently, procedures in place do not fully protect children from the spread of infection.

Children's health is supported through the clear policies and records maintained by the childminder. For example, accidents are clearly detailed. However, some required parental consents for medication are not fully detailed and agreements for emergency medical treatment is not formalised. Suitable procedures are in place to protect children from the effects of the sun. Babies lie in their prams under the shade of the apple tree in the garden. Toddlers wear tee shirts and sun hats when outside in the sun, and activities are set up in a shaded area on the patio.

Children enjoy their individual bowls of fruit for snack time. Food is presented attractively to encourage children to eat. Older children share a large plate of fruit on their return from school. They talk about foods that are good for them and have opportunities to taste different fruits. As a result, children develop some awareness of healthy eating. Older children can access a water dispenser and younger children can reach their individual beakers. This enables children to have regular drinks. However, older children are not always reminded to have a drink after exercise.

Older children happily use up their energy as they bounce and skip on the trampoline. They push each other round on the twizzler swing seats. Younger children have fun at a soft play centre where they can run, jump and crawl safely. This provides children with regular physical play opportunities and helps them develop control in their movements.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a comfortable home. Play areas are bright and colourful and appropriate furniture is provided. For example, younger children sit on small chairs at a low table for their meals and happily snuggle into an armchair for a rest. Children play with a wide range of toys and resources. A toddler has fun pushing his Hoover around. Babies explore their boxes of

activity toys with interest. Older children play table football or air hockey. There is a variety of specialised toys available, which are used with all children. Resources are well organised into labelled boxes, but many of these are stored on high shelves or behind closed cupboard doors. As a result, children are not well supported in making their own choices in play.

Children's safety is promoted through the clear policies formed. Consideration has been given to emergency evacuation and this is practised regularly. Safety prevention in place helps to protect children. For example, stair gates are used to prevent younger children gaining unsupervised access to other rooms. The outside play areas are checked before use and safety surfacing of artificial grass is provided under large play equipment. Main entrances are kept secure. Space is organised satisfactorily to provide different areas of play, but there are times when sufficient clear play space is not provided for the number of children attending. For example, the babies and toddlers play room becomes cluttered with toys on the floor. Larger baby equipment is stored at floor level, which reduces the clear play space available. There are times when this room is used for babies sleeping. This restricts the play opportunities provided and does not support the younger children in moving around confidently or safely. Children sleeping upstairs are monitored through use of a baby alarm, although regular physical checks are not made. This means some aspects of children's safety are compromised.

Children's safety is managed well on outings. They are provided with recognisable sun hats or tee-shirts. This helps the childminder to keep close supervision of them within larger venues. Children are adequately protected from harm through the childminders sound awareness of child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play happily together. For example, they have fun with their friends as they 'water paint' the Wendy house on the patio. They remember a walk they had to feed the ducks and they make hand print coasters to give to their parents. Older children enjoy different craft activities such as drawing, embroidery and model making. Children visit the sea life centre and go blackberry picking or to the cinema. Two children have fun making a den in the large pop-up house. They confidently squeeze the cold, cooked spaghetti. As a result, children's development is supported and they enjoy these play experiences. However, there is little planned for the babies and toddlers. The childminder has completed Birth to Three Matters training and has provided some activities relating to this framework. Overall though, this is not sufficiently implemented to ensure the younger children are well stimulated and occupied in suitable activities. Consequently, there are times when they are left to wander and are not motivated or consistently challenged in their play.

Children respond happily to the childminder and form friendly relationships. This helps children feel valued and contributes to them settling easily overall. Babies are cuddled and their routines followed well. This supports them in feeling secure and comfortable within the setting.

Nursery Education

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children benefit from the childminder's positive approach to learning through play and they enjoy a range of interesting activities. For example, they learn about their environment as they go on a slug hunt, or when they make bird feeders. Children's stages of development are recognised by the childminder and appropriate play experiences relating to the six areas of learning are planned. However, children's assessments are not always adequately completed and their progress is not clearly evidenced against the stepping stones. Therefore, the planning of activities is not sufficiently based on children's individual developmental needs. As a consequence, children are not being consistently helped to progress to the next stage in their learning.

Children are interested in activities and keen to try out new experiences. For example, a child spends time exploring the corn flour gloop. He mixes paints together to experiment with colours. Children begin to recognise letters of their names and join in with their favourite nursery rhymes. Their hand-eye co-ordination is encouraged as they attempt writing their names on a drawing, but they have fewer opportunities to recognise familiar words within the play areas. Children can recognise some shapes and a child identifies a circle shape in a bubble painting activity. He finds the square shaped cutter as he makes scones for tea. Children learn about numbers through counting games and number songs, but have less chances for problem solving within their play. They show interest in controlling the switch to turn on the fibre optic lights and marvel at the colours. However, opportunities to further encourage their awareness of technology are limited. Children use their imagination in some craft activities, but cannot easily access other resources to support and extend their own ideas in play. Children have fun in their physical play and begin to develop control over their movements. For example, a child moves his ride on car successfully around a given path. Consequently, children's developmental progress is supported in the play experiences provided, but opportunities are missed to consistently extend and encourage their natural curiosity in learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children behave well overall. They respond naturally to the suitable expectations kept by the childminder. For example, a child knows to say 'please' when asking for a bubble stick to hold. They take turns and wait to use the bubble mixture. Children are encouraged to help others and learn to use scissors carefully. As a result, children begin to develop self-discipline and an awareness of what is right and wrong.

Children with special needs are supported well. The childminder liaises with parents and professional agencies involved to maintain appropriate care. She keeps detailed information about the child's specific routine. This means sufficient procedures are in place to meet a child's particular needs. Children learn about other ways of living as they see positive images reflected through the range of play resources. For example, they can dress up in a variety of ethnic clothes. However, many of these are not easily accessible for all children and therefore does not effectively support their natural curiosity in play.

Children benefit from the friendly relationships formed by the childminder with their parents. They are welcomed into the home and liaise regularly on their children's care. They are kept informed of events and changes within the setting. Children's sleep, feeding and toileting

patterns are recorded in a daily diary, which parents take home. This supports children's continuity in care and contributes to them settling well.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parental involvement in the nursery education provided is encouraged through regular discussion and newsletters. Children's activities are attractively recorded in their individual record diary. Parents can access this diary, but there is no formal or consistent sharing of children's achievements. Consequently, parents are not able to regularly contribute to their child's developmental progress.

Children experience different festivals and celebrate special occasions together. They have their faces painted for 'Red Nose' day and learn to respect others as they share their toys. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is fostered appropriately.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, children's welfare is supported satisfactorily. For example, children's individual daily routines are recognised well. The childminder knows when a child is tired and encourages her to sit quietly and rest. Older children have time for physical play in the garden, on arrival from school. This helps them to use up their energy and they then settle quietly to play. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Play rooms provide areas for messy and general play. However, space is not organised effectively to provide sufficient clear play space for all children. As a result there are times when younger children do not have room to move around easily. Children's well-being is supported through use of detailed records. For example, their registration forms are regularly updated. Most required documentation is in order, although parental permission is not fully detailed for some health records. Children's registration forms are stored securely in a locked box. However, some records are left on a table within general view. Consequently, sufficient regard is not given to confidentiality in use of all documentation.

The organisation of the nursery education is satisfactory. The childminder is qualified in child care and continues to update her knowledge through ongoing training. She liaises with other professionals for further support. Clear operational policies and procedures have been formed and are shared with parents. This gives some structure to the daily routines and forms a suitable framework for the overall provision. However, there is no clear system in place to monitor and evaluate the nursery education provided. Consequently, some areas for improvement are not sufficiently recognised. For example, the effectiveness of assessments. This means that children's developmental progress is not clearly identified in all areas of learning. A welcoming play environment is provided for children, but the organisation of resources does not support them well in making independent decisions in their play.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection recommendations were made relating to the storage of confidential records and the monitoring of sleeping children. The childminder has now obtained a lockable filing box in which she stores children's information records and parents contracts. This helps

give regard to confidentiality with most of the children's personal information. However, children's daily diaries, are left on the dining table and not kept out of general sight. Consequently, full consideration to confidentiality with record keeping has not been given.

The childminder uses a baby monitor to keep check on sleeping children and also records the times that they settle to sleep. This alerts staff as to which children are upstairs should an emergency occur and so supports children's safety. However, some children sleep for long periods and staff do not make further checks to ensure children are sleeping safely. This means that children's safety is compromised when they sleep.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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.

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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 consistent hygiene procedures are followed to help protect children's good health and prevent the spread of infection
- review organisation of play areas to provide sufficient clear play space for all children to enable them to play safely, and ensure sleeping children are regularly monitored
- plan and provide a range of interesting play activities for children, for example, in line with the Birth to Three Matters framework; and improve upon the organisation of resources to support children in making clear choices in their play, and enable them to extend and initiate their own ideas. (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure all required details for administration of any medication are recorded, and obtain written permission from parents for any necessary emergency medical treatment.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure assessments of children's progress are clearly evidenced and effectively used to plan motivating activities, which build on children's existing skills and abilities
- develop a system to monitor and evaluate the overall provision to support and give clear direction for continual aims for improvement.

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