



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	222342
Inspection date	09 February 2006
Inspector	Veronica Sharpe

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 has been registered since 1989. She lives with her husband and 3 of her grown up children in Cambridge. She is registered to provide care for no more than 6 children aged under 8 years. She is able to provide occasional overnight care for no more than 1 child aged under 8 years. She is currently caring for 8 children, mostly on a part time basis.

Minded children mainly use the ground floor of the home. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. Local shops, a park and other amenities are in walking distance.

The family has two cats and two rabbits.

The childminder runs 2 local carer and toddler groups and is a member of the Homerton Childminding Network, which is an accredited childminding group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about good hygiene practices as they wash their hands before meals or after using the toilet. Areas used by the children are kept clean and hygienic and this minimises the risks of cross infection. Children receive appropriate treatment in an accident because the childminder updates her first aid skills and maintains a first aid kit. However, accident records are not complete, nor are they always signed by parents. This puts children at risk because their parents are not always fully informed about accidents. Appropriate medication records are kept so children are cared for safely and appropriately if they are ill. Not all parents have given their written permission for the childminder to seek emergency medical care or advice if a child is ill or has an accident.

Children are encouraged to be active and develop positive attitudes to physical exercise. They play in the garden and walk to and from school or nursery each day. They enjoy outdoor games, such as football and learn to pedal wheeled toys. Children rest or be active according to their individual needs, for example, younger children sleep comfortably in their buggy whilst older children play quietly or watch television.

Children enjoy healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit and breadsticks, which helps them understand the benefits of healthy food. They explore tastes as they sample different fruits and learn to make healthy choices. Parents who provide a lunchbox for their child receive some advice about the childminder's preferences, for example, not to offer sweets and this ensures all children eat nutritious food. Information about allergies or special dietary requirements is collected from parents so children eat safe and suitable food. Children sit together with the childminder to share meals and snacks so they develop good manners and eating habits.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely in the childminder's home, which is clean and spacious. They benefit from a secure home where most hazards have been minimised, for example some outbuildings are kept locked to prevent unsupervised access. Children enjoy the garden, where they use a range of toys, such as trikes or a climbing frame to develop their physical skills in safety. Toys and equipment are checked for safety and hygiene and are suitable for the age range. Most toys are stored in low level containers so children choose independently and the childminder encourages older children to select additional resources from the outside storage area.

The childminder has considered some aspects of children's safety in a fire as she has devised a written emergency procedure, which includes contingency arrangements if they are unable to return to the home. However, children have not yet practised the drill and therefore are not fully aware of what happens. Children are kept safe because the childminder is vigilant and supervises the children carefully. On outings children learn to cross roads safely, for example, using the pelican crossing. Younger children wear appropriate restraints such as reins or straps until the childminder is confident in their ability to understand road safety.

Children's safety and welfare is promoted well by the childminder's clear knowledge of child protection and the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures. The childminder is aware of her responsibility to protect children and keeps parents informed with relevant policies in the parents' information pack.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are secure and confident in the childminder's care and benefit from close relationships. Children approach the childminder to share ideas or to request help and she reciprocates with kindness and is attentive to their needs. They share cuddles and enjoy each other's company. The childminder has a sound knowledge of child development and this ensures children enjoy a good range of activities and play opportunities so they make good progress.

Positive support from the childminder enables children to explore the activities with confidence, such as playing imaginatively with the kitchen and being creative with paints or play dough. Children benefit from daily walks or they attend local activity and music groups to socialise and learn about their local environment.

Resources are accessible and children explore them independently, making their own choices from the available selection. Regular routines include times for rest or sleep and ensure children are settled and know what to expect.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs met because the childminder works with parents so she has a good understanding of their likes and dislikes. Children are encouraged to share and play together and they take an active part in the care of the family pets, for example, they feed a carrot to the rabbit, which helps them develop caring attitudes. Children benefit from planned activities that take into account their individual interests, for example, a planned topic of vehicles, which can be discussed as children walk to and from school.

Children learn about the wider world as they visit the library to choose books or play with multicultural resources, such as dressing up. Activities take into account children's differing cultural or religious backgrounds as they explore festivals or

celebrate special events such as birthdays together. Children with special needs are not being cared for by the childminder at present, however, she has a sensible understanding of the issues involved and works with parents to meet children's needs.

Children behave well and learn to negotiate and share with the support and praise of the childminder. They are helped to understand what is expected of them through clear expectations and consistent boundaries.

Children benefit from the positive relationships between their parents and the childminder. Verbal information about children's well-being is shared daily and written information is available on request. Parents are offered flexible care with a settling in period that is designed to meet the children's individual needs. A handbook given to all new parents ensures they have a good understanding of the childminder's routines and policies.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for safely in the childminder's home and are supervised when in the company of adults who have not been checked to ascertain their suitability, for example, when on visits and outings. Good organisation of space, time and resources ensures children's needs are met. Daily registers provide a consistent record of children's attendance and ensure ratios are always maintained.

Children benefit from the childminder's sound knowledge of child development and her understanding of how children learn. The childminder has a commitment to improving her good practice and attends courses frequently to increase her knowledge and understanding of modern childcare methods, for example she has recently updated her child protection knowledge and has attended workshops on early years education. She is a member of an accredited network and therefore has good opportunities to share fresh ideas with fellow practitioners.

Documentation is mostly complete and is regularly updated to ensure it continues to meet children's needs. Records are safely stored, but easily accessible for parents. A comprehensive range of written policies and procedures is available to support the childminder's good practice and these are shared with parents on placement. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to keep a record of any medicines administered and to improve her knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures.

The childminder has obtained the National Childminding Association record book so she can record any medicines given, along with prior parental consent. This ensures accurate records of dosages are kept, which promotes children's health and safety.

Children are protected from harm because the childminder has attended a child protection training course, which has updated her skills. She keeps appropriate guidance so she can recognise and deal with any concerns. A written policy is available for parents so they are aware of her responsibility to protect children.

Complaints since the last inspection

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. the complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

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):

- obtain written parental permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment
- ensure there is a consistent record of accidents, countersigned by parents
- practise the emergency evacuation plan with minded children so they understand the procedures to be followed.

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