



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	142057
Inspection date	03 May 2006
Inspector	Elaine Douglas
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 Somerset in 1998. She works with two other childminders and two assistants. They all work in a semi-detached house in a residential area of Axbridge. The property is mainly used for childminding and is owned by the childminder, who lives next door. All areas of the property are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

When all the childminders are working together, they are registered to care for a maximum of 15 children at any one time. They are currently minding 22 children under 5, and 12 children over 5 before and after-school. Children attend on a full and part-time basis. The childminder has guinea pigs in the garden, and children have access to ponies and horses, which are kept at her stables.

The childminder holds a level 3 qualification in childcare and is a member of the National Childminding Association. The childminder supports children with special educational needs.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is protected by extremely high standards of hygiene. The childminder protects children from cross contamination through very thorough procedures. She, her co-minders and assistants wear disposable gloves and aprons to change nappies. The mat is cleaned after each use. Hats and aprons are worn to handle food, and separate colour-coded chopping boards are used to prepare the food. Babies and young children sleep in clean bedding, which is stored in individually named bags. The rooms are appropriately heated and ventilated. Children's health is enhanced by the childminder having a first aid qualification, which she regularly updates. A very good supply of first aid equipment is readily available on the premises and in the car; excellent procedures are in place to check the contents.

Children develop very thorough hygiene practices for themselves through their daily routines. They wash their hands after being in the garden, touching the animals, before eating and after using the toilet. They are sensitively supported in learning to blow their own nose. Children are provided with paper towels and liquid soap.

Children are protected from illness and infection through very good written procedures which are shared with parents. The childminders' animals are kept in excellent condition and children are taught the importance of hygiene when touching them.

Children enjoy a balanced range of nutritional meals and snacks. A weekly menu planner is provided for parents, of breakfast, snacks, lunch and tea. Older children learn about nutrition through discussions, as they regularly help with the preparation, often using many organic ingredients. Good records are kept of children's dietary requirements. Older children help themselves to fresh drinking water, babies and younger children are provided with regular drinks.

Children's health is significantly enhanced by regular opportunities to go for walks, visit the park and use the garden. The co-minders use the Birth to three matters framework to provide a very good range of physical play experiences, for babies and children. Older children learn the importance of being active through regular physical play, for example, badminton, football and swing ball.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised through excellent supervision and well thought through risk assessments. The childminder has an excellent understanding of the need to reduce risks while allowing children independence to develop. For example, a childminder or assistant stay by the step in the garden to support all children in learning to use steps safely. Children use an abundant range of good-quality, developmentally appropriate, resources. These are extremely well-organised and stored securely. Babies are kept safe through a very good range of equipment, all in very good condition. The childminder has a good system of completing

risk assessments on new toys, these are kept for co-minders to check they are safe, each time they are used. Children benefit from the childminder's exemplary awareness of safety. For example, the cushions children have been sitting on are removed to prevent them falling while taking part in action rhymes. Children move safely between the different areas, ensuring they benefit from the safe variety of play environments.

Children travel in vehicles safely. The childminder uses appropriate car seats and restraints, and parents give consent for their children to be transported. Older children gain a good understanding of the excellent fire safety procedures, which are practised regularly. Fire equipment is checked weekly and records kept.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by the childminder's thorough knowledge of child protection issues. She regularly updates this knowledge by attending relevant training. Very good documentation is readily available to provide further guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children settle quickly and are very confident to make their own choices and express their own needs. The childminder works closely with the co-minders to plan stimulating activities, which cater for the wide range of ages and abilities, and help children to develop. Children benefit greatly from the childminder using the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum to plan appropriate activities.

Children regularly take part in creative activities, exploring media and materials. They look at patterns and changes through cooking, planting and growing things, and studying tadpoles. Children are highly motivated and join in with the activities with enthusiasm. For example, when singing and using instruments, one of the younger children plays along with the song and shouts 'again' when it finishes.

Children's development is significantly enhanced by the warm, professional interaction from the childminder. Children's speech is developed by the childminder listening to them, reading to them and asking good open-ended questions. Younger children enjoy the company of the older children and they engage in activities together where appropriate. The after school children make choices about the activities they wish to take part in and spend their time productively.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children settle quickly on arrival and are happy, relaxed and confident in the environment. They build excellent relationships with each other and the childminder. Children are exceptionally well-behaved and have a very good understanding of the expectations of their behaviour. The childminder uses consistent behaviour management strategies. Children are regularly praised and their self-esteem enhanced. For example, they enjoy choosing their own sticker for their enthusiastic singing.

Children learn about other peoples' differences through celebrating a wide range of festivals. They help others less fortunate than themselves by supporting organisations such as 'Operation Christmas Child'. All children are included and their contributions are valued. The childminder uses Somerset Total Communication (STC) and signing cards, and tells some traditional stories using sign language. Children with special needs are extremely well supported, as the childminder has attended several training courses to support her in providing appropriate care.

Children's individual needs are consistently well met. The childminder gains very well documented information on children's needs and babies' routines. These are regularly changed in line with their development, which ensures they always receive the appropriate care. Parents receive excellent information on the provision and their child's development. Children under 3 benefit from staff following home routines and providing detailed information for parents each day. New parents have very good opportunities to visit the setting, meet the co-minders, and discuss all policies and procedures.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well protected by the childminder competently putting into practice the very thorough policies and procedures. Children's care is enhanced by the extremely well organised, child-centred environment in which they come first. The excellent communication between the very professional team of co-minders and assistants ensures consistent, knowledgeable, individual care for each child. Well-organised, accurate documentation is confidentially stored and effectively used to ensure children are cared for appropriately. However, the consent forms to seek emergency advice or treatment have not been reviewed or made easily accessible, to ensure all children are protected. The information for parents on how to make a complaint has not been updated in line with the new procedures.

Children benefit from the childminder reviewing her provision and identifying areas for personal development. She is committed to ongoing training and regularly updates her knowledge of current issues. Good registration systems ensure ratios are always met. The childminder has an excellent knowledge of child development and has recently completed training on the Birth to three matters framework, to enhance the care of the younger children. The childminder regularly provides in-house training for her assistants and co-minders. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to provide a system for recording incidents of physical restraint.

Since that inspection the childminder has obtained a book to record incidents and this includes all the necessary details to ensure the safe welfare of children.

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.

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):

- seek consent from parents for emergency medical advice or treatment, for all the children
- update the information for parents on complaints, in line with the new procedures

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