



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY221894
Inspection date	15 May 2006
Inspector	Sarah Fletcher
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 registered in 2002. She lives with her partner and two children aged nine and 12 years in a three storey house in Conniburrow, close to Milton Keynes. Childminding takes place on the first and second floors, with the use of a downstairs bathroom. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder may care for a maximum of six children at any one time and she is currently minding two children under five years all day and one child over five years before and after school, together with two children over eight years. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The family has a caged bird collection.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because the childminder follows environmental health and hygiene guidelines, ensuring children play in appropriate surroundings. Children understand simple good health and hygiene practices, such as washing their hands before handling food and after using the toilet. The childminder is a good role model, keeping her home clean and encouraging children to learn suitable routines by washing her own hands often. The childminder protects children from the spread of infection by following a verbal sickness policy and using anti-bacterial sprays or wipes to clean surfaces and changing mats. Nappy changing takes place in accordance with each individual child's needs.

Children have their health and dietary needs met because the childminder works well with parents, providing after school snacks, meals and drinks, which conform to parents' wishes and children's choices. She ensures she meets any religious or dietary requirements to nourish children in her care. The childminder does not obtain prior written permission from parents to administer medicines to children, which is a breach in regulations, although she does discuss this with parents and record any medicines she administers.

Children benefit from indoor and outdoor play and enjoy regular physical activities. The younger children particularly enjoy dancing and exercising to music with the childminder and each other. The childminder further encourages children's exercise by going for long walks around the woods, using play equipment in local parks and visiting Gulliver's Land or walking around Willen lake. Children rest and sleep according to their needs and parents' wishes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are safe and secure in their surroundings. The childminder keeps children under close supervision, reducing risks and hazards and minimising most dangers inside and outside the home. Children are cared for in a family home where they can move around safely and freely, although kitchen knives are accessible to older children. The childminder gives priority to keeping children secure and helping them to understand how to be safe, explaining road safety and stranger danger and keeping them within her sight or hearing at all times. Children learn independence through being able to select from the suitable range of toys, resources and equipment available, which are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

The childminder has a developing understanding of child protection issues, taking steps towards protecting children's welfare. She informs parents of her role and responsibility to protect children and knows the importance of recording information. However, the childminder has limited knowledge and understanding of the child protection issues and the procedures to follow if there are any concerns with a child, or if any allegation is made against her or her family.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs met. They are very settled with the childminder and relaxed and happy in her company. Children ask questions and make decisions about what they want to do. They show interest in and respond well to the childminder's interaction and encouragement. Children are able to make choices from a variety of activities, such as finger painting, junk modelling, icing biscuits, sharing board games or playing outside in the garden or park. They are able to choose from a range of age appropriate toys and equipment, both indoors and outside.

Children make positive relationships with adults and with each other, understanding acceptable behaviour from an early age. They learn to share and to take turns, which helps them to develop self-confidence and self-esteem and respond to the challenges the childminder provides. The childminder finds out what children know and can do when they first attend by talking to parents and observing children when they are playing. Children settle into the childminder's care gradually over a period of several days, ensuring they are confident in her care and parents start to build trusting relationships.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel a sense of belonging in the family atmosphere. They move about the home confidently and are beginning to distinguish between right and wrong, behaving generally well and knowing the boundaries decided by the childminder. She uses clear strategies for managing behaviour, which encourages children to learn to understand self-control and to feel valued and respected. The childminder treats children as individuals but with equal concern, meeting their individual needs. They make choices and take decisions in their play and are asked to share toys and games so that they can all have fun together.

Children benefit from the excellent two-way communication system between parents and the childminder, which helps to maintain their continuity of care. The childminder provides a flexible service to parents, following their wishes and children's preferences, with daily information exchanges taking place through discussion. Children become aware of our wider society as they walk around the local community and begin to understand the wider world through a small selection of resources. However, the childminder has a limited range of positive images that promote differing cultures, gender and disability.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel at home and at ease within the family environment and play happily in the childminder's care. They know routines well and are settled in the warm and welcoming atmosphere. The childminder has a high regard for the well-being of all children. She shows particular concern for any child who appears to be quieter than normal, exploring the different avenues of possibility and adapting her care accordingly.

The childminder's understanding of children's developmental needs benefits children's individual care. She organises time well and provides a good balance of indoor and outdoor play, which extends children's learning and development. Verbal policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health and safety and their ability to make a positive contribution. The childminder shares her policies and procedures with parents and obtains most consents towards maintaining children's care.

Overall, 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 improve areas of children's safety, health and equality of opportunity.

The childminder has now ensured: smoke alarms are fitted on each floor; most written permissions are obtained from parents; and children's names are fully recorded on documentation. The range of resources that promote equality of opportunity have not been improved sufficiently and this remains a recommendation at this inspection.

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 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):

- improve the childminder's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and concerns and the procedures to follow if allegations of abuse are made against her or her family
- improve children's safety in the kitchen by making knives inaccessible to children
- obtain prior written permission from parents for administering medicines to children
- improve resources that reflect positive images of culture, gender and disability

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