



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	256550
Inspection date	12 December 2006
Inspector	Christine Hands
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 2000. She lives with her husband and two sons aged eight and nine years in Tattershall, Lincolnshire. The whole of the house is used for childminding with the exception of the master bedroom. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently minding two children under five on a part-time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and has shops and pre-schools within walking distance of the family home. The childminder has two pet rabbits.

The childminder has experience of caring for children who have special needs and is registered to provide overnight care.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted exceptionally well as they are cared for in a home that is kept clean and free from germs. They follow clear routines with regard to washing hands and although all minded children are under school age they are clear as to the reasons why this is important and speak about making their hands clean so that they do not become poorly. Children are reminded about blowing their noses and know where to dispose of used tissues which limits the risk of cross-infection. The childminder ensures that she has written permission to administer medicines and has a thorough understanding of any medical conditions of children she cares for, and when and how to administer medication. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate, has a first aid box that she checks regularly and written permission for her to obtain emergency medical advice or treatment which enables her to act quickly in the event of an accident.

Children's dietary needs are met because the childminder liaises closely with parents enabling her to have a clear understanding of any special dietary needs children may have and how she can meet these. All children have a healthy diet consisting of a selection of fruit, vegetables, yoghurt and meat and eat these whilst sitting at the table together where social skills are encouraged. Food is well presented and children eat well. Children are offered drinks at various times during the day, more often in the summer months or when they are taking part in active exercise ensuring they do not become thirsty.

The childminder has a very good understanding of the importance fresh air and exercise have in helping children to be healthy, and they walk to and from school on a daily basis. All children bring suitable clothing which in the winter includes Wellington boots and they happily tell of the fun they have splashing in puddles and kicking leaves. The childminder is of the opinion that there is no such thing as unsuitable weather providing the clothing is appropriate and that children can have as much fun in the wetter, colder months as they can in the summer.

The childminder has a clear understanding of how children develop and how she can meet their needs, for example babies need a regular routine for sleeping and eating and that cuddles are very important for all children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a home that is well organised to ensure their safety and security. Regular risk assessments are undertaken and any risks identified are immediately made safe, for example stairgates are in place at the top and bottom of the stairs and safety covers are in place in all empty low-level plug sockets. Children are protected from the risks of fire because appropriate detection and prevention measures are in place and an emergency escape plan has been practised with them which increases their chances of responding quickly to danger. Children are aware of road safety procedures and how by following these they will keep themselves safe. The childminder has written consents from parents for a variety of reasons

including, taking children out in a car and on outings, administering sun-cream and the use of plasters which ensures they are cared for in accordance with parental wishes. The youngest children talk about holding the childminder's hands and listening and looking when they reach the road to make sure there are no cars coming.

Children choose from a variety of good quality toys and equipment that are safe and suitable for their age and stage of development. Because the childminder considers it important for children to have access to as wide a range of toys and equipment as possible she is particularly vigilant when younger children have access to small pieces.

Children's welfare is well promoted through the use of clear policies and procedures. The childminder has a thorough knowledge of child protection procedures and ensures parents are aware of her role and responsibility regarding these. She is aware of the various signs and symptoms of possible abuse and who to contact to ensure that children's welfare and safety are promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well and enjoy their time at the childminders, quickly making themselves at home and choosing the toys they want to play with. The childminder has a good understanding of child development and how children learn through play. She is enthusiastic and instils this enthusiasm and excitement into the children who become engrossed in a variety of activities. They enjoy a selection of craft activities which at present are Christmas decorations, and happily decide what they would like to stick onto their silver mobile. They explain that they have made it by using glue to stick silver foil onto a circle and that they are now going to stick sparkly red tinsel on. After trying to do this with the glue they discover that it is not strong enough and move onto using double sided sticky pads. Different sparkly bows and long strands of silver tape complete the decoration of which they are justifiably proud.

The childminder is aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and uses this as a basis for her planning. Children initiate most of their play although the childminder makes suggestions for activities such as baking, craft and outdoor play. As soon as babies are old enough to sit up she provides activities such as painting and playdough so they gain a variety of experiences and use their senses. Later they become involved in activities that enable them to develop their fine manipulative skills such as threading and cutting out. The childminder has researched how she can offer different experiences to children to enable them to develop their large muscles and provides a range of equipment. Children develop their imaginative, investigative and creative skills through activities such as pretend play, painting, collage and construction using a variety of both man-made and natural materials.

The childminder effectively includes all children in play and prompts their thinking and language skills well by asking appropriate questions. She has a flexible approach which allows children to develop at their own pace. Children relate well to the childminder and are interested in the toys and activities provided. They are proud of their achievements and happily receive positive comments and praise from the childminder.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder has a good understanding of the importance of equal opportunities which is reflected in her written policy. She has robust procedures in place to ensure that she has as much information as possible about each child in her care which enables her to treat them as individuals, building on their feelings of self worth. The childminder displays children's work on the wall in the dining room demonstrating her pride in the children's achievements and enabling them to feel a sense of belonging.

The childminder has a positive attitude and experience of caring for children who have special needs. She uses the internet to obtain information relating to the needs of any children and then spends time with the families to make sure that she is fully conversant with the child's needs and how any medication or treatment is given. Parents spoken to said that they were confident about leaving their child in her care because of the interest she continued to show regarding their child's welfare. Children's behaviour is very good and children know what is expected of them. They have clear boundaries and the childminder takes time to explain why certain behaviour is not acceptable. They learn how to care for each other through the childminder's effective use of praise and encouragement.

Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the local community through walks around the village and visits to the local library, shops and school. They learn about the wider world through books, puzzles and activities that promote positive images. The childminder always answers questions as honestly as she can taking into account the level of understanding of the children, and discusses the fact that we are all different, have different likes and dislikes as well as beliefs. She tries to explain to the children that this is alright and just because two people have different ideas it does not mean that one of them is wrong.

Children are cared for according to the wishes of their parents. The childminder spends time talking at length to the parents prior to their child being cared for to ensure that she is fully aware of the needs of the child and the parents' expectations, as well as giving them the information they need to make an informed decision as to whether they would like her to care for their child. She understands the importance of building trusting relationships with parents and that by doing so this improves the care for the children. A gradual introduction and the opportunity to meet the childminder's family is offered to new children so that they settle happily.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a childminder who is sensitive to their feelings and needs which builds on their own self-esteem. She spends time listening to them and answering their questions honestly, encouraging conversation. Children benefit greatly from the childminder's knowledge of child development and how children learn. There is ample space in this homely environment for children to play and relax and this is enhanced by the organisation of resources enabling them to access these independently.

Documentation is organised well and includes comprehensive written policies and procedures which are included in a portfolio and shown to all new parents. There are robust procedures in place for the recording of any long term medication.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to devise and practise an emergency evacuation plan. This is now in place and practised on a regular basis ensuring that in the event of an emergency a quick evacuation can take place.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 1 2004 that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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

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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 that documentation is in place to record any concerns or complaints.

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