



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 101144
Inspection date 26 October 2005
Inspector Miriam Sheila Brown

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 registered in 1997. She lives with her husband and two daughters, aged 9 and 11 years, in a semi-detached house, which is within walking distance of local shops and amenities. The whole house, with the exception of the children's bedrooms, is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The childminder's husband works with her as an assistant and is in the process of registering as a childminder.

There are currently nine children on roll, who attend at varying times throughout the week.

The childminder is a member of the Cheltenham Childminding network and the National Childminding Association. She offers full and part-time care, and an after-school collection service from Dunalley and Swindon Village Primary Schools.

The childminder regularly takes the children to a local childminder support group and to a library, a wildlife park and a playgroup.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Well-organised routines help the children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene. The childminder's sound knowledge of basic health and safety issues reduces the risk of cross-infection. This is further supported by clear documentation of accidents, medications and dietary requirements which help to ensure that the children's individual needs are met and that parents are informed well of their children's care. Both the childminder and her assistant have up-to-date first aid qualifications, ensuring proficiency in the event of an accident.

The children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. At snack time, the childminder encourages them to try healthy food, including fresh fruit. She stores meals, which are provided by the parents, safely, and ensures that they are nicely presented.

The childminder encourages the children to develop their independence. She offers them appropriate cutlery to enable them to feed themselves. The children can help themselves to drinks, which are easily accessible. The childminder maintains the individual eating and sleeping routines of infants well, thus providing them with good continuity of care.

The children enjoy a wide range of activities, which contribute to their good health. The childminder regularly provides them with outdoor activities to help them develop control of their large and small muscles. The children play in the sand, for example, ride on wheeled toys and visit the local park, where they can use larger equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder cares for the children in a spacious, welcoming and generally safe environment. The main playing room is bright and colourfully decorated with the children's artwork and posters. The older children use the front room if they want quiet or if they want to play with toys that are unsuitable for the younger children, because of their small pieces.

Most risks have been identified and minimised, thus enabling the children to move safely, freely and independently inside the house. However, although the garden is secure, it has a deep hole to a drain, and parts of the fencing panels are damaged.

This, naturally, poses a risk to the children.

The childminder generally supervises the children well. However, the older children are sometimes allowed to play at the front of the house, where there is a larger area for bikes, without written permission from the parents.

Outings are managed well to ensure safety. The childminder, for example, regularly services the car, provides seats and a first aid kit. She also takes the mobile telephone numbers of the parents.

The childminder provides good overnight care. The children sleep in a separate room and the childminder is well aware of all aspects of overnight childcare. She ensures, for example, that familiar routines are followed, reading bedtime stories to the children, and giving them drinks and comforters.

The children are able to select activities from a wide range of easily accessible toys, which meet safety standards and which meet the needs of the whole age-range of the children, including those who attend after school and in the holidays.

The childminder is well aware of child protection procedures and has attended training, which she and her assistant are booked to update in the near future. This ensures that, should child protection concerns arise, they will be dealt with appropriately and in the children's best interest.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are happy and settled in the childminder's home. They relate well to each other and have opportunities to socialise with a larger group of children by regularly attending a childminder support group. They participate in various activities throughout the week, which the childminder plans to ensure a good balance of experiences, covering most aspects of play and development. She adapts these activities to mirror the children's individual interests and abilities. The younger children, for example, use brightly coloured and interesting toys, such as those which make a sound or movement following input from the children. This encourages them to investigate and develop their independence.

The older children enjoy playing with a range of craft materials such as dough and paint, using their fingers, rollers and cutters to increase their small muscle control. All the children have many free play opportunities, enabling them to represent their experiences, feelings and ideas in various ways. They dress up in clothes, for example, play with puppets, construction toys and musical instruments, and have role-play activities. There is scope to increase opportunities to use drawing resources in their unstructured play.

The childminder's good understanding of the needs of school-aged children helps them to relax after a day at school and enables them to enjoy their chosen activities safely and without risk to younger children. They take games which have very small pieces into a separate room, for example. There they may also use a games machine

and a television set.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children are highly valued as individuals. They develop a positive attitude towards others as they play with different age groups, increasing awareness of each other's abilities and strengths. The childminder supports the children well. She uses her knowledge of individual needs to provide toys and resources which are appropriate for the children's age and ability.

The childminder provides resources which develop the children's awareness of the wider world, showing positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability. The childminder works closely with the parents of children with special needs to ensure that she meets their physical and emotional needs, thus giving them effective support.

The children behave well and begin to distinguish right from wrong through consistent boundaries, praise and the age appropriate methods that the childminder uses to manage behaviour. These include explanation, distraction and clear house rules, and they are supported by a good exchange of information with parents to ensure continuity of care between the home and the setting.

The childminder provides the parents with clear and professionally produced information about all aspects of the care she offers. This includes a prospectus, newsletters, policies and complaints procedures. The parents of younger children receive a daily diary outlining personal care routines and activities. Time is set aside each day for verbal discussion with the parents of older children. This time is also used to update personal information. Written commendations from parents strongly support all aspects of the care provided.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are relaxed and happy within the childminder's well-organised home, helping them to initiate their own play and learning. The children's individual details are maintained well and stored securely, guarding confidentiality and ensuring that needs are met appropriately and in accordance with parental wishes. Although other aspects of documentation demonstrate the childminder's awareness of regulatory requirements, some permissions were not available at the time of the visit.

The childminder is qualified well for her job. She demonstrates, through her practice and discussion, sound awareness of childminding regulations, and has completed many childcare related courses since her registration. This good knowledge helps her to plan and provide for children effectively.

The childminder works closely with her husband, who is currently an approved assistant and is completing the process to become a registered childminder. All

adults associated with the registration are in receipt of appropriate clearance.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder agreed to share all medication records with parents. Medication records seen during the visit have all been signed by parents. This goes to show that the childminder is now keeping the parents informed well about their children's care, and that she is meeting the children's individual medication needs.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted has received one complaint relating to National Standard 1: Suitable Person, and National Standard 3: Care, Learning and Play.

The complaint related to children being distressed and left to cry. We carried out an investigation on 15 June 2005. We discussed the concerns in detail, checked documentation and made observations of practice. We found no evidence that the provider was not complying with the national standards. We took no further action and the provider remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The 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:

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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 the hard play area and fencing panels in the rear garden do not pose a risk to children's health and safety and that parents are in agreement with children playing at the front of the house.

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