



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	304671
Inspection date	30 August 2006
Inspector	Rachel Ruth Britten
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 was registered in 1998. She lives with her partner and two children aged 14 and eight years, in a suburb of Crewe and Nantwich. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed rear garden for outside play. The childminder walks to local schools and pre-schools to take and collect children. She also takes children to local parks.

She presently has five children on roll, who range in age from four to 10 years.

There is a hamster and three pet cats on the premises.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning to understand some simple health and hygiene practices because the childminder prompts them to wash their hands before snacks and after playing in the garden or visiting the toilet. Children always come with a change of clothes and do not attend if they are ill with anything infectious. They have some guidance and support to become more independent ready to attend school. For example, four year olds fetch their own drink from the kitchen and are allowed to visit the toilet independently. The childminder demonstrates improved understanding about appropriate environmental health and hygiene procedures. For example, she is keeping all living areas cleaner and free of pet hair. She has removed the cat litter tray and cat food to the garage, so that the cats spend more time in the garage. This means that hygiene in the kitchen is satisfactory.

Children enjoy adequate emotional health because the childminder helps each child to feel at home and part of the family. Many children have been attending since they were babies. Children also enjoy regular physical activity because they go out to play in the garden, walk to school or nursery and walk to local parks. Children's health and wellbeing is still somewhat compromised by poor documentation. Consents from parents for any necessary emergency treatment are now in place on children's individual details forms and a record book is in place for the recording of accidents and incidents. Medication consent letters have been collated, but there is still no system in place for the recording of the administration of medicines. This means that continuity of care is jeopardised if parents are not properly informed about the medicines given to their child.

Children are sufficiently well nourished because the childminder gives them mostly healthy meals and snacks. They have meals, such as cottage pie and broccoli, and snacks, such as sandwiches and apple. However, they do have crisps and chocolate bars for treats. The drinks offered are mostly milk, water or juice and the childminder reminds children to have drinks. However, the childminder is not observed talking to children about healthy eating or healthy lifestyles to develop their learning about these things.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an adequately welcoming and secure indoor and outdoor environment, with children's toys stored around the walls of the dining area and conservatory. However, there are no posters, photos or work displayed to interest children and there is only just sufficient floor and table top play space because storage boxes for toys and other furniture take up so much of the room. This makes it difficult for children to make large constructions with the jumbo Lego for example.

Children use an adequate range of suitable and safe equipment because the childminder regularly adds to and disposes of resources. However, there are quantities of play figures, cars and construction games, but fewer role play, creative or educational toys. Some children choose to

bring favourite toys from home to supplement what is offered. Toys and games are mostly organised into storage boxes and shelves in the dining area and conservatory where children know where things are. For example, children know where the large Lego and jigsaws are.

Children are generally safe as they move around the setting because the childminder supervises children appropriately according to their age. Safety gates are available to restrict access to the stairs and kitchen, but these are not in current use with the three children present at the inspection because they are all of school age. Equally, the fireplace and hearth are guarded if the fire is in use or if the hearth poses a hazard for babies and toddlers. However, there is scaffolding currently erected at the rear of the house and children have access to this and have been climbing on it. This poses a safety hazard to children.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe on the roads because the childminder is successful in teaching them how to be a safe pedestrian as they walk to school and other places. For example, use is made of pedestrian crossings, pressing the button and looking both ways before crossing. Children are kept safe on outings because they know that they must hold hands and not run off. Children are also generally safe in an emergency because first aid supplies, smoke detectors and fire blanket are in place, and the childminder is familiar with all the escape routes in the house.

Children are adequately protected from abuse because the childminder understands her role in child protection. She is able to contact social services if necessary and knows that she must contact Ofsted if an allegation is made against her. She has some written information about child abuse, but this is not accessible or understood. This should be better utilised to ensure that the care of children in abuse situations is not compromised.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop some confidence and self-esteem because the childminder is generally warm and interested in them. She suggests ideas of what they may like to play with and will join in with them as they play with jigsaws or the Lego. Children show some interest in what they do because they can develop group games together after school and in school holidays. For example, they might put on a dance show. They enjoy creating small world scenarios using the play figures or the fort. They can also be involved in helping the childminder with her other business by placing the slips inside the catalogues and then helping to post them through letterboxes.

Children are enthusiastic and want to play, but look to the childminder for ideas and input, which is sometimes limited because the childminder wants to complete other household jobs or commitments. The childminder suggests doing a puzzle with the four-year-olds, but there are frequent phone and house calls and the children are sometimes left to their own devices.

Children's enjoyment and achievements are satisfactory because the childminder is experienced and has sufficient knowledge of individual children and their needs. Their achievements are best when the childminder lays on art and craft activities so that children are learning how to share, socialise, use their imagination, and extend their creative skills. For example, they sometimes make bead pictures or decorate hard boiled eggs for Easter. Children make positive

relationships because they consistently meet a number of familiar children while with the childminder. They are encouraged to help and understand one another regardless of difference in age, and are helped to feel that this is like an extended family unit where every child is special.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's emotional needs are adequately met because the childminder is caring and attentive to each child. For example, she gives frequent cuddles and is kind and motherly to them. She treats all children as if they were her own and takes into account their home situations, which she knows well. Children are included fully in the life of the setting because the childminder fosters an atmosphere where each child feels part of the group. For example, they all help with tidying up.

Children's awareness of diversity is promoted sufficiently because the childminder has a range of books, dolls, play figures and dressing up, which children play with. These portray positive images of people from other cultures and of gender equality. Children also meet people in the local community who have disabilities and these people talk to them and the childminder. This facilitates some discussion about disability and develops children's understanding.

Children receive appropriate support to improve their behaviour because the childminder reminds them about what behaviour is expected. Children's understanding of responsible behaviour is that they help to tidy up; they take their shoes off at the door; they paint and draw in the kitchen; and they go to tell the childminder if they spill anything. An incident record book is available to record any significant incidents, including any incidents of physical intervention by the childminder. However, good manners are not always consistently prompted by her.

Children receive consistency of care because the childminder works satisfactorily with parents to ensure that they are all well informed about what is going on in the children's lives. The childminder spends sufficient time in verbal handover with parents so that she has enough information to provide care. For example, she knows if children have slept well and if they have behaved well at home. She uses this information appropriately, either by carrying on discussions with children, or by giving them praise to underline their good behaviour at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder has an adequate understanding of child development through her own parenting experience, but she lacks understanding of high quality childcare. This is because she says that pressures of time have prevented her from keeping up to date with the requirements of the National Standards for Childminding and from undertaking training courses to motivate and give her ideas. She has, however, updated her first aid qualification.

The routines of the day promote satisfactory outcomes for children. The childminder gives children adequate choices, but does not always fully utilise her time and personal skills to

maximise children's development in all areas. There are also numerous pressures of time involved in collecting and delivering children to various pre-school and schools. Nevertheless, children have good opportunities for physical exercise and adequate opportunities for rest and constructive play. The childminder makes sure that the individual needs of each child are well balanced with the mix of children attending, and is willing to adapt to children's particular wishes, for example, to paint. The attendance register is kept accurate and up to date to ensure that all children are accounted for.

The childminder has a basic understanding of the documentation required to ensure children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Contracts and particulars for each child contain only basic information, but are stored in a separate see-through wallet for each child. Required consents are handwritten onto forms and signed by parents, but information and policies about the service offered have not been organised or written. This means that parents have little idea of what their children will be doing, eating or what behaviour will be expected. They are also unaware of the childminder's responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities, special needs, child protection, emergency procedures or sickness. However, public liability insurance and car insurance details can quickly be accessed if they are needed to keep parents informed.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were four actions raised at the last inspection in March 2006. These have all been addressed and have improved the health, safety and organisation of the setting for children.

The childminder has attended a first aid course and renewed her qualification so that she can administer first aid competently if this is needed.

She has added a consent request to all her children's written details, so that parents can consent to the obtaining of any necessary emergency medical treatment or advice.

She has put the cat litter and cat food into the garage so that the cats mainly spend their time outside in the garage. As a result, the amount of cat hair in the house is much reduced and the kitchen and lounge do not smell as they did.

The organisation of the childminding documents is improved sufficiently to allow quicker reference to child details, medication consents, accident and incident records, and insurance documents. However, there is still no record of medications administered and documents are not placed into files for ease of reference.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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.

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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 a record is maintained of all medication administered and that the record is signed by parents to acknowledge each administration
- ensure that children are not exposed to hazards while there is scaffolding around the rear of the property.

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