



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	224483
Inspection date	17 July 2006
Inspector	Valerie Thomas
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 1992. She lives with her husband and one adult child in Stoke-on-Trent. The childminder's husband also works as an assistant on occasion. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed area for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding five children under eight and five children over eight years, all of whom attend on a part time basis. The childminder supports children with learning difficulties. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and takes children to a local toddler group.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Importance is placed by the childminder on ensuring children are able to play outside in the fresh air. Children go for regular walks to the local park where they are able to play football and play on the swings. In addition children walk daily to and from school and visit the local library. This encourages children to develop their physical skills and develop a healthy lifestyle.

The routines and procedures implemented by the childminder help children develop some understanding of when they need to wash their hands. Children know that they need to wash their hands when they have been to the toilet. However, they are not encouraged to wash their hands before their tea. There are clear hygienic procedures in place for nappy changes. However, sometimes children's nappies are not changed regularly enough to meet their needs. This does not fully promote children's good health.

There are satisfactory procedures in place for the recording of accidents. However, written consent to seek emergency medical advice is not in place for children and medication administered is not always signed by parents to acknowledge the entry. This does not ensure the childminder can meet children's needs if a medical emergency arose. The clear procedures in place for infectious children help limit the spread of infection and help them to keep healthy.

The childminder works in partnership with parents to meet the children's dietary needs. Children are given regular drinks and the childminder shows a good understanding that they need extra drinks in the hot weather. A varied diet is provided to meet children's needs and the childminder listens to what they want before she prepares the meal. Biscuits are provided for snacks although these are limited and fruit is encouraged if children want something else to eat. This encourages a positive approach to healthy eating.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure environment. They benefit from the clear boundaries set by the childminder. They learn that they should not pick each other up when playing as they may fall over and know that the small chairs should not be carried in the air. Suitable methods for ensuring children understand the importance of road safety are implemented. Children know that they have to cross at the crossing and wait for the childminder to tell them to cross. Procedures to ensure fire evacuation can take place safely are implemented and children know that they need to go out of the door and stand at the front when it is a fire drill. This helps children take responsibility for keeping themselves safe.

The home is maintained appropriately and offers adequate space and a welcoming environment indoors for children to play comfortably with the toys and equipment. However, the outside area has hazards present and the stairs inside do not always have a safety gate fitted to prevent young children accessing. This compromises children's safety.

Younger children select activities from the range of equipment set out by the childminder. However, this is sometimes limited and offers limited choice. Older children know they can ask for a different activity if they want to. This does not fully allow young children to make their own choices about their play.

The childminder has a clear understanding of child protection procedures and the correct procedures for reporting any concerns. This helps to ensure that children are protected from harm or neglect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled in the setting. They are confident and approach the childminder for their needs, which are met appropriately. Comfort is given to children when they are upset for example, when they bump their nose. The childminder provides an adequate range of activities to maintain children's interest. Children enjoy playing outside on the rocker, taking it in turns having lots of fun. Younger children sit and colour the pictures and others like to play with the electronic instrument pretending to sing. Discussions with the children show that they enjoy making cards and collages. However creative skills are not fully promoted as children have limited opportunities to paint and develop their sensory skills. The range of toys available is adequate although choice is sometimes limited. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is not used to enhance the play opportunities to develop children's all round learning and enjoyment.

The childminder places importance on developing children's independence. They manage their self-care well, going to the toilet by themselves. They are encouraged to help set the table for tea and children enjoy carrying the food through for the younger ones. As a result children are confident and willing to help.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are met appropriately most of the time. Suitable behaviour management methods are implemented and this helps children develop their understanding of what is right and wrong. They say sorry to their friends if they hurt them and use their manners well when reminded by the childminder. They develop appropriate levels of self-esteem enjoying the use of praise and encouragement given to them as they play.

Opportunities for children to learn about the wider world are satisfactory. They go for walks to the local park to play football, visit the library and younger children are taken to the local toddler group each week. This helps them to develop their social skills within the local community. However, there is a limited range of resources to promote positive images of different cultures and disability. This does not help to raise children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others. There is good support for children with learning difficulties and the childminder has a good understanding of ensuring inclusion for all.

Satisfactory methods are in place to develop the partnership with parents with some written information available on how the setting operates. The children's well-being and how their

needs are met during the day are discussed on a daily basis. This enables the childminder and parents to work together to meet the needs of the child.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are settled in the adequately organised environment. They receive positive interaction and appropriate support from the childminder to help them feel secure. However, the range of activities and resources available for children to choose from do not fully promote children's learning and enjoyment in all areas.

Most procedures are used appropriately to promote the welfare of children. However, written consent to leave children in the sole care of an assistant is not in place for all children. This does not fully safeguard children. Registers are accurate and up to date and show a clear picture of who is present at any one time. Ratios are met for the majority of the time however, on one occasion the childminder exceeded the number of children under five years cared for by one, for a short period. The childminder took action to reduce her numbers as soon as she was aware. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to complete an appropriate first aid course; keep required details for children and parents and request written consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment; provide a suitable range of toys that are age appropriate including toys for older children, outdoor play equipment and resources to reflect positive images of culture, gender and disability; increase the opportunities for creative play; increase the balance of time spent with the children to help them learn; and increase knowledge of behaviour management strategies.

The childminder has completed training for first aid. This helps to enable the childminder to deal with accidents appropriately. Children's and parents' details have been obtained. However, written consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is not in place. This does not help to ensure that children's needs are met if a medical emergency arose.

The childminder has provided some additional toys for older children and outside play. There is an adequate selection of board games available and there is now some equipment for outside such as bikes and a rocker. However, there is no age appropriate equipment for older children to use outside and children say that they make up their own games. There are still limited resources to promote positive images of different cultures, gender and disability and this will remain a recommendation as part of this inspection. This does not help to develop children's awareness of diversity. The childminder ensures that she listens to what the children want and is aware if children are becoming bored. She sits with them as they colour their pictures and talks to them. This helps to focus children's attention. The childminder provides some opportunities for children to develop their creative skills through making cards and collages. However they have no opportunities to paint. The childminder has made improvements in the methods used to manage children's behaviour. Incidents are dealt with appropriately and the

childminder uses distraction and talking to children in a calm manner. This helps children to understand what is expected of them and promotes a harmonious environment.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted has received one complaint, since 1 April 2004 relating to National Standard 1: Suitability. The complaint related to the suitability of the childminder. Ofsted carried out an investigation at the same time as the inspection on 17 July 2006. 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 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):

- obtain written consent from parents with regard to leaving children in the sole care of an assistant
- ensure that medication records are signed by parents to acknowledge the entry and obtain written consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment
- improve safety for children by ensuring children are not able to access the stairs and that the outside area is safe for children to use
- improve children's health by ensuring children wash hands before meals and that young children's nappies are changed to meet their needs
- improve the range of activities provided for children by using the 'Birth to three matters' framework and ensure that there is a good range of toys for children to choose from
- increase the range of resources and activities to develop children's awareness of diversity.

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