



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY313744
Inspection date	17 October 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 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 2005. She lives with her husband and two children, aged 11 and eight, in the town of Nantwich. The whole of the house is used for childminding except the main bedroom and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and she takes children to the local park and toddler groups.

There was one child present at the inspection and there are a total of four children currently on roll.

There are two medium sized dogs which have a separate run and kennel in a section of the rear garden.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's physical health is good because the childminder efficiently follows environmental health and hygiene procedures. She keeps all play spaces and surfaces extremely clean and tidy and uses clean towels and cloths. Antibacterial sprays are used for tables, changing mats, potties and all surfaces used by children. Children are learning to routinely wash their hands after playing outside, using the toilet and before eating or cooking activities. Children do not handle the two dogs which live in their separate run in the garden.

Children are increasingly independent in taking care of their own general health because the childminder teaches them to be aware of their bodies and how to look after them. She is vigilant to prompt and assist children so that they have quickly become independent in using soap, managing the taps and drying their hands thoroughly. In addition, children usually walk to all the venues they visit each day. They use sun cream and hats when the summer sun is hot. They also put on their coats when it is wet or cold. The childminder reinforces the importance of healthy eating and teeth cleaning, although the latter is not carried out in her home.

Children enjoy lots of fresh air and exercise and go out each day. They regularly go to parks and toddler groups and always walk to these. The garden is used as much as possible too, consisting of lawn and shingle so that the slide and bats and balls can be used all the year round. This helps children to develop strong and healthy bodies. The accommodation also promotes children's emotional well-being because it is warm, clean, spacious and welcoming. Children know where things are and where to put their coats and shoes. They take off their outdoor shoes and go straight to the lounge or snug/play room to play.

Children are protected from becoming ill because the childminder uses good procedures and records to ensure this. Her sickness policy is clearly written and states that children do not attend if they are infectious or have been physically sick, but can be cared for if they are feeling unwell or have a regular cold or cough. First aid supplies are ready to use and the childminder has a good working knowledge of childhood illnesses, has a first aid certificate and has obtained written parent consent for any emergency treatment, should this be needed. There are also good accident and medicine recording systems which are accurate and up to date, but the childminder has not obtained written parent consent for medication which may need to be administered if a child becomes ill during the childminding day. This has not adversely affected any child so far, but children's health is compromised because currently no medication can be given until the parent is able to collect the child.

Children have a varied, nutritious and balanced diet and learn about healthy eating because the childminder talks about this and encourages children to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Meals are usually provided by parents and are organic and home cooked, supported by the childminder with healthy snacks of fruit and wholemeal toast. The childminder talks to children about the importance of healthy eating and encourages them to drink water, fruit juice or milk regularly. She has written a small policy note in her portfolio expressing her

intention to fully support healthy eating and she ensures that parents know what their child has eaten and drunk each day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, clean, secure and safe indoor environment. All exits are kept locked, but with accessible keys and all areas are kept very clean and clear of hazards, so that small children can move about safely and freely. The childminder is committed to safety through thorough supervision, for example, being outside with children as they use swings and slides. She has thought through and written plans for emergency backup and evacuation from the house, detailing what to do and who to call upon, if there was any emergency, from serious accident, to fire. She has talked this through with school age children but has not actually practised emergency evacuations to ensure that all children are familiar with what to do.

Children use a very good range of suitable and safe equipment and toys because the childminder selects and organises resources using her clear understanding of each child's needs and stage of development. Items are stored mainly in the snug/play room, but items are rotated so that children can find something to do as soon as they arrive. For example, there are abacus, books, building blocks, dolls and doll's bouncy chair and a dolls' house, all set up in the lounge where a toddler is playing. Children make full use of the whole house, utilising the kitchen under supervision to make salt dough and the bedrooms when the childminder's own children want to play up there. Equipment and toys are kept clean and children are involved in helping with this. Outside, the garden is secure and offers play equipment including a slide, bats, balls and skipping ropes.

Children are safe as they move around the setting because safety equipment is in place and the only equipment out is what children are actually using. Safety gates, socket covers and locks are in place and all dangerous items, such as cleaning materials and sharp knives, are inaccessible. A fire guard is used in the lounge and a safety gate is used at the bottom of the stairs if needed to keep toddlers safe. The childminder reminds children not to run around or compete over toys and they take no risks because the childminder is very safety conscious. For example, she never uses the hob or oven when there are young children present and is very cautious to keep hot drinks well out of the way. Children are kept safe on outings because the childminder is highly vigilant and experienced at managing children on foot. School age children are reminded constantly to wait for her and never to cross a road without her.

Children are protected well from abuse because the childminder has a good understanding of her role in child protection and is confident that she is able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. She is sure of what to do and who to inform should an allegation of abuse be made against her. She also displays her child abuse materials in her portfolio to ensure that parents are aware of her responsibilities in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and secure and are making positive relationships from a very early age because the childminder actively encourages children to share and cooperate together. She plays on the floor, at the table and outside with them to facilitate this and is skilled at keeping toddlers and school age children motivated and interested. For example, a toddler and three school age children all use the construction blocks to make towers together, or the childminder makes a batch of salt dough with the children which they all use to make models at the kitchen table.

Children respond well and show interest in what they do because the childminder is skilled and understands the short attention span of toddlers. She makes available a wealth of resources which captivate children's interest. For example, toddlers put the baby doll which can gurgle and cry into the baby seat; decant objects into the truck and trailer; examine the play figures and put them into the dolls' house and go outside to see the dogs in their run and play on the wet grass, collecting leaves. As small children play and investigate, they are improving their small motor coordination and control, their understanding of the world and their creative and social skills.

The childminder extends children's learning with some questions, for example, about colour, number and shape. She models clear speech and encourages toddlers to vocalise. Her intention is that children will learn through the variety of social and play experiences which she enjoys providing. Television is seldom watched, but real experiences include local outings to parks, shops, library, toddler groups and childminding groups. She is familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and tries to ensure that she provides for children to become strong, healthy, skilful communicators and competent learners. Her personal knowledge of each child's likes and dislikes and her understanding of each child's needs, means that she can question, challenge and support each one to help them develop in all areas.

Children quickly develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem because the childminder gives them choices and opportunities to be independent within a clear routine for each day. For example, toddlers are usually met at the school and then go out to toddler groups, parks or shops in the morning. They play while lunch is prepared and have a sleep in the afternoon before walking to school to collect the school age children. Toddlers can help to fetch things, such as their changing mat ready for nappy change and can choose what to play with from the dolls, abacus, blocks, dolls' house and puzzles which are set out in the lounge. They are confident in their environment and enjoy exploring the buttons for the television or computer, requiring ingenuity and constant distraction from the childminder to move them away from these and onto relevant toys. The childminder decides to prepare a bottle and successfully cuddles a toddler and reads to her which helps the child to wind down as she is very tired today.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children in the setting are developing a good sense of belonging and feel secure because the childminder includes them in all aspects of domestic life, alongside her own children when they

are home from school. Incorporated into every day activities is a clear sense that all routines are learning experiences where children can learn how to care for one another and the world around them. This is achieved by the kind and proactive approach of the childminder as she talks and involves the children throughout the day, teaching them about looking after one another and other people's things. As a result, children help to tidy away, treat toys and equipment well, use good manners and play nicely with other children, both at the house and when they are at toddler groups.

Children are becoming aware of wider society because they talk with the childminder about their home life, school life and the wider world. The childminder is interested and helps children to make links between parts of their experience. For example, they talk about their parents, their friends at school and what activities they are doing there. They also talk about their feelings and why there are rules wherever they go, so that children can try to make sense of their world. For example, children know how to sit quietly at the table for meals and not to jump on furniture or run indoors. Children have sufficient opportunities to consider and value diversity because the childminder has an open approach to equal opportunities issues. She presents positive images of race, gender and disability through resources, such as dolls, play figures, books, dressing up and role play props.

Children receive sound support to behave well because the childminder is calm, vigilant and consistent in her approach. She listens to children, is in tune with their mood and talks to them about what is happening and what their activity choices are. She gives praise and encouragement when children respond to her and conform, for example, when a toddler plays nicely with the play figures and blocks instead of fiddling with the television. The childminder continues to apply her house rules when parents are in the house, so that children are clear about who is in charge, even when their parents are present for a long period for handover. This means that children know that they should not ever shout, kick, run about, or be unkind. Documentation supports consistency about behaviour management if necessary because the childminder records any incidents of unwanted behaviour and any injuries which children may come with.

Children's needs are met through satisfactory partnership with parents. The childminder is open and communicative with parents and spends time giving and receiving effective verbal feedback from them. However, there are no diary books or notes to keep parents informed if time is short and children are not creating any scrapbooks or albums to record the activities or progress they make while they are with the childminder. New parents view a short portfolio of policies and certificates which give a flavour of the service provided, including a complaints policy which gives details of how Ofsted may be contacted.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder has a consistently high regard for the well-being of children and is building upon her knowledge and experience over time. She has attended all the required training for childminding, including first aid, and has recently embarked upon the National Vocational Qualification in Child Care and Education to Level 3. Her childminding practice is forming the work experience and evidence of her knowledge towards this qualification. Vetting procedures

have been undertaken by Ofsted so that the childminder can demonstrate her suitability, although this is not shown currently in her portfolio.

The childminder has a clear sense of purpose and direction and uses her time and resources very well to support children's care, learning and play. She keeps group sizes small and manages the daily routine so that all children have their individual needs met and are well stimulated. For example, toddlers enjoy their role play and construction activities as well as the social opportunity of attending various toddler groups.

Procedures work well in practice to promote children's health, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. For example, all necessary parent agreements, child details and records of accidents, medication and incidents are kept confidentially with each child's record or in record books with a separate page for each entry. This information is very well organised so that good care can be given. The policy and procedures portfolio also clearly outlines the running of the service. However, the daily register is not kept up to date as children arrive and depart. This jeopardises children's safety in the event of an emergency, such as a fire, because details of exactly who is in the house cannot be seen.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted 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

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 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 the daily register is kept accurate and up to date at all times in case of any emergency

- ensure that there is parent permission for any medication that may need to be administered, should a child become ill during the childminding day.

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