

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	224424
Inspection date	19 February 2008
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 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 1987 and works with an assistant. She lives with her husband and two adult children in Stoke-on-Trent. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house and the bathroom on the first floor are used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding four children under eight years. The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The childminder transports children to local schools. The family has a dog, ghekkos, a tree frog and a snake.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Hygiene procedures implemented are good and help to promote children's health. Children know that they must wash their hands when they have been to the toilet. They use anti-bacterial gel to clean their hands when they hold the snake in their hands and good instruction by the childminder ensures they are cleaned effectively. Nappy changing procedures ensure that cross-contamination is limited. There are clear procedures for the exclusion of sick and infectious children and there is a written policy with a list of incubation periods available. This helps children to remain healthy.

Generally, procedures for the recording of accidents and medication are effective. Details of the dosage and the time any medication is to be given is fully discussed with parents and the childminder keeps detailed records of any administered. However, prior written consent is not always obtained for long-term courses of medicine to be administered. Consequently, children's well-being is not fully promoted.

Children benefit from a varied range of healthy and nutritional meals and snacks. Lunches are home-made and include shepherd's pie, chicken dinners and pasta with vegetables available at every meal followed by fruit or yoghurt. For snacks children have raisins, sultanas and carrot and celery sticks. The childminder helps children to develop an understanding of healthy food through growing fruit and vegetables such as carrots and strawberries at a nearby allotment. This helps children to develop a positive attitude to healthy eating.

Physical development is promoted well. Children visit the park and Lido regularly and often play in the garden and walk to the allotment to dig the soil for the plants. Indoors, children proudly show how they can do star jumps and roll over on the floor and they enjoy touching their toes, knees and nose as they bend and stretch. As a result, children are developing a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There is appropriate space within the home which enables children to move freely from room to room as they play. Areas are maintained well and the environment is welcoming with posters of the alphabet, numbers and a calendar displayed to enhance children's learning. There is a good range of toys for indoors and out and they are organised in boxes so that children can make decisions about their play. Children make independent choices as they go to fetch the bag so that they can shop for the food.

Safety is promoted well in the home. The childminder makes visual risk assessments each day to ensure all areas are safe and precautions such as safety gates and a fire guard allow children to play safely. Doors are kept locked and the outside play area is secure with the greenhouse area fenced off so that children cannot access. Children learn the importance of keeping themselves safe through clear guidance and boundaries set by the childminder. Fire drills are regularly practised and children know that when they hear the bell they need to stand still and then go to the door and go outside. They fully understand the procedures for crossing the road as they explain that they need to look both ways, hold hands and cross when there are no cars.

The childminder has a good understanding of the correct child protection procedures to follow for reporting concerns and has a written policy in place giving clear guidelines. She has an effective knowledge of the signs and symptoms that may alert to child abuse and has the relevant national guidance. This helps to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The 'Birth to three matters' framework is used well to enhance the play opportunities for children's learning. The childminder plans activities for each week to ensure there is a wide range of experiences for children. These include music and movement, painting and learning how to care for others. Daily observations of children's play and progress are made with photographs and examples of art work stored in their folders and learning targets are set for the next stage in their development. Photographs show that children visit Northwood Nurseries and the vets, how they explore different textures such as pasta, coffee granules and cotton wool and engage in varied craft activities.

Children enjoy playing in the role play area making the dinner and drinks for everyone. They show much enthusiasm as they put the plates in the microwave and pretend to go shopping to buy the food. Good interaction from the childminder extends their learning as she encourages children to develop their understanding of colour as they say what colour spoons and plates they have. Children's imagination is stimulated effectively through the childminder suggesting that they might want to go for a drive. They sit on the chairs and pretend that they are driving to the shops and then to Blackpool. During this play children's language skills are promoted well with key questioning to encourage children to explain what they are doing.

Support from the childminder is good and interaction is positive at all times. Cuddles are given to children as they sit on the sofa to watch the television and they thoroughly enjoy tickling games such as 'Round and round the garden'. Children are happy and have a fun time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There is a suitable range of resources to promote positive images of diversity. There are books and jigsaws and the childminder accesses other equipment on occasions such as small world equipment to extend children's understanding. Children look at maps of different areas in the world such as Asia and make pictures of a balloon which they use to travel around the world and talk about the different areas. This helps to develop children's understanding of others. Children are involved in the local community through visiting local places of interest which helps them to develop their social skills. Good support is given to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the childminder demonstrates a clear understanding of the importance of working in partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure their needs are fully met.

Good procedures are in place to manage children's behaviour. Each child has a star chart to reward when they are kind to each other and praise is given when children use their manners to ask for their drink. This helps to raise children's self-esteem. They respond positively to the boundaries set and get off the table when the childminder tells them to. Children learn to share the crayons as they colour their pictures and as a result their social skills are developing well.

The childminder builds positive relationships with parents. Parents are given a pack of the relevant policies on how the setting operates to ensure they are fully informed. There is a written complaints policy and a system to ensure any complaints are recorded. Children's individual needs are discussed and recorded including their likes and dislikes. Daily discussion with parents informs them of their child's well-being and diaries which record children's progress are regularly shared. Consequently, children's needs are met well.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder develops her practice and extends her knowledge of childcare issues through support from other childminders and development officers from the early years. For example, training received on the 'Birth to three matters' framework ensures that children experience a wide range of activities. This contributes to the quality of care given to children. The childminder demonstrates a good knowledge of the national standards with written policies in place to fully inform parents. Documentation for children's details and their attendance meets requirements. This promotes the welfare of children.

All required suitability checks are in place for all persons living or working in the household and the childminder has suitable procedures to monitor the care practices of assistants. However, there is no procedure to ensure assistants are aware of their responsibility to notify the childminder of any changes in their suitability. This does not fully promote the well-being of children.

Children are relaxed and at home in the well-organised environment and are able to develop their independence as they play. The childminder shows positive interaction at all times as she engages in children's play and extends their learning which maintains their interest well. Consequently, children are happy and enjoy their time in the setting. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to: complete an appropriate first aid course that includes training in first aid for infants and young children; devise a written procedure for child protection and share this with parents and make available to parents a written statement that provides details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint.

Following the last inspection the childminder attended first aid training. The childminder's first aid certificate has been renewed again and now expires in 2010. This ensures that children's medical needs can be met if an emergency arose. Written policies are devised for child protection and complaints which fully inform parents of the procedures that would be followed and these are included in a parent pack. Consequently, this promotes the welfare of children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- devise a system to ensure continuing suitability of assistants
- ensure prior written consent to administer any medication is obtained.

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