



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	224430
Inspection date	29 January 2007
Inspector	Maxine Williams
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 1968 and works with an assistant on a daily basis. She lives with her husband in Smallthorne, Stoke-on-Trent. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed paved area available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time, seven when the assistant is present. She is currently minding three children under five all day, and one child over five before and after school. She also cares for children over the age of eight. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities, which contribute to their good health. They discover, use and increase their physical control in exciting daily indoor and outdoor experiences. Garden games and regular indoor exercise sessions help to progress children's physical abilities. They develop knowledge of the way activity has an effect on their bodies and all are able to rest and be active according to their needs. The childminder and her assistant work well together, their sound understanding of each child's stage of development means that children are confident to try out new skills, ask for help when needed and set their own limits within a secure environment.

Children are cared for in warm, clean surroundings where they learn the importance of good hygiene. They thrive because the childminder and her assistant actively promote children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle and good hygiene procedures. Children are shown a video on how to wash hands to get them really clean and remove all germs. As a result their understanding of hygiene and how to protect themselves from infection is developing well. Procedures for accidents and medication are clear and understood and the assistant has a current first aid certificate. Therefore, children are protected in the event of an accident or medical emergency.

Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet and making healthy choices. They are offered a choice of drinks and snacks throughout the day. The childminder takes account of the wishes of parents and the children's preferences to provide healthy meals that appeal to the children and meet their nutritional needs. Children enjoy growing fruit and vegetables in the greenhouse and in pots in the garden. They learn about how the fruit and vegetables grow and then they help to make meals with the produce they have grown. The childminder talks to children about healthy eating and good nutrition. This contributes significantly to children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because the childminder is attentive and uses detailed risk assessments to reduce possible hazards. This means they are able to move around safely, freely and independently. Both the childminder and her assistant have a suitable understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits. Satisfactory priority is given to promoting children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe and to maintaining children's safety outside the home. This means that children learn about potential dangers and develop their knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm.

Children select activities from a good range of developmentally-appropriate resources, which meet safety standards. These are organised effectively in storage containers in the well-organised dedicated play room, children are encouraged to independently access toys and resources. The childminder has a satisfactory awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.

However, she is unsure of the correct procedure to follow when a concern arises. As a result children's welfare is not fully safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and comfortable at the childminder's house. They respond very well to each other and develop their independence as they choose between a large assortment of toys, books and activities, which are interesting and appealing. They use their imagination as they pretend to prepare meals, make cakes and serve drinks with the large kitchen play set and accessories. They are engrossed as they play with the stickle bricks, using them to represent birthday cakes for the childminder, stacking them to form the cake with candles and to form a shower, two year olds concentrate well as they try to make the hose of the shower strong enough to support the head. Children enjoy watching favourite videos, joining in with the songs and dances as they watch. They take pleasure in participating in the childminding activities and are confident in their relationship with the childminder and her assistant.

Children's budding communication skills are developed through interesting and stimulating conversations; they talk about what noises different animals make, and sing 'Mary has a little lamb' when they see the sheep. The childminder encourages children's understanding of nature and how things grow and develop by encouraging them to cultivate vegetables and fruit, children watch the transformation as the leaves start to sprout on the trees and as the tomatoes change colour and grow, until they are big enough to pick and use in recipes or for snack time. The childminder and her assistant have a satisfactory awareness of the range of experiences which enable children to make better use of their intellectual and imaginative capabilities. However, they have not accessed training or sought to extend their knowledge of child development and play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's understanding of right and wrong is increased as they respond to gentle reminders to care for their environment, the childminding resources and each other. Clear behaviour management methods implemented by the childminder and her assistant help children to develop their understanding of appropriate behaviour and they respond well to the boundaries set. Children take turns, share and demonstrate care and concern for each other, playing together amicably. The childminder has a satisfactory knowledge of ensuring inclusion and the importance of working in partnership with parents to meet children's needs. Children's individual needs are discussed with parents and additional needs are considered. There is a small range of resources in place to promote positive images of different cultures and disability. The childminder also uses the television and discussion to increase children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others.

The childminder fosters very good relationships with parents, which contributes considerably to children's well-being in the childminding setting. She seeks parent's views on their child's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting and on a regular basis during their

time there. Thank you cards and letters of support from parents are extremely positive about the care the childminder provides for their children. Information is shared verbally with parents and there are policies and procedures in place to inform parents of the childminder's practice. However, the assistant is regularly left in sole charge of the children and written parental consent is not in place. Consequently, it is not clear whether parents are fully informed of who is caring for their child at any given time.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children are comfortable and feel secure in the well-ordered surroundings. Indoor and outdoor space is organised to provide a satisfactory range of play opportunities for children. This enables them to initiate and extend their own play and learning. All legally required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being, is in place. Records of children's attendance are kept; although the hours of children's attendance are not recorded effectively, as children are marked as being present but times of arrival and departure are not recorded. The childminder provides verbal information for parents to ensure that they are aware of the care that she provides. This promotes stability and continuity in the children's care. The childminder employs an assistant who supports her in providing care and activities for the children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was agreed that the childminder should improve fire safety precautions, complete a first aid course and establish written agreements with parents. There is now a smoke alarm, which conforms to BS EN standards, available at every level of the house and the assistant has completed an appropriate first aid course that includes training in first aid for infants and young children. This means that in the event of an accident or emergency the children are protected from harm and appropriately treated. There are now clear and detailed contracts in place between the childminder and parents, detailing the expectations of both parties as to the care of the children, and written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment is now in place. As a result parents are well informed about the care that their child is receiving.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 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):

- ensure the daily record of attendance is accurately kept, with times of children's arrival and departure recorded
- obtain signatures of consent for leaving the assistant in sole charge of children
- further develop knowledge and understanding of child protection issues including reporting procedures

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