

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	304806
Inspection date	21 June 2007
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 1999. She lives with her partner and three teenage children in a residential area within walking distance of Crewe town centre. All of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed rear garden. There are currently six children on roll, four of whom are under eight years. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and attends local toddler groups.

There are a dog, cats, rabbit, chickens and bearded dragon reptiles on the premises and two ponies kept locally which are regularly visited.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's physical health is good because the childminder teaches children to wash their hands after handling the animals or using the toilet and before meals or cooking activities. The childminder conducts suitable nappy changing procedures and is sufficiently vigilant to make sure that children's noses are clean. The house is clean and tidy and children enjoy role play

and real activities to help them to learn about how to keep clean and hygienic. For example, children help to clean the horses in the holidays and small children often play with the small brush, dustpan and mop.

Children are protected from becoming ill through well understood procedures and records to ensure this. First aid supplies are ready to use and the childminder has an up to date first aid qualification. She has a good working knowledge of childhood illnesses and has obtained written parent consent for any emergency treatment, should this be needed. She has also obtained written parental permission for the use of sun creams and detailed consents for children to be involved with the horses, chickens, rabbits, dogs, cats and reptiles kept both on and off the premises. Medication records are kept and signed by parents, but there is one instance where the parent has not signed their instructions for the medication to be given. This makes it unclear whether the parent actually endorses the instruction.

Children enjoy an enormous amount of fresh air and exercise, walking to toddler groups or soft play centres wherever possible and they regularly participate with other children in dance, cycle rides, nature walks and sports days. They also spend a lot of time growing and tending plants and watching the wildlife in the ponds and flowers in the rear garden. These activities promote children's physical health.

Children have an extremely healthy diet, enjoying mostly vegetarian and organic foods. They are involved in growing soft fruits and some vegetables in the garden as well as collecting eggs from the chickens. They also sometimes go to a family run allotment. As they do this, they are learning about the real sources of food and how to enjoy a varied, nutritious and balanced diet. Water is always available as children play although the baby present did not have a drink during the inspection.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor environment. They enjoy free movement in the open plan lounge and dining area and have a good variety of floor and table top play space available to them at all times. The furniture and effects are largely made of natural materials which are robust, but contribute to a calm atmosphere. The lounge door is kept closed so that the bottom of the stairs does not require a stair gate and the fire is fully guarded and fixed for the toddling children who hang onto it. There is a safety gate to the kitchen so that children's access is restricted when there are dangers, such as things boiling in the hob. The childminder is committed to safety through thorough supervision and through minimising risks. For example, she ensures that children can safely use all of the garden by having the ponds fully covered with fixed metal grids and the chickens are fenced in.

The childminder has had a fire safety check and a ten year smoke detector fitted downstairs along with a fire blanket ready to use. However, the upstairs smoke detector is out of use currently because it requires a new battery. The childminder has thought through her plans for emergency evacuation of children from the house and practises this when all the children are present in the school holidays. This ensures that all children are familiar with what to do. In addition, the childminder has made back up arrangements with another childminder to cover in case an emergency happens to her while children are in her care.

Children use a wide range of inspiring, suitable and safe equipment with a natural emphasis. The childminder selects and organises resources using her clear understanding of each child's

needs and stage of development and stores items in baskets, bags and boxes which are inviting and intriguing. For example, the childminder has a number of story sack and props bags containing puppets, soft toys, books and props to enable children to act out stories. In addition, the childminder makes excellent use of resource boxes from a local toy library so that she can provide variety and detail for children along themes about particular cultures or subjects, such as road safety or circus. She has also put together a number of wooden musical instruments and natural materials in baskets for children to explore. In addition, she provides a wealth of craft and natural materials for activities, such as, flower pressing. Watching nature is an intrinsic part of activities, for example, encouraging butterflies, bees, ladybirds and birds in the garden through use of special equipment and feeders.

Children are well protected from abuse because the childminder has a good understanding of her role in child protection and is able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. She has attended recent training to ensure that she is up to date and keeps accessible information, policies and contact numbers in case she needs to act upon concerns about any child. She also knows what to do if an allegation of abuse is made against her.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very content and secure and are making positive relationships from the outset because the childminder encourages children exceedingly well to share, socialise and cooperate together. She plans a wealth of inspiring activities, many of which are outdoors or at local venues. For example, pre-school children enjoy a number of toddler groups and regularly go out on trips to parks or farms with excellent play apparatus and animals to interact with. The childminder is also highly skilled at providing play experiences to suit all ages in the school holidays, organising first class days out in the countryside or out at the stables, using basic equipment to make up sports and obstacle courses in the ménage there. She is highly motivated to provide children with optimal challenge, even in the small garden, where they can collect the eggs from the chickens, observe the squirrel in his dray in the tree, or watch the lifecycle of the frog spawn as it evolves into frogs. Wherever they are, the childminder uses her time profitably with children, talking and questioning them to extend their knowledge and understanding.

The childminder has great confidence in working with babies and toddlers too. She sings, uses musical instruments, puppets, toy phones, books and dolls to great effect as she stimulates children's senses so that they are beginning to walk, examine things, vocalise, laugh, listen, feel and look. She does not formally plan or record what children can do, but she takes lots of photos and has high expectations of what children can achieve. She links activities together, for example, using a frog sound musical instrument, a frog puppet and frog stories and role plays to support children's observations of real frogs in the pond outside. With pre-school and school age children, she is also successful in helping them to enjoy and experience the wealth of the natural and multi-cultural world around them as they grow strawberries to eat and dress up and try the food of people from other countries. Experiences such as these, help children of all ages to develop enthusiasm, confidence and versatile social skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children in the setting have a good sense of belonging and feel secure because the childminder fully includes each one of them and some have been coming for many years. Her own children are involved with all the children, particularly in the school holidays or after school, which adds to the welcome that children experience. The childminder encourages children to talk about their families and forges close professional relationships with parents. The childminder asks parents to read and sign up to a full set of policies and procedures. In addition, contracts, consents and child particulars are reviewed regularly to ensure that they continue to meet children's needs. This means that children are confident that all the adults involved in their care are communicating well and concentrating upon their welfare. As a result, they feel at home, help to tidy away, treat toys and equipment well and play nicely with other children both at the house and when they are out. Children have very good 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, dolls, dressing up and books. She supports the work on diversity issues being pursued in schools and devises themes where children can try cooking, craft, role play and dressing up activities relating to varied festivals and cultures.

Children behave very well because the childminder is always calm, vigilant and consistent in her approach. She listens to children, talks to them about what is happening and what their activity choices are, and has high expectations of them. She distracts and provides plenty of resources and is vigilant so that small children do not fight over the same toy. The childminder gives ample praise when children conform and cooperate by sharing nicely. Documentation is in place to support consistency in behaviour management if necessary because the childminder uses an accident and incident book any incidents of unwanted behaviour and any injuries which children come with. However, this has not been used to record any incidents involving behaviour thus far and the childminder is not completely clear about the need to record these.

Children's needs are met well through good partnership with parents. Written parent references state that she is reliable, caring, punctual, safe and provides very good trips and opportunities to be around animals. The childminder is business-like and communicative with parents, displaying her certificate and Ofsted poster and spending time giving and receiving effective verbal feedback. She also gives parents photos and gifts of things that the children have made for keepsakes. The system for recording complaints is also very available to parents because the complaints policy and the Ofsted format for recording them is shown to all parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder has a consistently high regard for the well-being of all children and builds upon her knowledge and experience well over time. She regularly attends training for childminding, including recently attending training on the 'Birth to three matters' framework, story sacks, disability discrimination, first aid and food hygiene. She is motivated to meet the requirements of the new early years foundation stage, evaluates the quality of her provision and is aiming high in her provision of childcare.

The childminder has a very strong sense of purpose and direction and uses her time and resources very well to support children's care, learning and play. She manages the daily routine so that she knows exactly who is coming, when and where they are going. This ensures that all children

have their individual needs met, are well stimulated and have her attention for the maximum amount of time possible.

Policies and procedures work very well in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. For example, all necessary parent agreements, child details, consents and records of accidents and medication are properly kept with each child's record or in suitable record books. In addition, the daily register is always completed as children arrive and depart, which ensures children's safety in the event of an emergency. There is a display file containing certificates, policies and useful information which give parents a flavour of the childminder's approach and responsibilities. However, this does not give a clear flavour of the childminder's particular emphasis on living an outdoor, natural and healthy lifestyle. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were four recommendations made at the last inspection and these have all been addressed thoroughly to improve children's health, safety and welfare in the setting. The childminder has provided a detailed child protection policy and undertaken training on this subject so that she knows what to do should an allegation be made against her. She has also composed detailed parental consent forms for children to be in proximity to all the animals. She no longer allows children to play unsupervised in the rear yard area and she has extended the resources and activity ideas she has for helping children to appreciate diverse cultures and disabilities.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1st 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

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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 parents always sign their consent to the giving of medication when they give the instructions
- ensure that incidents involving behaviour and physical intervention by the childminder are recorded.

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