

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	209570
Inspection date	09 July 2007
Inspector	Maxine Williams

Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 1990. She lives with her husband and adult son in Leek, Staffordshire. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is 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 five, all on a part-time basis. The childminder assists in running a local parent and toddler group. The family has a pet rabbit.

The childminder is a member of an approved childminding network, she is currently in receipt of funding for early education for three and four-year-olds and has a NVQ Level 3 in Childcare and Education. The childminder occasionally works with an assistant.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in warm, clean surroundings where they learn the importance of good hygiene. They thrive because the childminder actively promotes children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle and good hygiene routines. Effective hygiene procedures such as ensuring children wash their hands before meals and an appropriate nappy changing routine means that children's awareness of personal cleanliness is promoted. The childminder demonstrates a sound knowledge of how to promote children's good health. For example, she protects them from infection by ensuring parents fully understand that children who have contagious diseases cannot be cared for. Procedures for accidents and medication are in place, there is a first aid box available and the childminder has a current first aid certificate. However, parental permission to seek medical advice or treatment in an emergency is not individual to each child. As a result, in an emergency it is not clear that permission has been obtained, therefore delays in treatment are possible. Children's understanding of how to keep themselves healthy is promoted through topics and conversations. They discuss why they need to wear coats when it is raining outside and why they need sun screen and hats in sunny weather. This means that children begin to recognise ways to keep themselves healthy and to take responsibility for their own well-being.

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 visits to the local park help to progress children's physical abilities. The childminder's 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. The childminder provides a good range of healthy meals and snacks that appeal to the children and meet their nutritional needs. Meals are freshly prepared for the children and they enjoy sharing a nutritious snack of bananas, satsumas and sultanas. Their understanding of the benefits of a nutritious diet and making healthy choices is promoted through games and conversations. The childminder talks to children about which foods are good for them and three-year-olds are able to describe how satsumas are juicy and if they are squeezed orange juice comes out of them. The childminder has achieved a healthy eating award and completed training in food hygiene. She has a comprehensive knowledge of healthy eating and good nutrition guidelines, which contributes significantly to children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because the childminder is attentive and performs risk assessments on the premises to reduce possible hazards. This means they are able to move around safely, freely and independently. The childminder has a good understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits. She gives high priority to promoting children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe and to maintaining children's safety outside the home. Topics and activities help children learn about potential dangers and develop their knowledge of how to protect themselves from harm.

Children select activities from a wide range of high quality developmentally-appropriate resources, which meet safety standards. These are organised effectively in storage containers at an accessible height to encourage independent access. The childminder protects and supports children's welfare and has all of the necessary policies and procedures in place. Fire safety precautions are effective, fire fighting equipment is in place and the childminder has devised an evacuation plan to be followed in the event of an emergency. The childminder has a secure understanding of child protection procedures, in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines; this ensures children are protected from harm or neglect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and comfortable at the childminder's house. They respond 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. One and three-year-old children independently initiate a musical session, turning on the CD player and using instruments to make music along to the songs. Ten month old babies are encouraged to join in activities, they are able say 'Quack, quack' while the childminder and other children are singing 'Five little ducks'. Children's budding communication skills are developed through interesting and stimulating conversations; they are encouraged to talk about the story during story time and are asked to recall events in the story when playing the restaurant game. One year olds enjoy playing with the dolls, pushing the pram around the room and carefully covering the doll back up when the blanket slips off. Children are learning to recognise colours and numbers with the childminder's support; three year olds are able to correctly identify the numerals when playing with the magnets and say that they have a purple and a yellow number three. The youngest children make very good progress because the childminder recognises the uniqueness of each child. Close and considerate relationships provide children with a healthy dependence on the childminder, while enabling them to develop a strong sense of self. They often approach the childminder for cuddles.

Children enjoy participating in the childminding activities, they are confident in their relationship with the childminder, her family and each other. They play joyfully together and with adults using resources, such as soft toys, building blocks, small world toys and outdoor equipment, appropriate to their age and ability. The childminder has a very good awareness of the array of experiences which facilitate children to make better use of their intellectual and imaginative capabilities. For example, she encourages one-year-old children to wind up musical toys and to press the buttons that correspond to the question. The childminder provides children with stimulating resources such as lava lamps, fibre optic resources, rain makers, bubble tubes and magic rods. These resources encourage the stimulation of all of the children's senses, including sight, sound, touch and smell. Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they participate in an assorted range of creative and sensory experiences. For example, they enjoy taking part in baking activities, they make fairy cakes and take about how the eggs feel smooth and cold, three year olds are wary of cracking the eggs, but willing to do so, with the childminder's support. Children are given lots of individual attention to help them feel comfortable and more confident. All children, particularly babies, benefit from close physical

contact with the childminder, who give them lots of smiles and continuously talk to them. This helps them develop their sense of trust.

Early Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The childminder has a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a secure understanding of how young children learn and progress. Children are making significant progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. The childminder uses positive methods to maintain children's interest; she sits with children, ask questions, provides help and support and assists in extending their play. Planning contains sufficient detail to enable the childminder to make the best use of activities and experiences to promote the learning of children in all areas. The system for assessing children's progress is robust enough to record children's levels of progress and assess how children are progressing towards the early learning goals. However, next steps in learning are not identified in either the individual assessments or in planning. Subsequently, it is not always clear how children's learning needs are to be fully extended.

Children's awareness of the community and the wider world is increased through activities and the positive attitude of the childminder. There are topics to help children learn about nature and about how things grow and change through activities, such as going to visit the monkey reserve, going on a bug hunt and growing sunflowers. They take part in different topics, children learn about how both sunlight and the light from a torch cast shadows and they learn about the effect exercise has on their bodies when taking part in the sports day topic. The childminder organised a visit from local fire fighters and their fire engine, the children were able to see what the equipment on the fire engine is for and talk about how fires are extinguished. The childminder uses resources such as books and small world figures to help children develop an understanding of other cultures.

Children are involved and they enjoy taking part in the available activities. They are secure with the childminder and have good self-esteem. They are confident in their play and are interested in the available activities. Children demonstrate consideration and are usually polite to each other, helping each other to get bikes from out of the shed and playing together amicably. Although children usually play together well their behaviour is not always managed effectively, which can disrupt the usually calm and caring surroundings. Their self-help skills are promoted well; they are all encouraged to use the toilet and wash their hands independently and cut up their own fruit at snack time. Children speak clearly and assertively, discussing their likes, dislikes and home experiences, such as a three-year-old discussing that elastic bands are used to hold packs of letters together while disclosing that they have a parent who is a postal worker.

Children can count confidently and consistently recognise and use numbers to support their play. For example, three-year-olds are able to count up to 10 from memory and are able to recognise written numbers out of sequence, the childminder uses play dough to form numerals and children are able to identify all numbers made. There are resources in place for activities such as measuring and comparing, these are used effectively to promote children's learning. For example there are a variety of containers in the rice tray which children are able to use to fill up and empty bottles. Children are able to independently fill and empty them and with the childminder's assistance are able to construct funnels out of card, which they then use to fill

up bottles with rice. The childminder effectively uses a variety of resources to extend children's understanding of shape, position, speed and pattern such as making concertina fans with paper and talking about the position of competitors on sports day and who was the fastest and slowest.

The childminder spends time reading to children and encourages their understanding and imagination by providing story sacks for favourite stories, in order that children are able to participate in the story. For example, while reading 'Handra's surprise', children are able to wear masks of the animals in the story, as soon as they appear and find the cut-outs of the fruits that are mentioned. Children are eager to find the correct mask and fruit and excitedly shout out the correct answer when asked how many fruits are left and when recalling all of the animals in the story. Three year old children are able to recognise their own name and to recognise other words with the same initial letter. Role play games are used effectively to encourage early writing skills, children pretend to write orders in the restaurant game and they are encouraged to write their name on their certificates for sports day.

Children enjoy physical play regularly with the good range of play equipment in the rear garden. There are regular opportunities to use ride on toys and to play physical games. They enjoy taking part in a physical activity for the topic of holidays, when the holiday journey is recreated via play tunnels, climbing obstacles, cones and mats. This extends children's development of physical skills, as well as promoting children's knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy. An awareness of space is developed as children aim beanbags at drawings of flowers on the ground, trying to hit the target. Fine manipulative skills are developing and children demonstrate good control as they use chop sticks, pens and magnets.

Children respond well to a wide range of creative activities. They enjoy making flower garlands with tissue paper and shearing elastic and concentrate well as they make shadow puppets with cut-out pictures and straws. Children are confident in naming colours; they are able to say what colour the play dough is and know that if white is added the colour gets lighter. Imaginative games are played daily and children are eager to join in and pretend to be the waiter in the restaurant, taking the orders and then preparing the rice for the customers and carefully handing over the chopsticks. They have regular opportunities to play with musical instruments and explore musical sounds and rhythm. For example, children use creative session to make their own musical instruments and then are able to use their 'shakers' to join in when they sing songs and play music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a good range of opportunities to find out about themselves and each other, and to gain knowledge of the wider world through planned activities and outings to local places of interest. There is a good range of resources in place to promote positive images of disability and different cultures and the childminder uses topics, activities and discussion to increase children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others. Children's individual needs are discussed with parents and additional needs are considered. The childminder has a good awareness of disability and learning difficulties. She has attended training in 'Equality in Practice'

and 'Special Educational Needs' and is pro-active in ensuring that all of the children in her care receive appropriate support and experiences.

Children make themselves at home and play amicably together most of the time, confidently choosing activities and requesting drinks and snacks when they want them. They increase self-esteem and confidence as they present their views and make choices and decisions. The childminder has a clear behaviour management policy in place and has attended training in behaviour management. However, at times children use inappropriate methods to resolve disputes and do not always respect the boundaries set. When the childminder is present she helps them to understand that the behaviour is unacceptable and promotes positive behaviour. When the childminder is not present the children sometimes forget what they have been taught.

The childminder fosters very good relationships with parents, which contributes considerably to children's well-being in the childminding setting. 'Thank you' cards and letters of support from parents are extremely positive about the care the childminder provides for their children. Specific comments from parents include: the childminder provides a 'happy, safe and stimulating environment in which the child has flourished beyond their wildest expectations'. Information on children's development is shared with parents verbally and there are policies and procedures in place to inform parents of the childminder's practice. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive early education is good. The childminder provides information on the Foundation Stage to parents and copies of the planning are given to parents so they know what their child is learning in the setting. Children have individual files outlining the topics they have covered, with observations recorded, this file also shows clearly how they are progressing towards the, 'Early Learning Goals'. Parents are able to look at this file and discuss it with the childminder to see how well their child is progressing or where they need support.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are comfortable and feel secure in the well-ordered surroundings. Indoor and outdoor space is organised well to provide extensive play opportunities for children. This enables them to initiate and extend their own play and learning. The childminder successfully uses the policies and procedures to support the well-being, care and learning of children. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is regularly reviewed. The childminder has undertaken an excellent level of training. She sees ongoing training as an important way of developing her knowledge and expertise in childcare issues. She has undertaken a wide range of courses, for example, 'Outdoor play', 'Treasure baskets', 'Foundation Stage planning' and 'Persona Doll Training'. 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. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The childminder is a member of the local childminding network and is accredited to provide early education to children over three years old. The childminder's commitment to developing her expertise and her attention to the planning of the educational programme helps to ensure that activities are purposeful and interesting for children. Consequently, children are eager to learn and participate in the activities available. The childminder's comprehensive planning and

recording of progress ensures she monitors that children are making good overall progress for their ability.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was agreed that the childminder should ensure that a record is kept of the assistant's hours of work. The hours that assistants work are now recorded. As a result it is clear which adults are looking after children.

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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is individual to each child and contains their name
- develop and implement consistent strategies to manage inappropriate behaviour and encourage children to solve disputes in an effective manner

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- use the assessments made of children's progress to help develop the detail in the planning for the next steps in their learning

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