

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	304030
Inspection date	13 August 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 1987. She lives with her husband and adult daughter in a house in Wistaston, near Crewe. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed rear garden for outside play. The childminder walks or uses public transport, and takes and collects children from local schools and pre-schools. She currently has seven children on roll. She regularly takes children to local childminding and toddler groups.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's physical health is good because the childminder has a good knowledge of child development and childhood illnesses. She understands how to prevent the spread of infection and teaches children to wash their hands after using the toilet or playing outside, and before meals or cooking activities. The childminder conducts suitable nappy changing procedures and easily settles babies to sleep so that they are comfortable and have plenty of rest. She skilfully develops children's independence through encouragement and praise as they toilet train, or

as older ones help to sort the rubbish for recycling. However, she continues to help and supervise them until she is sure that they are competent to manage their own hygiene well.

Children are protected from becoming ill through straightforward, but carefully used 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 obtained written parent consent for any emergency treatment and medication consents and instructions from parents are kept, for example, while babies are teething.

Children enjoy daily fresh air and exercise, walking to school, pre-schools and toddler groups. They regularly play in the garden, grow plants, such as tomatoes and sun flowers, or feed the birds. In the holidays, outdoor trips to the maize maze or parks are popular, so that children enjoy the outdoors and keep physically fit. The childminder also makes use of local competitions for ideas which endorse children's learning about physical health. For example, school-age children compose a picture of children playing on a trampoline and eating fruit, to enter a drawing competition on the theme of keeping healthy.

Children have a generally healthy diet, enjoying plenty of fruit, such as grapes, raisins or apple for snacks, although children's main meals are now all supplied by their parents. The childminder is successful in encouraging children to drink water or fruit juice to keep themselves well hydrated as they play. She also talks to them about healthy eating and drinking as they role play using the tea set.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor environment. They enjoy free movement downstairs, using the hall and open plan lounge and dining room where there is a good variety of floor and table top play space. The kitchen is made safe for use because it is used for dining, messy play and provides access to the downstairs toilet. For example, base cupboards have locks on them, the washing machine and electrical goods are inaccessible, and all chemicals, glass and knives are inaccessible to children. The childminder is vigilant to ensure that crawling babies are not knocked over when the lounge door is opened and cannot get hold of toys with small parts. A comprehensive risk assessment has been devised, but this is not used regularly because the childminder acts upon her own instincts and experience to keep the environment safe.

Children use a range of suitable and safe equipment. The childminder keeps resources in the lounge and selects things which are appropriate for the children in attendance. Items are in cupboards, bags and boxes, but are stacked up so that children cannot always see and get out what they want for themselves without help. There are good outdoor games and play equipment and some craft, messy and baking activities undertaken. However, sensory and everyday objects and tasks are less often utilised for helping to develop children's investigative skills and senses.

Children are kept safe on outings because the childminder is highly vigilant when out on foot. She uses designated crossings and keeps to familiar routes, insisting that walking children stay close by using reins or the buggy board. School age children know that they must hold hands and always walk beside or just in front of the childminder. Children are adequately protected from abuse because the childminder does not allow children of any age to go off to public toilets without her. She has sufficient understanding of the signs and symptoms of child abuse, and she keeps accessible information and contact numbers in case she needs to act upon

concerns about any child. However, she is unsure about 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 because the childminder provides a very warm, 'home from home' environment. She talks to children about their interests and what they have been doing, and her own adult children get involved with this too. She prepares for their visits, buying suitable activity books for school age children to do in the holidays and providing ideas and resources for them to make cards and presents for their parents' birthdays. She organises fun days out at places of interest, such as farms. Wherever they are, the childminder uses her time profitably with children, talking, questioning and listening to them to extend their knowledge and understanding.

The childminder has great confidence in working with babies and pre-school children too. She sings and uses books, puzzles, role play tea sets and small world figures to stimulate children's small motor and communication skills, and their knowledge of colour, shape and number. She provides baking activities, plenty of outdoor play and social opportunities at toddler groups. She is well informed about what children are doing at other childcare facilities they attend and helps to build upon this as children talk and play together. For example, she helps pre-school children to develop their mark making skills before they start school. Progress records are not yet made for children, although photos are taken and sometimes given to them as gifts and keepsakes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children in the setting have a strong sense of belonging and feel very secure because the childminder fully includes each one of them, and many families have been using her service for years. She makes children welcome, listens to parents, exchanges necessary information to enable good continuity of care and makes sure that children have something to do straightaway. Her own grown up children know and are also occasionally involved with all the children, which further helps them to feel very much part of the family. Children have sufficient opportunities to consider and value diversity because the childminder has an open approach to equal opportunities issues and provides dolls, books and play figures, which present positive images of race, gender and disability.

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 teaches them from the outset about what they are not allowed to touch with a simple 'no', removing them from the video player or china bell collection. She distracts, provides plenty of resources and is vigilant so that small children do not fight over the same toy. The childminder is successful in teaching pre-school children to share and socialise well, using 'time out' as a short sanction if distraction and persuasion are not enough. As a result, behaviour incidents are rare.

The childminder forges close professional relationships with parents and they have complete confidence in her. She asks parents to complete contracts, consents and child particulars when children start and these are updated yearly or as details change. She makes sure that parents see inspection reports and are aware of how to contact Ofsted or complain if they wish to. She

helps children to make cards and presents for their parents' and siblings' birthdays. She also keeps references and thank you cards which have been given to her. These illustrate a high level of satisfaction from parents about the love and care given to children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder has a sound regard for the well-being of all children and has been childminding for about twenty years now. She attends occasional training for childminding, for example, on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and she has some knowledge about the five outcomes for children and the forthcoming Early Years Foundation Stage. However, she feels that her experience is her most important asset and does not strive to extend herself through extra training. The childminder enjoys her work and properly uses her time and resources to support children's care, learning and play. She completes a planner diary so that she knows exactly who is coming and when. She spends all her time with the children and keeps records of babies' daily routines. This ensures that children have their individual needs met and are well settled.

Policies and procedures are adequate, and some work 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, medication and incidents are properly kept. The daily register is always completed as children arrive and depart, which ensures children's safety in the event of an emergency and the registration certificate is displayed. However, information about the childminding service, such as policies, risk assessments, emergency procedures, references, certificates of training, insurance and evidence of children's activities, are not collated for use or presentation to parents. This means that the childminder does not fully know or utilise them and parents are unaware of the procedures underpinning the service.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one recommendation made at the last inspection in September 2004. This was to obtain written information about children's dietary requirements. The childminder's contract forms now request this information so that it is obtained each time a new child starts and is reviewed at least annually. This improves partnership with parents and ensures that food supplied by the childminder meets with any special dietary requirements for children's health.

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 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 childminder is familiar with what to do in the event of an allegation being made against her
- consider starting progress books of pictures and notes for each child to have an individual record of their achievements.

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