

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY291610
Inspection date 06 February 2008
Inspector Rosalie Mary Turner

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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 2004. She lives with her son aged seven in a residential area of the city of Chester. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The family keeps cold water fish.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently minding three children under eight years on a part-time basis. She also provides out of school care for older children.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children's health is compromised because the childminder does not always have their doctor's contact details or a written record of their health and dietary requirements before she provides

care. However, they are cared for in a warm, clean and suitably maintained environment. The childminder has an exclusion policy to inform parents that children are not able to attend if they are suffering from an infectious illness to protect others from cross-infection. She reminds them to wash their hands after using the toilet to reinforce the importance of personal hygiene. The childminder keeps a fully stocked first aid kit close at hand and maintains appropriate records of accidents and medication that has been administered so that children's health is safeguarded to some extent.

Children are offered a variety of nutritious meals to ensure their growth and development. The childminder has a sound understanding of what constitutes a balanced diet and has recently reviewed her provision to exclude options that are less healthy such as chips. She verbally checks dietary requirements before she provides care so that she is able to offer food that is appropriate to their individual needs, but the weakness in completing written agreements with parents impacts on their children's continued well-being. Drinks of fresh water or juice are available throughout the day to encourage children to meet their own health needs.

Children have suitable opportunities to access fresh air and maintain their health through exercise. They can use up their surplus energy by jumping on the small trampoline, pedalling wheeled toys or playing ball games in the garden. Toddlers regularly go for walks and the childminder parks her car a distance from the local school so that older children walk each day and develop a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are not sufficiently safeguarded because the childminder has not completed a thorough risk assessment of her home to ensure that hazards are suitably reduced. For example, she does not always secure the front door when they are present to prevent children from leaving the house unsupervised or unwanted strangers from gaining access and posing a threat to them. Furthermore, children could become locked in the bathroom or burn themselves on the heater in the conservatory. However, they are to some extent learning to keep themselves safe by practising a fire drill every fortnight so that they can get out quickly in an emergency. In addition, the childminder covers low-level electrical sockets and she keeps hot drinks away from younger children so that they can play freely.

Children are happy and emotionally secure as the childminder is warm and kind towards them. She talks to them about familiar experiences so that they settle well. Children can access a broad range of safely maintained resources that are set out in the lounge or contained in storage boxes in the conservatory, therefore, they stay relaxed.

Children are protected from the risk of possible harm because they are never left alone with persons who have not been vetted or released to adults unless the childminder has permission from their parents. She has a clear awareness of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and she keeps Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance to hand so that she is able to act quickly if she has concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have positive relationships with the childminder because she is sensitive and considerate in her approach to them. She reassures them and helps children to engage in play by sitting

with them as they take the toys for a 'picnic in the park'. The childminder constantly chats about what they are doing, speaking clearly and repeating words such as 'I would like' to help them to increase their vocabularies. She holds books so that children can see the pictures and points to the text to develop their early reading skills. The poster over the hand basin in the bathroom helps older children to learn that print carries meaning.

Children are able to build on their mathematical skills because the childminder uses opportunities within the daily routine to encourage them to count. For example, she asks 'how many grapes have you got?' and the children successfully identify how many candles are on the birthday cake. They begin to learn their colours from an early age through the childminder's effective questioning. For instance, she asks 'What colour is this cup?' and extends learning by enquiring 'Which one does it match?'

Children remain occupied in meaningful play because they access an appropriate range of resources that are regularly changed to ensure they are interested in what is available to them. The childminder does not formally plan activities but she ensures that children have variety in their play to help them to develop their skills in all areas of their learning. Older children are able to experience a pleasing variety of self-chosen activities such as crafts or table games that meet their individual needs very well. For example, they have opportunities to experiment with Hama beads to help them create intricate patterns or they build on their design skills to create artwork using glue, glitter or brightly coloured materials. Children demonstrate their increasing pencil control as they draw around their hands to make collage pictures and they know that their work is valued because it is used to decorate the conservatory. As a result, children feel good about themselves.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children's well-being is at risk because the childminder fails to implement the systems she has in place to obtain and record their personal information prior to care being provided. Furthermore, she does not obtain written agreements with parents to set out the business arrangements before their children are cared for. As a result, the childminder is unable to meet their individual needs or provide care in accordance with parents' wishes. However, she has developed a system to respond to and record any complaints that may arise in future to safeguard children, and parents have provided letters to demonstrate they are satisfied with her service.

Children feel at home in the childminder's company because they are treated equally and fairly. She welcomes children from all backgrounds and encourages them to learn about and respect diversity by providing positive activities and resources that reflect their multicultural society. Children feel good about themselves as the childminder uses their names and looks at them when she talks to them so that they know she is interested in what they say and do.

Although the childminder is not currently caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, she has experience in providing care for those with additional needs and a sound understanding of the stages of child development. As a result, she is able to recognise any delay in reaching milestones in their development and has systems in place to ensure that children can receive support to help them make progress.

Children are well-behaved because the childminder uses positive techniques that are beneficial in calming them if they become disruptive. For example, she is consistent in her approach and

gives clear explanations if she asks children to change their behaviour to help them to learn right from wrong. The childminder agrees basic house rules with the children so that they know what is expected of them. She always gives them a warning before removing them from the situation if their behaviour is challenging. Children are able to model their behaviour on the childminder's calm and polite approach, therefore, they behave well.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Overall children's needs are not met. Children's welfare and care is not fully promoted because of a number of weaknesses. The childminder has not minimised all potential hazards in her home or recorded parents' wishes for their children's care robustly. Furthermore, she does not always mark the register of attendance as soon as children arrive to ensure they are safeguarded in an emergency. However, other aspects of her practice safeguard the children. For example, all household members over 16 years of age have been vetted to ensure that they are suitable to be in close contact with them and the childminder continues to access short courses to ensure her knowledge is up to date.

Children's care and learning is adequately supported through the organisation of the premises. The free floor space in the lounge allows toddlers to explore or gain control over their bodies and the flooring is easily wiped clean to facilitate messy activities. Children's needs are met to some extent because the childminder structures her day so that she has time to play with them and support their emotional and physical needs. She organises the day around school and pre-school routines so that children feel secure because they know what happens next.

Most legally required paperwork is suitably maintained to promote children's welfare and care. For instance, the childminder has developed a range of policies to guide her practices and her aim is 'to provide a safe, caring environment' for children. She maintains her records in a neat and orderly fashion and stores children's personal records confidentially.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to: ensure the garden is safe, ensure exit routes from the house are kept clear, increase the range of toys reflecting equal opportunities, ensure the register is maintained and to complete enrolment forms and contracts prior to care commencing.

Children's well-being is assured to some extent because the garden is securely fenced and gated, the drains are covered and dangerous items locked in the shed. The childminder has cleared all exit routes so that children can escape safely in an emergency and provides dolls and books that show positive images of other cultures. She discusses disability so that children learn to value and respect diversity. However, the register is still not accurately maintained and the childminder does not have enrolment forms or written agreements with parents for all children attending. As a result, their safety and well-being is compromised.

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

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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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure the register of children's attendance is accurately maintained
- assess the risks to children in relation to the heater in the conservatory, the security of the premises and the bathroom door and take action to minimise these
- ensure the written agreements with parents and carers that detail their children's personal information and business arrangements are completed prior to care commencing.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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