

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	210481
Inspection date	13 December 2007
Inspector	Sally Ann Smith
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 1988 and works with an assistant. She lives with her husband and adult child in Tamworth. The whole of the ground floor and upstairs bathroom are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for six children at any one time and is currently minding nine children on a part-time basis.

The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. She attends the local toddler group and takes children on local outings.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children follow good hygiene routines and wash their hands observed by the childminder to ensure procedures are effective. Children know where to access paper towels and tissues when required. Children each have their own toothbrush and clean their teeth after breakfast. The

childminder talks to children about good oral hygiene. Suitable procedures are in place when children are unwell or taking medication. The childminder has consent forms to administer medication prescribed by the child's General Practitioner for both short and extended periods of time if necessary.

Children are supplied with regular drinks to include water, milk or organic fruit juices. Children often enjoy making their own 'cocktails' mixing together different flavours such as orange, pineapple and pomegranate. During colder months children enjoy drinks of hot chocolate accompanied by a digestive biscuit to 'dunk'. On other occasions, children are provided with fresh fruit for snack. The childminder avoids giving children chocolate, crisps or fizzy drinks. She prefers parents to provide meals ensuring that dietary requirements and preferences are respected for their child. However, the childminder discusses healthy options with parents and ensures that children make healthy choices if eating a packed lunch. Children sit together at the table to eat meals whilst younger children sit in a highchair alongside so that meals are sociable occasions. The childminder has completed a food safety training course and undergone an assessment to determine her understanding in order to promote appropriate food safety and hygiene in her practice.

Children regularly go outside and have fresh air and parents are asked to bring suitable clothing for all weather eventualities. Children walk to and from school and visit the local park almost daily so that they can run around and burn off steam. Children have access to a garden and enjoy playing in the playhouses. Older children use the large playhouse to form a club, displaying various rules and notices. Children enjoy playing with the tunnel shuffling and crawling from one end to the other. They have a variety of different musical tapes to dance along to.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. The childminder attends various training courses to update her knowledge and understanding of how to keep children safe. The childminder regularly carries out risk assessments of her home and makes revisions to safety procedures accordingly. For example, she ensures that keys to the conservatory doors are easily accessible at all times in case children need to use this as an exit in the event of an emergency. The childminder has devised a fire drill using a whistle to alert children's attention. Children are familiar with this sound and know in what circumstances it would be used but they have not practised the emergency escape plan, potentially compromising their safety.

Children learn about safety, particularly when out and about. They know that they must be within sight of the childminder at all times and never walk too far ahead. Discussions alert children to 'stranger danger' and not to talk to other adults without the consent of the childminder. They develop an awareness of road safety and the importance of using appropriate pedestrian crossings wherever possible. Children know that they must listen to the instruction of the childminder at all times.

The childminder is conversant with procedures to protect children and recognises different signs and symptoms which are of concern. She is aware of the procedures to inform all the relevant agencies, including Ofsted. She has a good understanding of procedures should an allegation be made against herself and records all accidents and incidents. This means children are fully safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children independently access resources of their choice and generally play well together. They assemble the track and cars on the floor and enjoy watching the cars 'whizz' around. The childminder incorporates a range of activities which stimulate and maintain children's interest. Children enjoy using the play dough, rolling and manipulating it into different shapes and objects. They add glitter and other textures to the dough for variety and interest. Children see how many little figures they can cut out of the play dough and line them in a row. Seasonal activities see children making their own Christmas baubles or carving pumpkins for Halloween. Children take advantage of the weather to play out in the snow or take photographs in the fog.

Numerous outings develop children's awareness of their surroundings and community. A planned visit to the local sports hall enables children to play with lots of large play equipment to promote physical exercise. They enjoy hurling balls into the air and catching them in the parachute. Younger children regularly visit the local toddler group and participate in a range of varied activities. The local water park enables children to see ducks, geese and other wild fowl in their natural habitats. The childminder makes good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and uses the visit to plan accordingly. For example, children develop self-assurance and a sense of belonging as they go on this visit with their friends, another childminder and her minded children. This encourages them to become skilful communicators as they engage in conversation and talk about their observations. The childminder extends the activity to encourage the children to be imaginative, for example, to walk like a duck. Children visit a nature centre and go on mini beast hunts, walk through a hay meadow and observe butterflies and get close up to different birds of prey. A trip to the canal enables children to operate the lock gates and observe the narrow boats as they enter and exit the lock system. They talk to boat owners as they pass through. At times, children just happily walk along the canal tow path collecting blackberries to take back and eat.

The childminder ensures that activities maintain all children's interest and they have fun. Children enjoy reminiscing about past trips as they look at photographs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's needs are appropriately met as a range of resources according to their age and stage of development are provided and all children have access to these. Children learn about the wider community as they regularly go for walks and outings. In addition they have discussions about different festivals and celebrations to extend the knowledge they have gained from nursery or school. The childminder attends courses on diversity and explains to children what this means, for example, valuing each other's differences. The childminder notes down children's comments to include in her policy. Children acknowledge that 'we're all different and it would be boring if we were all the same'. Children compare differences between being old and young. They discuss and observe that older people have grey hair. They wonder whether they too will have grey hair when they get old. Children play with various resources that the childminder brings back from holidays. A Rastafarian wig and hat prove popular and children learn that the colours of the hat are the same as the Jamaican flag. Children discuss their holidays and look at a globe to see where they have been. Children learn that it takes nine hours to fly to the Caribbean. Children on occasions dress up in different clothes. In response to watching a news item on television, older children make a Burka out of black cloth. Children enjoy playing

different musical instruments such as steel drums and whistles made from bamboo. On occasions, children attend musical workshops and play a variety of different instruments from around the world.

Although not currently caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the childminder has strategies in place to support all children in consultation with their parents. The childminder acknowledges the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents to meet all children's needs and plan for these accordingly. The childminder recognises that the layout of her house may be difficult for children with physical disabilities, for example, a first floor bathroom. However, where possible she is proactive in ensuring all children are included.

Children behave well as they generally know what is expected of them but also respond to the boundaries set by the childminder. Where possible, the childminder enables children to resolve any differences they have for themselves but also recognises where intervention from herself is required. Explanations are given as to why certain actions or behaviours are inappropriate. Distraction and diversion strategies are used for younger children.

Parents receive good quality information regarding the childminder's service in the form of a booklet. The front covers of these are designed by the children. Younger children each have their own profile which is shared with parents. This ensures that parents are made fully aware of the routines, care, learning and play their child receives.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a well-organised environment with clearly established routines. All adults in the household are appropriately vetted to ensure children's safety. Routines and play activities are effectively incorporated to meet the needs of all children. The childminder has a good understanding of the National Standards and has a range of written policies and procedures to ensure that the welfare of children is consistently maintained. These are shared, discussed and reviewed with parents to ensure that the care provided is appropriate and is individual to the child.

The childminder displays her certificate of registration for parents perusal. Children's attendance is accurately recorded to identify their times of arrival and departure. The childminder accesses training which is relevant to her role and she has a current first aid certificate. She is aware of the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' and the impact for her practice. She regularly liaises with other local childminders to discuss current initiatives and reads childminding literature. These factors ensure that she can fully support children's care, learning and play effectively.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was required to: improve fire safety by securing the fireguard to the wall. The childminder is not currently using the lounge although strategies are in place to secure the fireguard to the wall when using this room.

Complaints since the last inspection

There has been one complaint made to Ofsted since the last inspection. Ofsted received a complaint in relation to National Standard 13: Child protection. Concerns were raised regarding reporting of child protection concerns and notifying the regulator of any significant events. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit. Through scrutiny of documentation and discussions with the childminder two actions were raised around the childminder's understanding of child protection procedures and her responsibility to notify the regulator. As a result of the responses received from the childminder Ofsted is satisfied that she remains qualified for registration.

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):

- improve further the safety of children within the setting, for example, practising the emergency escape plan.

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