

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 209682
Inspection date 16 October 2007
Inspector Sarah Jane Rhodes

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 1998. She lives with her husband and two children aged 12 and 14 years in Newcastle-Under-Lyme, Staffordshire. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house and the first floor bathroom are used for childminding. There is no outdoor area available to children. However, the children regularly visit local playgroups, parks and places of interest.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding three children under five all day. She walks to local schools and pre-schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local parent and toddler group and is a member of Newcastle-Under-Lyme Childminding Network. The family has a dog and three tortoises.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming home. They learn the importance of good personal hygiene, for example, hand washing before meals and after having their nappy changed. Individual towels and a sickness policy that excludes children who are infectious ensures children are protected from these avenues of cross infection. The children benefit from toys that are kept clean through systematic cleaning on a weekly basis. The childminder ensures that pets are excluded from areas that the children play in. Children's medical needs both in an emergency and with regard to ongoing medication are met through the use of accident and medication procedures that are clear and understood by the childminder.

Children's health is promoted through the provision of a healthy diet. This is supplied through an effective partnership between parents and the childminder. The parents provide all meals and snacks for the childminder to serve. The childminder relies on parents' judgement to supply suitable meals, however, she does discuss healthy options. The children have access to drinks throughout the day ensuring they are not left thirsty. The childminder has undertaken a food hygiene course. She recognises when the children need a rest or meal; the children are able to eat or rest according to their individual needs.

The children enjoy activities which contribute to their good health. They increase their physical control through daily routines and visits to local play parks. This helps them develop their coordination and physical strength. Stamina is built up by daily walks to the local school. This helps them develop a natural acceptance of being physically active as part of a normal day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a safe and secure environment, the childminder has attended a course to help her identify and minimise hazards, for example, she covers the hearth to protect a child if they fell. The home is well maintained and well organised, this means the children can move around safely and independently. The children can use three rooms for a range of activities, but generally use the rear lounge and conservatory to play in. These rooms are set out to be welcoming with bright informative posters and child-sized furniture. Children are encouraged to clear away when they have finished with a toy; this minimises the chance of accidents. The outside area is not safe and so the children do not use this area. The childminder reminds children about hazards, for example, reminding them not to swing on their chairs because they could slip and she practised her emergency evacuation procedure with the children to ensure they have a growing understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

A wide range of safe, appropriate toys, suitable for the age range attending is readily accessible in low units in the conservatory and rear lounge for the children to select from. These are rotated with other toys and supplemented with toys from a local toy library to maintain children's interest. The childminder has accurate current knowledge of child protection procedures in line with the very latest government guidelines. She also has a clear understanding of the signs of child abuse and correct reporting procedures, ensuring children are protected from harm or neglect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are very settled, confident and happy. They relate well to the childminder, their play and learning is actively supported by the childminder as, for example, she helps them concentrate on making a difficult jigsaw giving them suggestions like finding the sides first, whilst supplying a simpler jigsaw to keep younger children happy and motivated. Children enjoy lots of general verbal communication and praise. They are confident in explaining what they want and the childminder is skilful in finding out what they want when their speech is not clear. All this helps to build their self-esteem and confidence to express themselves.

The childminder plans a varied range of interesting activities both inside and outside the home for the children. Attendance of local toddler groups allows younger children to experience playing in a larger group with others and the use of local parks extends their balancing and climbing skills. The childminder informally assesses the children's abilities, for example, what level of jigsaw or story they require. These observations are used to tailor the activities to children's individual needs. The children are well occupied and concentrate for good periods of time. On the day of inspection they played with cars, jigsaws and a microphone. The childminder is not currently using the 'Birth to three matters' framework or government guidance that will supersede this. This means she is not utilising these tools to help in the planning of the next steps in children's play and learning to enhance the provision fully for children under five years. However, on the day of inspection children were well occupied with easy access to a range of toys and the attentive help and support of the childminder to make their day enjoyable.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment that celebrates an individual's uniqueness and provides lots of positive images of disability and culture. Activities and discussion are provided that also encourage children to have positive attitudes and an awareness of diversity and the wider world. For example, looking at national dress to start to develop a knowledge of the differences and traditions of countries around the world. Children are seen as individuals, their unique needs are met as they follow their own daily routines as discussed with their parents. They have access to all age-appropriate activities regardless of gender. A written equal opportunities policy is in place and shared with parents, this ensures everyone is aware that nobody will have less favourable treatment due to their gender, culture or disability and any discriminatory remarks would be challenged. The childminder has only limited experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and physical disabilities. However, she has a strong understanding of the need to adapt activities to ensure inclusion and work with parents and other professionals to ensure each child has appropriate care and activities.

Children behave well for their age and stage of development. The childminder manages the children's behaviour in a very positive way, praising the children, using distraction and helping them negotiate with each other. They respond positively to the childminder's boundaries. They play alongside one another, developing positive relationships. The written behaviour policy which is shared with parents sets out the childminder's positive strategies so everyone is aware how behaviour is managed.

A positive relationship with parents is promoted, with a range of written information about the childminding service filed and shown to parents. Parents sign to say they have seen the policies

and any later amendments. All required written consents are obtained from parents. Information about how children have been during the day is passed on to parents verbally on a daily basis. Parents are encouraged to share any information that they think will help the childminder when working with their child. This enables the childminder and parents to work together to meet the needs of the children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are comfortable and feel secure in a child-friendly, well-organised environment. The childminder organises her time exclusively to meet the needs of the children attending. This means they are confident and are well occupied, but also able to initiate their own play.

Training is seen by the childminder as very valuable and an important way of developing her knowledge and expertise in childcare issues. She has undertaken a number of courses and information sessions. She is also a member of the Newcastle-Under-Lyme Childminding Network which she sees as a key resource to enable her to do a professional job. These courses and her involvement with the childminding network have broadened the childminder's knowledge and contribute to the quality of care provided.

Policies and procedures are in place, effectively organised and used efficiently to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. The policies and procedures are shared with parents to provide continuity in the children's care. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to devise and practise an emergency escape plan. She has done this and practises with the children on a regular basis. This ensures they have a growing understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

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):

- develop the service by increasing knowledge and use of guidance such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework or other Government guidance.

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