



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	260357
Inspection date	13 December 2005
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 satisfactory. 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 2001. She lives with her husband, two adult children and child aged seven in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire. The whole ground floor and first floor toilet 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 five children at any one time and is currently minding two children under five all day and one child before and after school. She walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local parent and toddler group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming home. They learn the importance of good personal hygiene, for example, hand washing before meals or after using the toilet. The childminder has a sickness policy that excludes children who are infectious, ensuring children are protected from this avenue of cross infection. The childminder does allow parents to smoke on the premises whilst their child is present, this exposes children to cigarette smoke. The children benefit from toys that are kept clean through systematic cleaning. 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. However she does not currently record injuries that children arrive with. This means she may not be aware of information that could be required if a child's condition worsened, impacting on the care that they would receive.

The childminder works in partnership with parents to meet the children's individual dietary needs. She provides a balanced diet and encourages all children to make healthy choices. The children have access to drinks throughout the day ensuring they are not left thirsty. The childminder recognises when the children need a rest or meal, they 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.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are cared for in a safe and secure environment, hazards are identified and minimised. The home is adequately maintained and organised, this means the children can move around safely and independently. The children use the lounge for the majority of their play, they have room to crawl, play and learn to stand safely and the childminder can easily supervise them. The outside area is fenced and gated. There is a small water feature in the rear garden, the childminder supervises the children when outside to enable them to play safely. She ensures children are aware of safety rules on the walk to school, but does not practise her emergency evacuation procedure with the children to ensure they have a full understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

A basic range of safe toys, suitable for the age range attending, is made accessible in the lounge for the children to select from. The childminder has all required documents in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. She has an adequate knowledge of child protection procedures in line with the latest government guidelines, ensuring children are protected from harm or neglect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are very settled, confident and happy. They enjoy close physical contact and relate well to the childminder, benefiting from lots of verbal communication, praise, cuddles and individually tailored routines. Children with minor illnesses, such as colds, are monitored, comforted and given the opportunity to rest or feed as they require. This helps children to enjoy their time with the childminder, building their self-esteem and confidence to learn new skills.

The childminder provides a basic range of activities, which contribute to children's development inside and outside the home. However she has limited understanding of how these activities can be used to help children develop and learn. The childminder is not currently using the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this would help the childminder's planning of the next steps in children's play and learning. On the day of inspection children had little to occupy them, they had access to a range of soft toys, colouring and children's television. Toys are not made accessible in a way that creates a stimulating environment and this limits children's ability to develop their curiosity as learners and their independence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are seen as individuals, their unique needs are well met as they follow their own daily routines as discussed with their parents. Children have access to all age appropriate activities regardless of gender. Only limited resources that reflect positive images of culture, gender and disability are available. Children are able to join in with activities at the local toddler group or school that encourage children to have positive attitudes and an awareness of diversity and the wider world. The childminder has experience of caring for children with special needs. She has a sound 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 acceptably for their age and stage of development, they respond positively to the childminder's boundaries. They play alongside one another, developing positive relationships. Children's self-esteem is boosted by praise and encouragement when they achieve different tasks, for example, feeding themselves.

A positive relationship with parents is promoted, with some written information about the childminding service shown to parents. All required written consents are obtained from parents. Information about how children have been during the day, is passed on to parents verbally as required. 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 satisfactory.

The children are comfortable and feel secure in a homely environment. This means they are confident and able to initiate their own play in a limited way.

The childminder sees training and her links with the childminding support worker as important ways of developing her knowledge and skills on childcare issues. She has undertaken her 'Introduction to Childminding Practice' course and is renewing her first aid training in January 2006. These courses and the one-to-one input from the support worker, broaden the childminders knowledge and contribute to the quality of care provided.

Policies and procedures are in place and used effectively 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. However the children are sometimes left in the sole charge of the childminder's daughter who acts as an assistant for short periods, in poor weather. The childminder has ensured that all necessary checks have been completed in the past regarding her suitability and has gained parents verbal permission regarding this arrangement but parents have not given written permission. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last Children Act inspection set actions for the childminder. The first was to ensure that household members complete the required vetting procedures. All members of the household over 16 years have undertaken a Local Authority Police check or have a Criminal Records Bureau clearance. She was asked to demonstrate how registered numbers of children would not be exceeded, the childminder cares for a maximum of three children at the present time and her registration is for five children, this ensures the childminder has sufficient time to give to each individual child.

The childminder needed to develop her knowledge of child protection procedures and ensure accurate attendance records and children's details were recorded. The childminder has an adequate understanding of child protection procedures and keeps all required attendance record's and children's details. This ensures children are adequately protected.

Two recommendations were also made, to devise and implement a system to record any incident of physical restraint and to establish a written agreement with parents. The childminder would record incidents of physical restraint in the accident book, she has introduced contracts with parents. This paperwork ensures parents are fully informed about business arrangements and incidents. These changes have ensured the quality of the care is now of a satisfactory standard.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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 satisfactory. 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 children are never exposed to cigarette smoke and that any existing injuries are recorded, to provide required information in the event a child's condition worsened
- practice emergency evacuations to ensure children know how to keep themselves safe
- develop the provision of activities through the use of the, 'Birth to three matters' framework and organise toys to create a stimulating environment
- obtain parents written permission to leave children in the care of an assistant, once the variation regarding the assistant is granted.

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