



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 304671
Inspection date 23 March 2006
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 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 1998. She lives with her partner and two children aged 14 and 8 years, in a suburb of Crewe and Nantwich. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed rear garden for outside play. The childminder walks to local schools and pre-schools to take and collect children. She also takes children to local parks.

She presently has five children on roll, who range in age from 4 to 10 years.

There is a hamster and three pet cats on the premises.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children are learning to understand some simple health and hygiene practices because the childminder prompts them to wash their hands before snacks and after playing in the garden or visiting the toilet. Children always come with a change of clothes and do not attend if they are ill with anything infectious. However, they have limited guidance and support to become more independent, ready to attend school. For example, 4 year olds do not fetch their own drink from the kitchen and are allowed to drink milk from bottles with teats. The childminder also demonstrates little understanding about appropriate environmental health and hygiene procedures. For example, she does not keep all living areas clean and free of pet hair, and the cat litter tray in the kitchen is smelly and close to the table where the children eat their meals.

Children enjoy adequate emotional health because the childminder helps each child to feel at home and part of the family. Many children have been attending since they were babies. Children also enjoy regular physical activity because they go out to play in the garden, walk to school or nursery and walk to local parks. However, children's health and wellbeing are compromised by poor documentation. Consents from parents for any necessary emergency treatment have not been obtained for any of the children attending. In addition, no system is in place for the recording of accidents and medication. This means that continuity of care is jeopardised in the event of an emergency and parents are not properly consulted or informed about their children's health.

Children are sufficiently well nourished because the childminder gives them mostly healthy meals and snacks. They have meals such as cottage pie and broccoli and snacks such as sandwiches and apple. However, they do have crisps and chocolate bars for treats. The drinks offered are mostly milk and water and the childminder reminds children to have drinks. However, the childminder is not observed talking to children about healthy eating or healthy lifestyles to develop their learning about these things.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a reasonably welcoming and secure indoor and outdoor environment, with children's toys stored around the walls of the dining area and conservatory. However, there are no posters, photos or work displayed to interest children and there is only just sufficient floor and table top play space because storage boxes for toys and other furniture take up so much space. This makes it difficult for children to make large constructions with the jumbo Lego for example.

Children use an adequate range of suitable and safe equipment because the childminder regularly adds to and disposes of resources. However, there are quantities of play figures, cars and construction games but fewer role play, creative or educational toys so that some children choose to bring favourite toys from home. Toys and games are mostly organised into storage boxes and shelves in the dining room and conservatory where children know where things are. For example, children know where the large Lego and jigsaws are.

Children are generally safe as they move around the setting because the childminder supervises children appropriately according to their age. Safety gates are available to restrict access to the stairs and kitchen, but these are not in current use for a 4 year old present at the inspection. Equally, the fireplace and hearth are guarded if the fire is in use or if the hearth poses a hazard for babies and toddlers.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe on the roads because the childminder is successful in teaching them how to be a safe pedestrian as they walk to school and other places. For example, use is made of pedestrian crossings, pressing the button and looking both ways before crossing. Children are kept safe on outings because they know that they must hold hands and not run off. Children are also generally safe in an emergency because first aid supplies, smoke detectors and fire blanket are in place and the childminder is familiar with all the escape routes in the house.

Children are adequately protected from abuse because the childminder understands her role in child protection. She is able to contact social services if necessary, but is not familiar with what to do if an allegation is made against her. She has some written information about child abuse, but this is not accessible or understood. This should be better utilised to ensure that the care of children in abuse situations is not compromised.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop some confidence and self-esteem because the childminder is generally warm and interested in them. She suggests ideas of what they may like to play with and will join in with them as they play with the dolls or the Lego. Children show some interest in what they do because they can develop group games together after school and in school holidays. For example, they might put on a dance show. They can also become involved in helping the childminder with her other business by placing the slips inside the catalogues and then helping to post them through letterboxes.

Children are enthusiastic and want to play, but look to the childminder for ideas and input which is sometimes limited because the childminder wants to complete other household jobs or commitments. The childminder fetches the Barbie dolls for a 4 year old and helps her with a puzzle, but there are frequent phone and house calls, and the childminder spends time looking for documents that are not at hand.

Children's enjoyment and achievements are satisfactory because the childminder is experienced and has sufficient knowledge of individual children and their needs.

Their achievements are best when the childminder lays on art and craft activities so that children are learning how to share, socialise, use their imagination, and extend their creative skills. For example, they sometimes make Hama bead pictures or decorate hard boiled eggs for Easter. Children make positive relationships because they meet a number of consistent children while with the childminder. They are encouraged to help and understand one another regardless of difference in age, and are helped to feel that this is like an extended family unit where every child is special.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's emotional needs are adequately met because the childminder is caring and attentive to each child. For example, she gives frequent cuddles and is kind and motherly to them. She treats all children as if they were her own and takes into account their home situations which she knows well. Children are included fully in the life of the setting because the childminder fosters an atmosphere where each child feels part of the group. For example, they all help with tidying up.

Children's awareness of diversity is promoted sufficiently because the childminder has a range of books, dolls, play figures and dressing up which children play with. These portray positive images of people from other cultures and of gender equality. Children also meet people in the local community who have disabilities and these people talk to them and the childminder. This facilitates some discussion about disability and develops children's understanding.

Children receive appropriate support to improve their behaviour because the childminder reminds them about what behaviour is expected. Children's understanding of responsible behaviour is that they help tidy up; they take their shoes off at the door; they paint and draw in the kitchen; and they go to tell the childminder if they spill anything. However, good manners are not consistently prompted and no incident record is maintained to record any significant incidents, including any incidents of physical intervention by the childminder.

Children receive consistency of care because the childminder works satisfactorily with parents to ensure that they are all well informed about what is going on in the children's lives. The childminder spends sufficient time in verbal handover with parents so that she has enough information to provide care. For example, she knows if children have slept well and if they have behaved well at home. She uses this information appropriately, either by carrying on discussions with children, or giving them praise to underline their good behaviour at home.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The childminder has some understanding of child development through her own parenting experience, but she has a poor understanding of good quality childcare. This is because she has not kept up to date with the requirements of the National

Standards for Childminding and has not undertaken any training courses. Her first aid qualification lapsed in 2005 and she has overlooked the need to update this. As a result, children's health and safety is compromised in the event of an accident or emergency.

The routines of the day promote some satisfactory outcomes for children. The childminder gives children adequate choices, but does not fully utilise her time and personal skills to maximise children's development in all areas. There are also numerous pressures of time involved in collecting and delivering children to various pre-school and schools. Nevertheless, children have good opportunities for physical exercise and adequate opportunities for rest and constructive play. The childminder makes sure that the individual needs of each child are well balanced with the mix of children attending and is willing to adapt to children's particular wishes, for example to paint. The attendance register is kept accurate and up to date to ensure that all children are accounted for.

The childminder has a poor understanding of the documentation required to ensure children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Contracts and particulars for each child are disorganised and contain only basic information. Consents, information and policies about the service offered have not been written or organised. This means that parents have little idea what their children will be doing, eating or what behaviour will be expected. They are also unaware of the childminder's responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities, special needs, child protection, emergency procedures or sickness. Public liability insurance and car insurance details cannot quickly be accessed if they are needed to keep parents informed and provide a high standard of consistent care for children. Overall, the provision does not meet all the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were two actions and two recommendations made at the quality inspection in May 2003.

The action to ensure the suitability of sleeping arrangements for babies and the recommendation to ensure children's safety on the stairs no longer apply to current childminding arrangements. This is because there are no children under 4 years of age attending at present. If babies and toddlers attend in the future, their sleeping arrangements will be properly arranged according to parents' requests and the stairs will be gated. This will improve safety and wellbeing for young children.

The organisation of the documentation is still poor. It does not support safe and stimulating care for children or easy access to necessary information in the event of any emergency or illness. This weakness is therefore raised again as an action following this inspection. Nevertheless, children's dates of birth are now written on the parent agreements so that this necessary information is available in the event of any emergency.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

Ofsted has received one complaint since the last inspection. The complaint was received in March 2004 and related to National Standards 6, Safety; 3, Care learning and play; 8, Food and drink; and 12, Partnership with parents. The evidence examined demonstrated that Standard 6 was not being met because a young child was allowed to hold a baby over a wooden floor. The childminder agreed to take reasonable steps in the future to ensure that hazards to children on the premises are minimised. The evidence relating to Standards 3, 8, and 12 demonstrated that these Standards continue to be met. The provider 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- complete an appropriate first aid course that includes training in first aid for infants and young children
- ensure that any animals and arrangements for their care do not pose a health risk to children
- ensure that parents give written permission for any necessary emergency treatment and advice
- ensure that all records relating to childminding activities are readily accessible and available for inspection at all times, including public liability insurance, accident, medication and incident records.

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 *Building better childcare: Compliments and*

concerns about inspectors' judgements which is available from Ofsted's website:
www.ofsted.gov.uk