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Our Reference 148251

Monitoring for provision judged as inadequate

An Ofsted inspector, Heather Allen, monitored your provision on 30/05/2014 following your inspection where the provision was judged to be inadequate.

Outcome of monitoring

As a result of our inspection on 20/11/2013, we sent you a welfare requirements notice.

The welfare requirements notice had a completion date of 5 February 2014 and required you to: ensure that the premises, including outdoor spaces, are fit for purpose and clean; and ensure risk assessments identify aspects of the indoor and outdoor environment, that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked, and how the risk will be removed or minimised.

You were also sent a notice to improve asking you to complete 15 actions relating to the Early Years Register with a completion date of 4 February. One action required you to ensure effective systems are in place which promote equality of opportunity, so that inappropriate attitudes and practices are challenged and adults provide good role models to encourage children to value diversity and difference and to respect others.

Some actions related in particular to required documentation and asked you to: keep a written record of accidents or injuries and first aid treatment; obtain written parental permission for all children to take part in outings; ensure the following information is recorded for each child: full name; date of birth; name and address of every parent and/or carer who is known to the provider (and information about any other person who has parental responsibility for the child); which parent(s) and/or carer(s) the child normally lives with; and emergency contact details for parents and/or carers; maintain a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises and their hours of attendance; ensure the current certificate of registration is displayed at the setting and shown to parents and/or carers on request; and ensure records are easily accessible and available.

Some of the actions related to your liaison with parents and/or carers and required you to: obtain and share information regularly with professionals, parents and carers

and other early year providers to allow an effective two-way flow of information that informs planning and supports effective teaching; put in place a procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents and/or carers, and keep a written record of any complaints, and their outcome; make available to parents and/or carers details about how to contact Ofsted, if they believe the provider is not meeting the legal requirements; make details of policies and procedures available to parents, including the procedures to be followed if a parent fails to collect a child at the appointed time, a child goes missing, and the complaints procedure; and keep parents up-to-date with their child's learning and development, including the range and types of activities and experiences provided, the daily routines of the setting and how parents and carers can share learning at home.

Three actions related to the learning and development requirements and asked you to: establish children's starting points when they first attend and carry out ongoing observations and assessments in order to understand children's abilities, interests and learning styles. Shape appropriate learning experiences for each child by reflecting on observations and assessments and planning a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity; plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development, taking into consideration their individual needs, interests and stages of development; and support children who speak English as an additional language by giving them opportunities to experience a rich language environment, including opportunities to develop and use their home language in play and learning and to reach a good standard in English language.

You were also asked to complete 24 actions relating to the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. These reflect the same actions raised on the Early Years Register. In addition, the notice to improve for the compulsory and voluntary parts of the General Childcare Register also required you to ensure that the childcare is accessible and inclusive by not refusing to provide childcare or treat any child less favourably than another child by reason of the child's home language.

An inspector visited you on 10 February 2014 to monitor your progress in meeting the actions required in the welfare requirements notice and notice to improve.

The indoor environment was clean and tidy. Children had access to a range of resources and had sufficient space to play and eat in comfort. Risk assessments had been completed for both indoors and outdoors. Hazards, such as rain water in the sandpit, had been removed.

Required documentation was in place and available for inspection, including copies of policies and procedures, details of children and contact details of their parents and/or carers. The last accident recorded in your accident book was in December 2010. You stated that no child in your care had had an accident since that time. If children had an accident at school you forward a copy of any accident form completed by the school to parents when they collect their children from you. Your record of attendance showed the contracted times of arrival and departure of children. You confirmed that children always arrive and leave on time. Your certificate of

registration was displayed, but this was not the current certificate. You said you had not received this. A duplicate copy of your current certificate was sent to you. You discussed how you liaise with parents and /or carers. You confirmed they are given copies of your policies and procedures when their child starts and these are also available for them to see on your premises. Details of how to contact Ofsted were displayed on the lounge wall, together with your certificate of public liability insurance and your paediatric first aid certificate.

You completed learning journals for children giving daily details of the activities they had participated in. Parents took these home when they collected their child and mostly returned these when their child next attended. In addition, you had regular discussions with parents when they brought and collected their children. As a result, some children benefited from a two-way flow of information which supported their learning because you found out about their interests and shared this with their parents. For example, you observed that some children enjoy pretending to cook pizza. You discussed this with the parents and planned a cooking activity where children helped to make their own pizza.

However, you lacked knowledge of children's backgrounds and cultures. You described some children by their colour and made assumptions about their nationality. You had not obtained information from parents about their children's abilities and interests before they started and therefore children did not always settle easily. You described how you had difficulty communicating with some parents and children whose home language was not English. You knew only one word in some children's home language. You had not made any attempts to learn some familiar words which might support children and help them to communicate and settle. You regularly took children on outings to groups, for example toddler groups, but you had not taken the individual needs of some children into consideration. Most children enjoyed these outings but children who do not have English as a home language became bewildered and clingy. You provided repetitive activities which lacked challenge for children whose home language is not English in an attempt to improve communication with them. For example, you encouraged children to pass you toy money. Therefore some children were treated less favourably than others and did not have challenging and enjoyable experiences because you did not have sufficient information about them and because their home language is not English.

Following our visit we issued you with a welfare requirements notice requiring you to ensure effective systems are in place which promote equality of opportunity, so that inappropriate attitudes and practices are challenged and adults provide good role models to encourage children to value diversity and difference and to respect others.

We also issued you with a notice to improve that asked you to support children who speak English as an additional language by giving them opportunities to experience a rich language environment, including opportunities to develop and use their home language in play and learning and to reach a good standard in English language; establish children's starting points when they first attend and carry out ongoing observations and assessments in order to understand children's abilities, interests

and learning styles. Shape appropriate learning experiences for each child by reflecting on observations and assessments and planning a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity; and plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development, taking into consideration their individual needs, interests and stages of development.

An inspector visited you on 17 March 2014 to monitor your progress in meeting the actions required in the welfare requirements notice and notice to improve. Your current certificate of registration was displayed.

You liaised proactively with the local authority and received helpful support. You attended a course relating to equal opportunities and English as an additional language. Families from other nationalities and cultures benefited because you found out about their backgrounds and festivals and shared traditional foods. Children who had English as an additional language had settled and interacted well with other children and visitors. You supported their communication and language skills and their knowledge of English improved because you obtained dual language books and obtained details of familiar words in their home language. You involved parents with their children's learning and development by encouraging them to read the dual language books at home in their own language and then read the book yourself to children in English. Children also enjoyed looking at family photographs which parents had supplied.

You liaised with parents about children's interests and abilities and used this information to plan activities which interested children. For example, you planned activities round the theme of 'Transport' and took children on outings to get books about transport from the library. You used outings to support children in different areas of learning such as counting cars on the way to school and looking at different types of transport such as buses. You started to observe and assess children's knowledge and understanding and the progress they were making towards the early learning goals.

However, we found there were still some areas indoors and outdoors which posed a risk to children. Although you carried out regular risk assessments, you failed to identify that the outdoor climbing frame was located on concrete and children could therefore be at serious risk of injury if they fell off. In addition, although a gate prevented children's access to the rear garden, smaller children could potentially crawl under the gate. This placed children at risk because a fish pond could be accessed via the rear garden.

In addition, the indoor area used by children posed a risk to their health. A used litter tray was within easy access of children. In addition, children ate snacks which they had dropped onto the carpet where animals were walking.

Following our visit we issued you with a welfare requirements notice requiring you to: ensure that risk assessments are robust so that premises and outdoor spaces are safe for children to use, in particular ensure children cannot access areas that are

hazardous and are not at risk of injury when using outdoor climbing equipment; and ensure the premises are clean and hygienic and areas used by pets do not pose any risk to children's good health, including ensuring that litter trays are inaccessible to children and children do not eat on areas used by pets.

On 16 April 2014, we carried out a monitoring visit to check compliance with the actions set. We found you had failed to meet the actions required in the welfare requirements notice. Areas of the premises were unclean, had thick dust and were unhygienic. Cats regularly walked along the kitchen worktop and licked food left on plates on the worktop. You had reduced some of the hazards in the garden. For example, you had reduced the gap under the gate leading to the rear garden so that there was insufficient space for children to crawl under. You had added some additional meshing to the fence in front of the garden pond to prevent children from accessing the pond. You had laid some rubber matting on top of the concrete paving slabs around the climbing frame in order to minimise the impact in the event of children falling off. However, you had not extended the matting to cover the concrete paving slabs directly under the top of the slide. You did not feel children were at risk if they fell in this area despite the fact they could sustain a serious injury if they fell onto concrete.

We also found that although you had identified some concerns with the learning and development of individual children, for example with regard to speech, you had not provided them with sufficient support to help them make adequate progress. In addition, you had not liaised effectively with parents to discuss concerns nor provided guidance for them to support their children's development at home. Although you had a mobile phone and camera policy in place, children were not effectively safeguarded from potential inappropriate use of mobile phones and cameras, because older children were taking photographs with their personal mobiles.

On 28 April 2014, we carried out a further monitoring visit. We found that you had taken steps to minimise any risks to children when they played on the climbing frame by placing additional matting on top of the concrete paving slabs. You also had a rug ready to place on top of the matting in dry weather.

The indoor areas used by children were clean and dust free, with clean rugs placed onto the carpet where children play. You explained that if children do not finish their packed lunches then uneaten food is either immediately thrown away or packed back into children's lunch boxes. You stated that cats had been inoculated, wormed and treated for fleas but could not produce any records to verify this.

Only one child in the early years age group was present during the visit. You were kind and attentive to the child, providing company and support over lunch and encouraging communication and language skills by reading stories and asking questions. You had evaluated observations of children during activities and planned how you would support them to make progress in their learning and development.

You had attended a course 'Parents as partners' in order to enhance your liaison with parents and carers and explained how you regularly share information with them when they drop off and collect their children. You had taken steps to safeguard children in your care with regard to the use of mobile phones and cameras. You had updated your mobile phone and camera policy and shared this with parents. You had made parents and older children aware of potential risks from the use of private mobile phones and cameras and restricted their use.

On 30 May 2014, we carried out a further monitoring visit and found that you had sustained the improvements previously made. In addition, since our last visit you had taken steps to ensure that hygienic arrangements were in place to promote the good health and safety of children in your care. You had wormed and treated your cats for fleas and the premises were clean and tidy. You had carried out a risk assessment for both indoors and the garden and had taken steps to identify and minimise or remove hazards.

At the time of the visit you were caring for one child in the early years age group and three older children. They were absorbed and relaxed playing together on the carpet with a self-assembly house and dolls. The older children were considerate of the younger child and they all chatted together as they played. You regularly joined in with their discussions and provided discreet support. You had planned monthly topics for children and organised regular activities relating to the topic. For example the topic for May was insects. You organised regular activities related to this topic, including taking children on walks to the woods to look for bugs.

Having considered all the evidence, the inspector is of the opinion that the childminder has taken prompt and effective action to address the points for improvement.

Next steps

The next step will be a full inspection.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your childminding service. If you have any further queries please contact us on the number at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Fitzjohn
National Director, Childminding