



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	124014
Inspection date	25 September 2006
Inspector	Jill Nugent
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 registered in 1992. She lives with her husband, three adult children and a 14 year old son in a house in Cheshunt. The whole of the house is used for childminding and there is an enclosed garden for outdoor play. The family has a collection of goldfish.

The childminder is registered to care of a maximum of five children under eight at any one time. Currently she is minding four children under five. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children's health is not promoted adequately overall. The childminder requests information about children's medical backgrounds and also consent to administer medication. However, they are not always protected from infection because parents are not made aware of exclusion times for infectious illnesses. Consequently, children who are sick may be present in the provision, thereby putting others at risk of infection. Children are not well taken care of in the event of an accident. The childminder has not attended first aid training and does not have an appropriately stocked first aid kit available. Consequently, children are at risk of receiving inappropriate treatment. She does not have consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment which means children are also at risk of a delay in treatment in an emergency situation.

The childminder does not always promote good hygiene practices. Children's hands are not cleaned before eating, although older children are encouraged to wash their hands after going to the toilet. Consequently, children are not becoming sufficiently aware of good hygiene. When young children are tired, they sleep in a pushchair or cot, according to their needs and in view of the childminder. This helps to prevent them from becoming overtired during the day. Their nappies are changed on the childminder's knee, although she does not always ensure good hygiene by placing the child on the available towel. Overall, the childminder's procedures for health and hygiene do not contribute effectively to keeping children healthy.

Children have their dietary needs met appropriately. They bring their own packed lunches and so eat according to their parents' wishes. If the childminder offers extra foods, she ensures that the needs of children with special diets are met. If providing meals for children herself, she promotes healthy eating through providing children with a balanced diet and healthy foods. Children have access to drinks at all times and also a choice of fruit. They particularly enjoy plums from the tree in the garden. However, they have limited opportunities to talk about healthy eating generally. Their lunch boxes contain an assortment of foods and so children are encouraged to eat the healthy items first, for example, a sandwich before a bag of crisps. They have few opportunities otherwise to discuss a healthy diet. Overall, they are adequately nourished but have only a limited awareness of healthy eating.

Children enjoy opportunities for regular physical activity. They enjoy playing in the garden with a variety of resources, including bikes, cars and a seesaw. They learn new skills using small items of equipment outdoors, such as, bats and balls. Children like to visit the local park where they can explore the environment or take a picnic. Very young children are becoming more confident physically when using baby walkers to move around and they dance in response to musical toys. Therefore, children have an increasing bodily awareness and are encouraged to keep fit through regular exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a generally safe and secure environment. They are protected from potential hazards in the house through the use of a fireguard and locks on low level cupboards. They are secure on the premises because the front door is kept locked and there is no outside access to the back garden. They play safely in the garden and are always carefully supervised by the childminder. If needing to go upstairs she makes sure that children are strapped into their pushchairs while she is temporarily out of the room. There are adequate fire precautions in place, although the childminder has not practised evacuating the house so that children know what will happen in an emergency. On outings, young children are restrained in pushchairs, or on reins, so that they keep safe. Older children know to walk with the childminder and learn how to cross roads safely. Overall, children keep safe while in the childminder's care.

Children use resources and equipment that are suitable and safe. A few toys are made available in the living room and children can also choose from others stored in the adjacent quiet room. Older children are able to choose from a selection of games and puzzles, although these are not always easily accessible. If toys become unsafe through breakage, they are discarded so that children can continue to play safely. Children are learning to keep themselves safe because the childminder reminds them how to play carefully when sharing toys. Young children crawl around safely as the floor is smooth wood and is free from clutter, so there are no obstacles in their way. Consequently, children keep safe during play.

The childminder has an adequate understanding of child protection issues. She is aware of the signs of abuse and has the necessary information to enable her to seek advice. She ensures that children are only collected by a known adult and also requests a signature if the adult is not a parent. Consequently, children are adequately protected in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Children are generally well settled and happy. They are interested in playing with the toys but tend to be distracted by the television which remains switched on for long periods. They relate well to others and enjoy conversation with the childminder. Young children play alongside each other quite happily, often amusing themselves. They are gaining confidence as they move around the downstairs rooms freely, responding to the childminder's comments and questions. They enjoy some drawing and sticking activities and these provide an opportunity for them to begin to learn creative skills. However, the childminder does not take opportunities to interest them in play activities and develop their communication skills through more focussed conversation. Therefore, they miss out on opportunities to learn to use their imagination in play situations. Their play is not enhanced through interaction with the childminder and this results in a lack of real enthusiasm for play.

Children are involved in few activities which support their development and learning. They attend toddler groups where they can mix socially with others. They have fun running around the childminder's house but are not always encouraged to develop play situations, for instance, with train and road sets. They do not have easy access to a wide selection of toys and are not

actively encouraged to choose toys. The childminder is aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, although she does not make use of it to encourage the development of appropriate skills in young children. She tends to supervise children rather than becoming involved with them in play. Therefore, she is not encouraging young children to find a voice and make connections in play situations. Children do not have satisfactory purposeful play to enable them to develop new skills and make progress in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children feel valued, and special, as they receive plenty of attention from the childminder. She has a caring nature and ensures children are happy through being available to them and engaging them in conversation. Children feel at home in the setting. After sleeping, they wake in a cheerful mood and ready for play. Very young children sit happily on the childminder's knee and this helps them to develop a sense of belonging. She is careful to divide her time between all children so that no-one feels left out, although she does not always respond actively to children's need for play. Children are beginning to learn about a wider society, for example, through sharing books which reflect diversity. Consequently, children are treated as individuals and are able to feel secure in her care.

Children do not always have their needs met appropriately. They receive some good support from the childminder in meeting their needs for food, drink and nappy changes when necessary. However, she does not always meet their needs in providing interesting activities appropriate to their age. For example, they are left to sit in high chairs for too long after they become disinterested in eating and consequently bored. They do not have sufficient opportunities to learn to make decisions for themselves. The childminder helps them to choose toys at times, although they have limited choices otherwise.

Children are beginning to show awareness of others' needs, for instance, when playing alongside a baby. They take turns happily and join in clapping to praise the baby. They play together harmoniously and are generally aware of their boundaries. They behave well as the childminder encourages sharing amongst young children and supervises them closely. Older children are asked to sit out for a while if behaving irresponsibly. Therefore, children have an increasing awareness of right and wrong which helps them to contribute positively to the group.

The childminder does not work effectively with parents and carers. She does not have written agreements with parents of all children in her care, or all necessary consents. Consequently parents may be unaware of her expectations and they of hers. In the event of a disagreement, children's continuity of care is put at risk. She exchanges information with parents through conversation and has individual notebooks available so that she can record additional consents and any notable events. She does not have a complaints procedure in place and is unaware of the need to keep a record of any complaints made by parents. If parents do not know how to voice a concern, children's continuity of care may again be at risk. Overall, the childminder's working partnership with parents is unsatisfactory.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The childminder's policies and procedures do not work in practice to promote the outcomes for children. Her attendance register is not maintained appropriately as children's attendance is not always recorded until they have left the setting. Therefore, there is no record of children being present during the day. Information about children is easily accessible in individual files, although the childminder's paperwork in general is disorganised and not readily available. The childminder has not made a commitment to improving the quality of her provision through training. She has no qualification in first aid and this puts children at risk in the event of an injury. Overall, she does not demonstrate a full understanding of the National Standards in providing a framework for children's care.

The childminder has regard for the well-being of children in her care. She uses the space available in her home satisfactorily in order to allow children room to play and have good access to the back garden. She spends her time with the children so that she is always on hand to meet their needs. However, she does not organise her routine to include sufficient times for children to enjoy stimulating play activities and develop their skills. Overall, children's needs are not met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the childminder was asked to develop her knowledge of child protection issues, to make sure that a fire blanket is accessible in the kitchen, to ensure that the garden is free from hazards, and to keep a record of any incidents. She has now obtained the required information to enable her to seek advice if having a child protection concern. She has access to a fire blanket and a spray in the kitchen and has cleared the hazards from the garden. A new fence has also been fitted in the corner of the garden. She has introduced individual notebooks for children in which she can record incidents. Children's safety has been improved through her response to these requests.

The childminder was also asked to complete a first aid course, ensure that she has contact details for all minded children and obtain consent for seeking emergency medical treatment or advice. She now has a contact number on record for each child in her care. However, she has not completed a first aid course or obtained the necessary medical permission.

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.

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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
- improve the outcomes for children under three in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment
- ensure that there are written agreements with all parents and that a record is kept of any complaints

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 *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