

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	224500
Inspection date	26 September 2007
Inspector	John Vernon
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 1996. She lives with her husband and son aged 13 years in a house in Stoke-on-Trent, within walking distance of local shops and amenities. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for five children under eight years at any one time and currently cares for four children on a part-time basis. The childminder is leader of a local Childminding Group and a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminder has completed training in promoting children's physical development and children have good opportunities to participate in challenging active play. The childminder promotes physical exercise through the provision of a good range of outdoor equipment. Equally, the children take regular trips to the local park to play games, climb, scramble and run

around. Overall, this enhances children's balance, co-ordination skills and physical development, and in turn their appreciation of the importance of being active.

Children's dietary needs are met as the childminder works effectively with parents to meet each child's individual needs. For example, she ensures that proper precautions are taken for any child with a nut or dairy allergy. Children are well nourished as they are provided with healthy snacks such as fruit and yogurt. Older children have independent access to water throughout the day. All children have good opportunities to learn about a healthy lifestyle as they are encouraged to try and taste a variety of fruits. Recently they have enjoyed eating plums, kiwi fruit, melon, pears and strawberries.

Good standards of hygiene and cleanliness are maintained throughout the home. The childminder follows regular routines to ensure that the spaces used by the children, both indoors and outdoors, are clean and well maintained. Children are protected from cross-infection as the childminder has effective procedures and policies in place. There is a sick child policy in place and parents are clear about what happens if their child becomes ill whilst in the care of the childminder. This ensures that the good health of all children is maintained.

The childminder holds a current first aid certificate and there is a first aid box available to support children's health needs. All required documentation is in place, including permission to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment, in order to maintain the welfare of the children. Effective, regular cleaning routines ensure that the areas used by the children are hygienic and free from germs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment which is well maintained and child friendly. Children select activities, toys and equipment from a suitable range of developmentally-appropriate resources, which meet safety standards. Children are able to rest and play in comfort as there is ample space for their needs. Toys and play resources are available at floor level and are easily accessible to children. Consequently they are able to self-select, and make free choices about their play.

Children are cared for in a safe environment as the childminder has put in place a number of measures to ensure their safety including smoke alarms and a fire blanket. Children have discussed and practised with the childminder what they should do in the event of a fire. Clear procedures for the evacuation of the home in the event of an emergency ensure that children stay safe.

The childminder monitors the play materials used by the children to ensure they are safe and age appropriate. Children are encouraged to tidy away toys after play and to hold hands when away from the home and to stop, look and listen when crossing the road. As a consequence they are beginning to develop a greater awareness of personal safety.

The childminder has a good awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. She is aware of the correct procedure to follow when a concern arises. She does have a copy of the booklet 'What To Do If You're Worried About A Child'. Consequently, the children's welfare is fully safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The childminder clearly enjoys the company of children and has a good understanding of how children learn and develop through play. Children have good opportunities to enjoy and achieve. They are well stimulated and enjoy a mix of free and adult-led play. The childminder uses her experience and understanding of the needs of young children to provide a good range of experiences which appeal to their interests, and enable them to have fun.

The childminder takes the time to find out what interests the children. She listens to them and plans some activities around their ideas. Children enjoy sharing books with the childminder and learning about animals both ancient and modern. During inspection, the children explored picture books and talked about their interest in dinosaurs. Later, they drew around stencils of dinosaurs and coloured in pictures of their favourite beast. Later, the children explored a book which contained pictures of the habitats where certain creatures live. Animals that inhabit our world such as snakes, sharks and tigers were considered and talked about. The children sorted cut-out pictures of animals such as whales, frogs, hippopotamuses and gorillas and after much discussion, stuck these shapes on to pictures of the most appropriate 'home' in which they might live.

Children regularly enjoy activities such as sticking & gluing, drawing, painting and baking. General conversation, coupled with these fun activities and experiences, enable children to ask questions and to make sense of the world. Skills and concepts are developed through routines, conversation and questioning and as a result, overall, children develop well. However, the childminder doesn't consistently plan for all children's learning. Therefore all learning outcomes for children are not always fully developed. Children have suitable opportunities to enjoy play outdoors and have access to a fully enclosed garden. Equally, they have access to a good range of outdoor equipment to ensure that their needs are met.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder fosters good relationships with parents, which contribute to children's well-being in the childminding setting. She seeks parents' views on their child's needs and interests. Information is shared verbally with parents and there are some written policies and procedures in place to inform parents of the childminder's practice. Equally, parents are supplied with the contact details of the regulator should they wish to make a complaint.

Children make themselves at home and are self-assured in deciding what to do. They take turns, share and demonstrate care for each other, playing amicably. Children are respected and as a consequence, they grow in self-esteem, as the childminder provides a positive role model for the children to follow.

Children benefit from the childminder's friendly disposition. She has a warm and generous manner and is keen to work with parents to ensure the most appropriate care for the children. Children are valued and respected as individuals. They understand behaviour boundaries as the childminder has established clear ground rules. Inappropriate behaviour is challenged, and the childminder uses a range of strategies to manage behaviour sensitively. Children's understanding of right and wrong is increased as they respond to sensitive reminders to take care of toys and each other.

Although there are no children currently attending with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the childminder has a good knowledge of ensuring inclusion for all children and the importance of working with parents to meet individual children's needs. The childminder has a good understanding of the importance of building positive relationships with parents and consequently relevant information is shared verbally to ensure consistency of care.

The childminder has a good awareness of her role in promoting equality of opportunity. She plans some activities for the children to enable them to have a greater awareness and understanding of the world. She talks to the children about the difference and similarities of people from other cultures, as this naturally arises in conversation. The childminder has a suitable range of resources and books which children can access on their own to enable them to explore and learn independently about the wider world.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder is committed to her own improvement and development which in turn benefits children. She has completed a variety of training courses and incorporates new learning and understanding into her childcare practice to enhance their experiences. She attends local network meetings and receives support from the local authority. She also offers support to other local childminders and has made arrangements with another childminder in a case of an emergency. This ensures that children are cared for by a properly vetted individual should an unforeseen incident occur.

The childminder and parents work as a team for the benefit of each child. The children's needs, routines and behaviours are discussed, as appropriate, on a regular basis with parents thus contributing to the continuity of the children's care. Documents are stored securely and safely in order to ensure children's privacy.

The childminder has a good understanding of the National Standards and along with effective organisational skills, is clear about her responsibilities as a registered childminder. Children are offered good levels of support and supervision to enable them to feel secure. Indoor and outdoor space is organised appropriately to provide a good range of play opportunities for the children. This enables them to initiate and extend their own play and learning. The childminder does maintain an accurate record of attendance. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, to improve standards of care, the following recommendations were raised.

A recommendation was raised to obtain written permission from parents before administering medication to children and written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. These recommendations have been fully met and as a consequence, children's welfare and safety is assured.

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 further planning and play activities to fully promote children's all-round opportunity to enjoy and achieve.

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