

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	255374
Inspection date	24 October 2007
Inspector	Karen Cooper
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 1985. She lives with her partner and teenage child in Walsall. The location is convenient for schools, pre-schools, park and shops. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The family has two cats, a rabbit and several fish.

The childminder is registered to care for six children at any one time and is currently minding eight children at various times during the day including before and after school. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminder takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection by keeping her home clean. Children are helped to understand that washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating helps keep them healthy. They are well cared for in the event of illness, for

example, parents are made aware of the sickness policy, which states that children will not be cared for in the event of illness and that they will be contacted to collect their child as soon as possible. All relevant documentation regarding accidents and medication is in place and shared with parents. However, accident records are not always countersigned by parents therefore, children's welfare is not fully safeguarded.

Children's health is promoted by a wholesome, nutritious and balanced diet. A meal plan is shared with parents to ensure they are aware of meal choices. The childminder ensures that children are encouraged to eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Very often she prepares the food in advance and freezes it. Meal times are treated as a social occasion when the children and the childminder sit together to eat their food and enjoy each other's company. Drinks are readily available, particularly for the younger children to ensure that they do not become dehydrated. Children's individual needs are well met and information is frequently shared with parents to ensure that their wishes are being respected.

Children enjoy a good range of physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They develop self-confidence in their physical skills as they use a range of indoor and outdoor toys such as wheeled toys, push-alongs and musical toys. They go for walks to the local park, library, art gallery and frequently attend the local toddler groups where they have access to a broad range of resources, play opportunities and activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play, eat and rest in well-maintained premises and benefit from a range of good quality toys, furniture and resources. Equipment is kept clean and is regularly checked for safety. Indoor and outdoor space is used effectively, creating a child-friendly environment. Many toys and resources are placed on shelves, tables and in boxes at child height to ensure children can access them independently. This also helps to create a stimulating, learning environment. Children have access to the ground floor of the premises which include a play room, kitchen, conservatory, toilet and a fully enclosed garden.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure home because the childminder is aware of her responsibility to keep children safe. She regularly carries out rigorous safety checks and has put procedures in place to minimise any potential risks to children. For example, appropriate safety equipment is used including socket covers and safety gates. Effective security systems ensure that children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised and there are clear procedures to ensure only authorised people collect the children. Visitors are requested to sign in and out of the premises. Children are beginning to learn about their own safety through discussion and explanation. They gain a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in the event of an emergency and regularly practise evacuation procedures to ensure they are aware of where to go to stay safe. This helps children to begin to take responsibility for themselves and others.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as the childminder has a good understanding of her role and responsibility to protect children in her care. She is aware of signs and symptoms of possible abuse and knows the appropriate procedures to follow should she have a concern about a child. The children's welfare is further safeguarded and promoted because the childminder has produced a written child protection policy which she ensures is shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are provided with an excellent range of activities and experiences that reflect their needs, interests and which help them to make very progress in their development. For example, they are provided with a superb range of structured activities such as art and craft, music and singing and cooking to ensure that they remain interested and stimulated. The environment is extremely well organised and child-orientated which ensures that children are able to make decisions about their play and independently select from the well-placed toys and activities. Very good use is made of the outdoor space for more active play and exercise to ensure children's physical skills are promoted. The childminder organises activities to ensure they are in line with the 'Birth to three matters' guidance.

Children benefit from extremely good relationships with the childminder. The childminder is particularly skilled in talking to children, responding well to them and listening to their ideas. As a result, children are well settled, enjoy their time at the childminder's home and are helped to achieve. Children know the routine and enthusiastically join in with the activities. Younger children play with an excellent variety of programmable toys that stimulate their learning and development. Children enjoy looking at the wide range of books and concentrate well when listening to stories such as 'The little polar bear'. Older children become involved for extended periods of times using a pirate activity sticker book. The encouragement that children are given to appreciate music is exceptional. The younger children enjoy moving around the room demonstrating their excitement, squealing with delight and enjoy making their own tunes using a recorder. Older children happily listen to and join in familiar nursery rhymes and songs.

Children are helped to develop confidence and self-esteem through the use of praise and encouragement. The childminder spends time playing and talking with the children, which significantly enhances their development. Good behaviour is acknowledged and the childminder ensures that it is highlighted during daily discussions with parents.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly respected and valued by the childminder. They are confident in her responses to their requests as they ask for various resources and activities knowing that they will be met. The childminder meets their needs exceptionally well through daily routines which are discussed and agreed with parents, for example, sleeping and eating arrangements. Children are learning to respect diversity within their immediate and wider community through an excellent range of planned and spontaneous activities, toys and resources such as books, work sheets, dolls, role play and figures. They take part in discussions about different cultures and festivals such as Diwali and Eid which helps them to consider and value each other's similarities and differences. The childminder welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ensures that all children can access and participate in all activities offered. Where relevant the childminder has fostered positive links with children's own culture involving parents to ensure their wishes are respected.

Children's self-esteem is extremely well fostered and the childminder uses a range of strategies to manage behaviour that are appropriate to individual ages and stages of maturity and understanding. Children are made aware of the boundaries and expectations of their behaviour because the childminder takes time to discuss concerns and consequences of their behaviour on others. Children play extremely well together and are confident, sociable and secure. They

are well-mannered, share and willingly take turns. Children are encouraged to show consideration for others and are very helpful when it is time to tidy up. Younger children are well settled, happy and eager to learn. Older children are confident, independent and self-reliant as they choose activities. Children are listened to and the childminder values what they say, which helps them to feel good about themselves.

Children benefit greatly from the extremely well-organised and professional approach the childminder has to working in close partnership with parents and carers. The childminder provides a comprehensive range of policies and procedures, including one for complaints. This ensures that parents are fully aware of the expectations and services offered and can be reassured about the care their children receive. The childminder endeavours to meet parents requirements wherever possible ensuring consistency of care for their children. Parents are made welcome and are frequently consulted about their child's needs and progress. The childminder regularly asks them for feedback and suggestions ensuring that any comments are acted on if necessary. She provides flexible support to parents who have varying work patterns, which ensures children are safe and secure.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel at ease in a well-organised, but still homely environment. They use the ground floor of the property to enjoy a wide variety of spontaneous and planned activities and independently select from a range of quality toys and equipment provided for them daily. Regular visits outside of the home contribute to children's learning and enjoyment of the local environment. The childminder shows commitment towards her own personal development and improves her knowledge by attending relevant short courses for example, first aid, 'Birth to three' matters and child protection. She is an experienced childminder and has recently acquired a quality assurance accreditation.

Policies and procedures that are required for the efficient and safe management of the children are regularly reviewed and shared with parents. The majority of the required paperwork is in place to ensure the care of the children is promoted. However, vetting procedures are not always followed promptly and the attendance log is sometimes completed in advance, therefore children's welfare is not fully protected. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was requested to obtain written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment; ensure security of the premises is maintained at all times and ensure the daily attendance log is kept updated and includes times of arrival and departure of children.

Children's health is now protected because the childminder ensures that all relevant documentation regarding accidents and medication is in place and shared with parents. Children are cared for in a safe and secure home because the childminder is aware of her responsibility to keep children safe. She regularly carries out rigorous safety checks and has put procedures in place to minimise any potential risks to children. Although children's times of arrival and departure are recorded the log is sometimes recorded in advance therefore, as part of the inspection this has been carried forward as a recommendation.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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):

- ensure accident records are accurately maintained
- improve recording procedures of children's daily attendance
- complete process to ensure that persons over the age of 16 years living on the premises are suitable to have access to children.

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