

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	304075
Inspection date	29 August 2007
Inspector	Sue Anslow
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 outstanding. 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 1990. She lives with her husband and two children aged 18 and 11 in Congleton. The whole house, with the exception of one bedroom, is used for childminding and there is a safely enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and occasionally works with an assistant. Eight children are currently being minded, three under fives and five over fives. All children attend on a part time basis. The childminder mostly walks to the local school to take and collect children. The childminder attends local toddler groups and other play facilities during the week.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and the local childminding group in Congleton.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because the childminder follows highly effective procedures and practices which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. The childminder's animated and enthusiastic personality ensures children learn about their health and good hygiene practices by talking, explaining and encouraging their active involvement. They happily wash their hands or use wet wipes at appropriate times and nappies are changed regularly and hygienically. Sick or injured children are managed extremely well by the childminder who has current first aid and food hygiene certificates. Parents are advised about the exclusion of infections for the protection of the other children and any medication is administered and recorded correctly. A healthy lifestyle is promoted through the children's ability to explore, test and develop their physical control within a variety of indoor and outdoor experiences. They walk to and from school, visit the local park to play ball or use the playground equipment and play lots of outdoor games in the garden, at every opportunity. Younger children attend local toddler groups which offer an excellent variety of physical play as well as social contact with other children and adults. Young children are becoming adept at using their fine motor skills as they draw, paint, roll out dough or thread the cotton reels together.

Children enthusiastically learn about food and the effects on their bodies. The childminder actively involves them in baking activities and they choose which fruit and vegetables they would like when out shopping. They thoroughly enjoy making their own fruit drinks which they enjoy with their snack. A sample menu informs parents of the type of foods provided and a range of fruit, vegetables and salad items are included everyday. Fresh, filtered drinking water is available throughout the day from a water dispenser in the utility room. Older children help themselves and younger children have their own feeder cups filled regularly. The childminder has an excellent understanding of children's individual needs and requirements, gained in consultation with parents, which ensures each child's needs are respected.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment where easy access to all the toys and equipment is given high priority. This allows children to make their own choices and their independence is significantly enhanced as they move from room to room or outside into the garden. Children's enjoyment and delight in the varied activities they undertake is evident from pictures displayed and albums full of photographs. Colourful posters in the playroom enhance the children's curiosity and encourage communication. Children use high quality equipment, appropriate to their age and stage of development, which enhances their learning and enjoyment in all areas and protects their safety. Excellent use is made of natural play materials, such as sand, water, junk modelling and baking, which extend children's play experiences using different textures.

Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because the childminder is extremely vigilant, provides close supervision and thoroughly risk assesses all areas to be used by the children. Garden gates are checked when children go outside to play and the sand box is kept covered when not in use. The childminder has an excellent understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits. Smaller objects are put at higher levels on the shelf unit so children can only access toys and equipment which are safe for their use. Children are

safe and secure on outings because the childminder has good sound procedures in place for the children's protection. Reins and harnesses are used as required and lists of names and contact numbers are always taken, along with a mobile telephone, when outside the home. Children have extremely good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe as they explain what to do if the 'fire whistle' sounds and how they cross the road safely. Children's welfare is very well protected by the childminder who has sound knowledge of child protection procedures and informs parents of her role and responsibilities through clear notices and written policies. The childminder updates her knowledge and skills regularly by attending courses and any existing injuries are recorded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time spent with the childminder and engage well in a broad range of exciting and stimulating activities which promote their all round development. Teaching and learning are consistently high because the childminder's enthusiastic and outgoing personality motivates and excites children to use their imaginations and curiosity. Excellent use is made of relevant guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum, to enhance the planning of appropriate activities for all children. Monthly themes link activities together, for example, looking at pictures of animals in books, walking along the canal to watch the ducks, visiting local farms and singing songs incorporating animal noises, all help children understand nature and the world around them.

Children's needs at various ages are extremely well met, with the childminder providing a fun and challenging environment, conducive to effective learning. Children are actively encouraged to try new things, such as attempting to keep a balloon in the air or scraping every last bit of yoghurt out of the pot. Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas enthusiastically as they join in a diverse range of exploratory and sensory experiences. They create towers and buildings out of bricks or cardboard tubes, cut out shapes with play dough or see how many colours they can incorporate into the butterfly picture.

Young children are becoming confident and self-assured because of the warm, close and caring relationship with the childminder. They are supervised, supported and encouraged with animated praise and enthusiasm, making each activity exciting and stimulating the children's imaginations and curiosity. For example, taking it in turns to sit on the childminder's knee to sing the 'row, row, row your boat' song, eventually learning to hold each other's hands to do the 'rocking' actions. Children thoroughly enjoy manoeuvring their wheeled toys up and down the drive, whooping with joy when they 'win' the race.

The childminder has a clear understanding of each child's individual needs and interests, which ensures the comprehensive range of activities suit their various ages and abilities. Young children visit toddler groups and playgrounds during the day and after school they enjoy watching the older children have fun on the bigger swings and slides. Optimal challenges lead to all round progress in children's learning and development and any areas which need extra attention are made fun and exciting so children learn quickly. They count the numbers of bricks in the tower and discuss the colours of the plates at snack time. Excellent written activity plans are devised for each week which are varied and imaginative. Regular visits to local play facilities so children can have social contact with other adults and children and trips to the library to look at books or listen to stories, significantly enhance the children's enjoyment, excitement and interest.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly valued as individuals. They show a positive attitude to others and gain a good understanding of the world around them through the exceptional variety of activities and resources available, as well as positive encouragement and sound teaching by the childminder. An excellent range of toys and books with images of people who look different from themselves, ensure children's understanding of diversity and respect for others. Children's welfare is superbly promoted because the childminder consults closely with the parents and others on any issues of concern or particular requirements. All children are welcomed and integrated into the home environment where they participate in all activities to the level of their ability. This promotes the children's all round development and ensures a positive sense of self-esteem.

Children's contributions and achievements are highly valued and rewarded which contributes to their self-confidence. Positive behaviour is well promoted through meaningful and enthusiastic praise and good role modelling by the childminder. Children are thanked for helping or taking turns with another child and the older children often help the younger children in a variety of ways. Children have a positive understanding of right and wrong as they learn to care for each other and their environment. An excellent partnership with parents contributes significantly to the children's well-being. Parent's views about their child's needs and interests are actively sought before the child starts, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. Parents are given full information about the service offered and daily reports on how their children are progressing and enjoying themselves. The childminder works extremely closely with parents to support the child's learning and development, involving them in the monthly activities and explaining all aspects of the children's care and routines.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is greatly enhanced by the exceptional quality of organisation and management techniques of the childminder. The home is well organised, bright, warm and inviting for young children, with a wealth of play materials easily accessible to meet all their needs.

The childminder is highly motivated and committed to enhancing her knowledge and skills in childcare, for the benefit of all the children. She has completed all three childminding courses as well as short courses and workshops relevant to the care of young children and future developments within the regulation framework. This ensures the childminder is able to offer children a range of outstanding and innovative activities.

Accurately kept records and other relevant documentation support the excellent childcare practice and ensure children's health, safety and progress is well promoted and managed superbly.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The childminder was asked to obtain parent's signatures on all medication records. This is now the normal practice and ensures good management of children's health care.

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 complaint 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 outstanding. 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

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

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