

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY241647
Inspection date	20 August 2007
Inspector	Dianne Andrews
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 has been registered since 2002. She lives in a modern, terraced house, in the village of West Felton, in between Shrewsbury and Oswestry. She lives with her husband and young son, aged eight years.

The minded children have access to the lounge, conservatory, kitchen and bathroom. The children can also play in the enclosed rear garden.

The family have two cats, which live outside.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well-maintained and comfortable home. Their health is effectively promoted as the childminder obtains appropriate information from parents about their children's

individual health care needs and has a wealth of information to refer to on children's health care issues. Written records are maintained of any accidents, which are countersigned by parents, and appropriate procedures are in place if children should require any medication.

Children follow appropriate hygiene procedures, such as washing their hands before meals and after using the toilet; they make use of individual towels to prevent cross-infection and show that they understand why good personal hygiene is important. Toys and equipment are kept clean and in good condition to further ensure that children's health is protected. However, children's dummies are frequently dropped onto the ground while they play, then put back into their mouths without suitable cleaning. This potentially compromises children's good health. Children of all ages are able to eat, rest and play to suit their individual needs because the childminder takes account of their home routines.

Information is gathered from parents to ensure that children's dietary needs are met. Some parents provide their children's meals, which are stored effectively so food remains fresh. A healthy eating policy is fully implemented so children eat food that is good for them. Fresh fruit or raisins are offered for snacks and children help themselves freely to drinks of water so they are well hydrated.

Children learn to lead a healthy lifestyle and enjoy daily vigorous exercise in the garden or at local parks where there is more space. A good range of equipment, such as a climbing frame and slide and a range of wheeled toys enable them to develop a range of physical skills. The childminder has a positive attitude towards outdoor play, which means children benefit from plenty of fresh air. Interesting and fun activities such as chasing bubbles, parachute games and building sandcastles encourage children to be active.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a child-friendly environment that has been very well organised to ensure children are safe and happy. The play space is warm and comfortable and children move around the home with confidence. Their safety is effectively promoted because most necessary steps have been taken to minimise their risk of accidental injury and there is a safety policy in place to underpin the practice. The outdoor area is fully enclosed, but the lock on the gate leading to the shared-use alley has the potential to be opened by the older children, thus compromising their safety. All the required fire safety precautions are in place and the childminder regularly practises emergency evacuations with the children so that they all know what to do in the event of a fire.

Children have access to a broad range of high quality toys that meet safety standards; these are mainly stored in a dedicated playroom. The childminder supervises children's play to ensure they are safe and that toys are used appropriately and are suitable for the ages of children attending. Children are kept safe on outings because the childminder ensures they are familiar with road safety rules and wristbands are worn by children, completed with the childminder's contact number, in the event that they become lost.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because the childminder has attended 'Safeguarding Children' training and she is aware of the correct procedures to follow if she has a concern. She has a clear policy which is shared with parents to ensure they are aware of her role in protecting children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and independent, they pursue their own interests and make choices from the good range of toys and activities. Children approach the childminder with confidence and enjoy her company, they share games together and have warm and affectionate relationships. Consistent routines ensure children know what to expect and as a result they are settled and happy. They enjoy lots of positive interaction with the childminder, who offers them good support during their activities and this encourages them to develop and extend their skills.

The childminder knows the children well. She takes time to find out what interests each child and builds on this information to provide a variety of activities and opportunities to ensure their preferences are met. Children benefit from the opportunity to socialise with others while at SureStart toddler groups and outings to local amenities. They play cooperatively together and use their imaginations well during their play as they enjoy acting out familiar scenarios, for example, while playing with shopping trolley, play-food and till.

The childminder has a good understanding of how the youngest children learn and provides opportunities for them to develop in all areas. For instance, they delight in the exploration of a sensory box; they jingle the bells, laugh as they look at their reflection in the mirror and listen as they crinkle a piece of material; supported and encouraged to use language and sounds by their carer.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs recognised and met so they thrive in the childminder's care. The childminder knows them well and shows them respect and affection as she listens to them and values their ideas and contributions. Children have equal access to toys and equipment that meet their individual needs, so they can become confident and independent. The children access an innovative range of resources positively reflecting diversity and they have opportunities to become aware of the wider world through discussions and their experience of life in their local community.

Children play happily together and show good, healthy relationships with each other. Disputes are few and are settled through quiet discussion and negotiation and older children have devised a set of house rules to encourage good behaviour. However, some behaviour management strategies in place, such as the occasional use of a 'naughty chair', do not consistently promote children's well-being and self-esteem in a positive manner.

Children benefit from the warm and positive relationships between the childminder and their parents and carers. All essential documentation is in place, detailed information is collected on children's individual needs, including any that have learning difficulties or disabilities. All aspects of children's care are discussed and agreed so that parents are confident that their wishes are known and respected. Parents know about the childminder's practice as written and verbal information is regularly shared with them.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well looked after in the stimulating environment. The childminder is motivated and knowledgeable and organises her day well so children benefit from a balance of interesting activities. She is committed to developing her practice further by attendance at relevant early years training courses and is part of the Childminder's Network. Children's health, safety and welfare is promoted well because the childminder has a sound understanding of the National Standards and she knows how children develop and learn. Children participate in a good range of activities that are effectively organised to ensure they suit the range of ages and interests. Overall children's needs are met.

Comprehensive and clear written policies and procedures underpin the childminder's good practice. These take into account the individual nature of the setting and the expectations of care. All documentation is in place, including any necessary consents from parents, such as permission for outings. Important documents, such as the insurance certificate, the conditions of registration and first aid are clearly displayed to reassure parents and carers.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to improve hygiene practices for sleeping children. The childminder now uses individual sheets, which are washed after each use to promote children's health and well-being effectively.

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:

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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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection; this refers to the use of young children's dummies
- ensure that the outdoor area is fully secure
- ensure that all strategies used to manage children's behaviour fully promote their welfare and development.

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