



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	500352
Inspection date	24 July 2006
Inspector	Christine Myerscough
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 2000. She lives with her husband and two children, one of whom is an adult and her other child is aged thirteen years. They live in a house in the south of Manchester. A playroom and an upstairs toilet are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder occasionally works with an assistant. She is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding nine children who attend on a part-time basis. The family has a cat. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

In the main, appropriate hygiene routines protect children from the risk of cross infection. For example, children independently wash their hands before eating and after toileting. They understand about healthy practices, such as the importance of wearing sun lotion during hot weather so their skin does not burn. However, children share hand drying towels and some areas within the childminder's home are not maintained to a good level of cleanliness. The childminder keeps suitable permissions in place with parents regarding health care matters to ensure children's well-being. A clear and detailed sick child policy is fully agreed and sets out the expectations of both parties if children are unwell. This ensures the best interests of all children are taken into account to prevent the spread of infection. A first aid box is within easy reach to attend to children's needs quickly, if required.

Children are well nourished to promote their growth and development. They develop healthy eating habits as nutritious foods are on offer. The childminder has experience of working as a chef and prepares homemade meals, such as pasta dishes and shepherds pie. Meals are balanced to meet children's dietary requirements with fresh vegetables and fruit available daily. Mealtimes are a relaxed, social occasion. Children sit together at the table, politely share a plate of toast and are given plenty of time to thoroughly enjoy their food. They have opportunities to experience new tastes as they make regular visits to a shop which provides food tasting sessions. As a consequence, they develop their confidence and learn to enjoy foods they have not tried before, such as sushi. Children quench their thirst when needed as their drinks are accessible to them at all times. A water cooling system is available for their use and provides refreshing chilled water.

Children take part in a good range of activities to contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Planned visits to parks and woods with spacious areas allow children to play games and exercise their bodies. The childminder's garden is well equipped to promote and develop their physical skills. Children explore their capabilities and keep fit as they play on the climbing frame, push trolleys and ride in wheeled vehicles. Children talk excitedly about the forthcoming childminding sports day event. They demonstrate their eagerness to engage in the egg and spoon race and throw their bean bags.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play freely and in comfort. The layout of the furniture is effectively organised so they have space to move around confidently without the worry of injuring themselves. The childminder's home is in a reasonable state of decoration and ongoing improvements are being made to ensure the surroundings are inviting. Children's art work and photographs are on display in the playroom to help make the environment welcoming to children and their families. Toys and equipment are of good quality and suitable for differing ages to meet children's developing needs. The childminder purchases new items regularly from the internet to increase her stock. This helps to stimulate children's curiosity and widen their play experiences.

Children feel reassured as the childminder supervises them closely. A good range of safety equipment minimises the risks of accidents to children. For example, there are gates so children do not gain unsupervised access to specific areas and a guard over the radiator. Good fire safety measures prevent children from coming to harm. A fire blanket is accessible in the kitchen and a smoke detection system is in place. A fire officer has visited the childminder's home at her request. A clear, written emergency evacuation plan is located on the wall. Children practise drills on a regular basis so they become aware and familiar with safe practices. Effective security arrangements protect children from unwanted entry into her home. There is close circuit television at the entrance to the house and the childminder verbally agrees a password system for the safe collection of children.

Children avoid dangers outdoors. When out on walks, younger children are transported in a buggy or stand on the buggy board. Older ones hold hands together and act sensibly. Children are suitably protected whilst being transported in the childminder's car as necessary documentation, such as business insurance cover is kept up-to-date. The childminder ensures she keeps to the speed limits on roads to ensure children's safety. Extra precautionary measures are undertaken when children go on trips. Risk assessments are carried out before using parks and the childminder talks to children about the procedures to follow if they get lost. During outings, they wear brightly coloured wrist straps with contact details in the event of them becoming separated from the childminder.

Children's welfare is well supported by the childminder's clear understanding of her responsibilities in relation to child protection matters. She has attended additional training to improve her knowledge of the subject. Procedures are fully shared with parents so they have a good understanding of her role with regard to identifying any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are well settled and happy in the childminder's care. They form trusting relationships and freely climb on her knee for a hug. Warm smiles and soothing words reassure them and contribute to their well-being. Playing games with other children builds their confidence and encourages them to become sociable. The childminder consistently talks to children to engage them as they play. As a consequence, they feel secure and are keen to communicate, ask questions and seek support. The childminder uses everyday opportunities to promote children's learning. They talk about colours, count as they walk up the stairs and say letters in the alphabet as they look at posters on the wall.

Children play purposefully and show an interest in what they do. They develop good concentration levels as they draw detailed pictures of the beach at Blackpool, thread bobbins and play with interlocking shapes. Good emphasis is placed on encouraging children's creativity through a range of craft activities. They represent their feelings and ideas as they mould clay to make pots. A range of natural materials, such as leaves and shells are collected to do rubbings and create a collage. For mother's day, children placed coloured sand in glass bottles for presents and decorated them with a candle. Regular storytelling helps children to develop an enjoyment of books. They handle books with care and freely select them for pleasure. Children's imagination

is developed as they dress up in outfits, pretend to be doctors and make up a story with their puppets.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are warmly welcomed. They feel at ease and are treated with equal concern so they feel valued. Boys and girls freely express themselves and follow their interests as they eagerly care for the dolls together. Important events in children's lives, such as birthdays are celebrated. A party is arranged and photographs are taken so their special day with friends is remembered. Children develop a positive attitude towards others as the childminder answers their questions about similarities and differences in a sensitive and appropriate manner. They take an interest in learning sign language and a range of resources, such as multi-cultural books are available to increase their awareness of diversity. Regular trips to places of interest help children to become familiar with their local environment. For example, children visit Blackpool, the museum and Gulliver's World. To increase their understanding of the wider world, the childminder plans activities relating to different festivals. Children have opportunities to taste food from other cultures, such as rice during Chinese New Year. The childminder has experience of caring for children with a range of needs. She liaises with parents and outside agencies to meet children's specific requirements.

The childminder creates a calm atmosphere and promotes respectful relationships. This contributes towards a harmonious environment for children. As a result, they are well behaved and demonstrate good manners as they ask the childminder's permission for things. They act responsibly as they share equipment and spontaneously tidy away toys after themselves. Sensitive storytelling helps children to understand about how to deal with bullies. Siblings enjoy one another's company and play without rivalry. Frequent use of praise supports children's efforts and fosters their self confidence. Their individual achievements are recognised and they respond well to the use of sticker charts to encourage their development. Children develop a sense of pride and enjoy looking at a special folder of their creative work. They look forward to bringing their bears for the teddy bears picnic to show to their friends.

An open and friendly approach with parents contributes to establishing an effective partnership. A flexible service is on offer to meet children's needs successfully. Time is spent chatting together to maintain good relationships and enable relevant information, such as a child's daily sleeping patterns, to be passed on. This promotes consistency of care for children. At Halloween and Christmas time, families are invited to the childminder's home. They take part in activities with their children and enjoy a Christmas meal. This provides an opportunity for everyone to meet, get to know one another and experience a good time.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a positive and supportive environment. The sharing of experiences with the childminder and one another helps them to have a fun time. Children benefit from a dedicated playroom so they develop a sense of belonging. Space and resources are organised

well to enable children to participate and initiate their own ideas. The garden leads directly from the playroom and children confidently make choices about whether to spend their time indoors or outdoors. A good balance of activities both in the childminder's home and the community appeal to children's interests. Effective use is made of the childminder's assistant so children have extra support and attention. For example, she accompanies the childminder on trips so they receive a good level of supervision.

Documentation is well organised and stored in separate files to maintain confidentiality. This ensures the smooth running of the childminder's business for a safe and efficient service to promote children's well-being. Established relationships with other childminders and guidance from Sure Start workers keeps the childminder abreast of current issues in child care. Attendance on short training courses on a range of subjects helps to develop her knowledge and skills in order to promote positive outcomes for children. This supports the continued improvement of her childminding practice. First aid training is kept up-to-date to enable the childminder to administer treatment, if necessary to ensure children's welfare. 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, the childminder agreed to ensure the safety of the front garden and gas appliances, keep documentation in order, and provide a range of accessible toys and activities to promote children's learning.

The front garden is not registered for childminding and children do not use this area. A carbon monoxide detector is in place to alert the childminder to any potential safety issues with regard to gas appliances to keep children free from dangers. Record keeping, such as the register of attendance for children, and the consent and contract forms with parents, are accurately maintained to ensure children's welfare. Toys and equipment are stored on low level shelving and in boxes so they are fully accessible. Children freely select their favourite items and the things they want to play with. A range of planned activities capture children's imagination and interest. This motivates them and supports their overall learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted has received concerns regarding National Standard 6 (Safety). An Ofsted Early Years Childcare Inspector conducted an unannounced visit to the provision on 11 October 2005. Ofsted are satisfied that the childminder remains qualified for registration.

The childminder 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

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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):

- keep all areas of the premises clean
- ensure suitable hand drying facilities are available for 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