



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	308838
Inspection date	07 September 2006
Inspector	Lesley Sharples
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 September 1999. She lives in Blackpool with her two children age 15 and 10 years.

She is registered to provide care for six children. At present she cares for four children aged between six months and six years who attend on a part time basis.

Facilities for children comprise of the lounge and playroom, kitchen and hallway as well as the bathroom upstairs. There is a garden to the rear of the house.

The childminder has completed both the Introduction to Childminding and Developing Childminding Practice courses and has also gained NVQ Level 3 in Childcare and Education. The childminder is a member of the Blackpool & Fylde Childminding Group and the National Childminding Association. She is also a member of the 'Oak Tree' Childminding Network and has gained accredited status, being able to provide early education as a childminder.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have their health needs met well because the childminder provides a clean and well maintained home where they are beginning to learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. For example, wiping a runny nose with tissue and the use of suitable items when using the bathroom. This helps to prevent cross infection. However, the childminder feels this could be better implemented, by her helping children learn more about hygiene as part of their daily routine, such as when potty training and understanding why hand washing is important after playing in the garden. Independence is encouraged with young children by the use of a step to the toilet and sink. Documents relating to the administration of medication and the recording of accidents fully supports children's health and safety. Consents are in place for sun cream and emergency medical treatment so that children's health is safeguarded.

Children are learning the importance of healthy eating because the childminder provides them with good range of nutritious home cooked fresh foods. They are offered varied and nutritious snacks and plenty of drinks throughout the day, including sugar free drinks and filtered water. Children are encouraged to enjoy their food and the childminder encourages this by presenting it attractively, such as faces on buns using tomato sauce. Children have their dietary needs effectively met because the childminder uses information from parents about individual children's dietary needs and knows that these must be met, such as an allergy to milk. Training has been completed in relation to food hygiene and as a result, knowledge relating to storage and cooking foods is implemented in practice.

Young children's and babies' physical growth and development is promoted well. This is achieved through encouraging babies to move about on the floor and reach out for mobiles. Older children have a huge variety of outdoor play resources to encourage climbing, cycling, running and catching balls. They are also taken for walks in the local area and this extends their environment and keeps them healthy. Babies make themselves understood as they express their feelings when they are hungry, tired, sad or happy and the childminder responds to all of these needs well. They receive plenty of cuddles and reassurance and rest and sleep according to their individual needs. This fully ensures their emotional well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have a strong sense of belonging within the setting. They are cared for in a welcoming indoor and outdoor environment which is dedicated to meeting their all round needs. The outdoor area offers an extension to play as it is used as another room where children have extensive opportunities for safe role play and physical activities. Children are confident when moving around the setting and are made to feel part of the family. Their art work is very well displayed in the entrance hall, which shows it is valued. Children are looked after in secure premises so that they play safely both indoors and outside. Children use a vast range of safe and good quality resources which provide for their all round development. These are all made available for easy access to promote children's independence, such as the computer, book case

and low level shelving. They play with resources and equipment that are of suitable design, condition and conform to BS standards, for example the travel cot, and this keeps them safe.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised with the childminder taking all the necessary precautions to keep them free from harm. For example, barriers are sited in all areas required to contain children and prevent access. Written policies are held on security procedures, missing child, and uncollected child, which shows that the childminder places children's safety as a high priority. Further to these, children have had the opportunity to practise the emergency evacuation procedures and the childminder has arranged a back up system with another childminder. Children are becoming increasingly aware of keeping themselves safe. The childminder takes the opportunity to talk about road safety when out walking and helps children come down the stairs with care and supervision.

Children's safety is further assured because the childminder has a clear understanding of the requirements for reporting any concerns of a child in her care. She has written a policy which includes up to date information regarding Local Safeguarding Children Boards and telephone numbers and knows to also inform Ofsted of any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children make very strong and positive relationships with the childminder. They settle immediately on arrival and feel at ease within the setting. There are some children who have been coming a long time which provides them with continuity of care and offers a secure second home in which they feel part of the family.

Older children benefit from the childminder's thorough planning and preparation of activities to ensure children have their all round development and learning needs met. As an accredited childminder she implements continuous provision in the six areas of learning when older children are present. This means that activities promote the desired learning outcomes for funded children as part of the Foundation Stage and prior to them going to school. Younger children have access to the same planned activities but differences in expectations are identified in the planning. For example, extra help is given in language development when doing an alphabet frieze.

All children's needs are met with the childminder providing high levels of care and attention. There is an excellent balance of both free choice as well as adult led activities. Help is given when watering the sunflowers they have planted and children play happily during a quiet activity on the table on their own when the childminder is cuddling the baby. Children are able to freely express themselves through an exceptional variety of media, hence they develop their creative and imaginative skills. For example, using appropriate crayons and felt tips for their skill level, creating beautiful art work linking with growing sunflowers and making father's day cards. Children's outdoor experiences include going out in the rain, making mud pies and picking pears to make pies. The childminder fully encourages children to develop their imagination outdoors where they can satisfy their curiosity in natural elements and does not mind them making a mess as she feels these are important experiences. Children respond well to the childminder, who is interested in what they do and say. They are asked questions and this

motivates their play, such as "What colour is it?", "How many?", "Can you find a horse?", and "Do you need some help?" They are therefore happy, confident and meaningfully engaged. Children are learning to be competent language users. They talk about the past, present and future such as what the refuse men are doing outside as well as looking at photographs when their hair was shorter.

Young children are benefiting from the childminder's training and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. She is starting to implement aspects of this and is focusing on observations which in turn influences her planning. Children's achievements are acknowledged by the childminder and she ensures they are also recognised by the child. Young children, including babies, have extensive opportunities for painting in a variety of ways, such as using hands or free painting. Children also enjoy baking and cooking simple meals, as the childminder has previous experience in this field of work. Babies are highly stimulated with interesting sounds and colourful moving objects. They are fascinated and attentive, showing their joy by kicking their legs and smiling happily in response to the childminder's interaction. She is aware of the importance of talking with babies, allowing time for them to respond in their own way. Plans are in place to provide a treasure basket in readiness for the baby and she demonstrates a wonderful understanding of the significance of the contents, which she has carefully thought out. This attention to understanding all levels of development in children and creating opportunities for self discovery ensure their learning is fun and promotes positive outcomes in all areas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are fully discussed with parents and conscientiously met by the childminder. She has very good knowledge and awareness of the importance of treating each child with equal concern and attention and ensures cuddles are given in equal amounts. The childminder has a thorough understanding of issues relating to equal opportunities and how this affects practice. For example, she challenges any negative remarks from older children and discusses these with parent's so that changes in understanding can be made. The childminder has taken the time to write a policy demonstrating how she implements requirements in practice. For instance, as part of their play, children access a good range of resources that contributes to their awareness and understanding of the immediate and wider world. There are books, posters, small world figures as well as discussion time in talking about others. Children have access to all activities with no gender bias, such as girls playing with hammers and cars and boys with the dolls' house.

The childminder is aware that some children may have special educational needs and is proactive in ensuring these needs are met. She understands the importance of close liaison with parents and has, as part of the childminding network, completed training in this area of work. A written policy statement clearly indicates a thorough understanding of partnership with parents and other professionals and she has experience as a childminder in looking after children with both learning difficulties and learning disabilities.

Children behave very well. They are interested and engaged in activities provided and play happily. The childminder constantly praises children and uses positive reinforcement strategies,

which helps them to behave appropriately. For example, an agreed number of stickers for wanted behaviour results in a treat from the parent, such as going to the park. Importantly, this strategy is also used in partnership with parents for consistency and is benefiting the child. Minor altercations are dealt with in a calm and sensitive manner by explaining at their level of understanding and if necessary moving them from situation. Children therefore learn to distinguish between right from wrong as they are encouraged to be kind, friendly and share during their play. The childminder is sensitive to the reasons for some behaviours and manages situations skilfully by asking a child to give the baby's blanket back and finding one for her. There is a written policy in place with clear explanation of her approach to managing behaviour in a positive way. The childminder also is very clear in her understanding of recording physical restraint if used and informing the parent on the day, as required.

The childminder works closely with parents. She forms strong relationships and shares information on a daily basis, both verbal and written, to ensure that children's welfare is promoted. New children have settling in visits and increased times of separation so they and the parents feel confident. Information is gained in order to meet home routines and consents are gained for outings and photographs. Procedures have been developed that are shared with parents, which includes complaints information. These are contained within an information pack and contributes to effective partnership. Children's planned activities are shared with parents when they commence with information explaining a typical day. It shows the range and the variety of play opportunities on offer such digging for worms, baking, constructing as well as what is for dinner and snacks. Parents show their appreciation through thank you cards, invitations to weddings, christenings and birthday parties. They also give flowers and presents which indicates they are thoroughly happy with the provision for their children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children fully benefit from the numerous training and qualifications obtained by the childminder. She genuinely enjoys her work and is constantly developing her skills and knowledge. She has recently updated her first aid training so that an appropriate response can be given in the event of an accident to a child. There is very good organisation by the childminder who ensures children have sufficient space in order to play in comfort and access resources to promote their independence. Knowledge regarding suitability is understood as well as the adult-child ratios. Children attend a parent and toddler group each week, run by the childminder, and this increases their opportunities for social interaction with others.

Well organised documents contribute to the efficient management of the provision. There is a clear understanding of ensuring confidentiality is maintained and therefore the childminder uses a secure filing box to retain information held on children. Documentation relating to policies and procedures is appropriately shared to enhance the quality of care each child receives. Children's attendance is accurately recorded and up to date. There are reciprocal arrangements with another childminder to maintain care for children to cover for holidays and illness. The childminder's certificate of registration is displayed as required.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was agreed to obtain written permission from parents to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment for minded children and to devise an emergency evacuation plan.

Both requirements have been fully met and this means children's welfare and safety is improved.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report since April 2004.

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):

- encourage children to learn about personal hygiene through the daily routine.

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