



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY335942
Inspection date	18 January 2007
Inspector	Sarah Elizabeth Howell
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 2006. She lives with her partner in Runcorn in Cheshire. She is registered to provide care for three children under eight years at one time and currently has two children on roll. Minded children have access to all the ground floor rooms and one bedroom and bathroom on the first floor. There is also access to a fully enclosed rear area for outside play. The childminder takes and collects children from the local pre-school and has strong links with Sure Start and local church-run toddler groups. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning about being healthy through the wide range of experiences the childminder provides and effective support for their learning. They enjoy helping the childminder with basic household tasks, such as brushing floors and dusting, and whilst working alongside the childminder they learn why it is important to keep our homes clean and how this can help to keep us fit and well. Toddlers and pre-school children know to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. They understand that this stops germs from making them poorly. The childminder employs a range of good hygiene practices which also support children's healthy development and prevent the spread of illness, for example, children have individual face flannels and towels and the childminder maintains hygienic procedures when changing and disposing of nappies.

Children are also learning about healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. Snacks and meals are planned to ensure that children get to experiment with new tastes and foods as well as things they know and like. Meals are home cooked and reflect the childminder's good understanding of healthy eating. Water and milk are always available for children to drink and the childminder regularly asks toddlers and pre-school children if they would like a drink. Children know that some foods, for example, sweet things, are not good for their teeth and through discussion children are beginning to understand that the things that they eat influence how they grow and develop. For example, children are experimenting with growing bulbs and the childminder is helping the children to understand what things plants need to help them grow strong and making useful links to how children grow strong and well when they are eating and drinking things which are good for them.

The childminder also provides children with very good support for their physical development. As she does not drive, the children walk with her to pre-school, toddler groups, visits to the library and other places of interest in the village and further afield. In addition, children enjoy trips to the local park where they can have lots of fun and opportunities to develop their physical skills and abilities. In the winter months the childminder also makes sure that children have access to a range of active indoor play opportunities, for example, through visits to play barns and toddler groups, and through being encouraged to use all of the space available within her home for games of chase and singing and dancing. Again the childminder very effectively supports children's enjoyment of physical activity and talks to them about the role this plays in helping to keep them fit and well.

Children are also learning to value each other's emotional well-being. They are encouraged to be kind to one another and to recognise behaviour which makes them sad and which makes them happy. The childminder has good settling-in procedures to help parents and children at the beginning of each placement. She encourages children to bring something from home with them, spends time individually with them to allow them to get to know her well and ensures that routines are as consistent as possible so that children feel secure when making the transition into her care.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder is open and friendly with parents and encourages them to feel welcome and comfortable in her home so that they make time when dropping off or collecting children to stay and chat. As a result she feels that she is developing good relationships with parents which promotes regular, open communication about the progress of children's placements. A good range of age appropriate toys and resources is available within the setting. Children select and play with items they have chosen for themselves and the childminder encourages them to put items back before selecting others so that toys do not become a tripping hazard. Resources are well maintained through regular visual checks as they are being used.

Children are kept safe and free from harm through the childminder's supervision and through the preventive measures she employs to reduce the risks to their safety. Safety gates are used at the top and bottom of the stairs, and child safety locks on low level cupboards prevent children having access to anything which might be hazardous. Children are also learning about what safety means as the childminder explains why she uses a safety gate to keep them from coming into the kitchen when she is cooking. Children understand that hot pans might be dangerous and that it is important to stay away from them. The childminder also employs effective arrangements for fire safety and has a written procedure for emergency evacuation which she uses to help children become familiar with what to do, should such an event occur. Security arrangements for the front door and gate off the back yard are not consistently monitored and there are times when these exits are not locked. This is important as the childminder's house is bordered by a busy main road.

Children are also learning about road safety. The childminder is using the green cross code each time children are out walking with her, so that they are becoming aware of the need to be careful by the road and behave in such a way that they can help to keep themselves safe, for example, by looking and listening before crossing a road with the childminder. The childminder is well informed about the issues surrounding child protection. She is very aware of her responsibility to keep children safe and follow appropriate procedures, should she have concerns about a child's welfare or well-being. She has a written statement which she shares with parents which indicates her commitment to working with them to keep children safe and free from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are provided with a rich and varied range of activities and experiences which support their learning and development. In addition, the childminder's enthusiastic participation in these activities and experiences means that children relish their play time and the involvement of a supportive, encouraging adult. Children are encouraged to be confident, independent and develop good self-esteem as the childminder provides lots of opportunities for them to try things out for themselves, encouraging them to be involved in everyday activities and to feel a sense of achievement when they help her complete simple household tasks or manage part of their own care, for example, taking off and putting on their shoes or starting to use the toilet independently. They make very good use of toys and resources. For example, toddlers

and pre-school children help themselves to toys from the toy cupboard and props from the kitchen to support their pretend play and sustain this imaginative activity for quite sometime without needing adult intervention. As a result, young children are learning to use their initiative and direct their own learning.

The childminder supports children's early development and learning through a range of planned activities both indoors and outside. She supports their early acquisition of language through lots of conversation, through the use of books and stories and through singing and rhymes. She takes children to toddler groups where they have lots of opportunities to talk to their friends and other adults, as well as practise their social skills. Children quickly learn to share, take turns and listen to others as they see this modelled for them by adults and older children. Children enjoy opportunities to be creative as they paint, glue, stick and bake with the childminder, activities which also support the development of their fine motor skills and coordination. They are encouraged to be curious about the world around them and to explore, for example, they talk about the things they see when they are out walking and collect things that are interesting to them such as empty snail shells. They plant bulbs and seeds and talk about what might happen and then watch with fascination as the bulbs grow and become flowers. They enjoy learning through all their senses, for example, being encouraged to touch things to see what they feel like and smelling the flowers which have grown out of the bulbs and taking pleasure in a new smell. As a result, children are intrigued by the world around them and want to know more.

Children are excited about being able to travel on the bus when they spend time with the childminder. They like to talk about what they see out of the window and what they are going to do when they reach their destination. The childminder provides lots of opportunities for children to meet and mix with other children as well as to try new opportunities. For example, young children delight in being able to sing and dance and play with musical instruments at the 'musical mayhem' sessions they attend each week and this has encouraged them to want to do similar activities at home with the childminder. They enjoy visiting the local library and being able to choose their own books as well as joining in the story time sessions with the other children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder plans her care arrangements for each child around her recognition of their individual natures, abilities and needs. Children are actively encouraged to make their own choices about play and where necessary the childminder adapts activities to meet the varying needs and abilities of the children attending. She encourages equal access to resources and experiences through helping children learn to share, take turns and recognise the needs of others as well as themselves. The childminder actively promotes equality of opportunity through discouraging stereotyping, for example, in children's role play and through the use of picture books which show men and women carrying out a variety of non-stereotypical roles.

Children are learning about appropriate behaviour through the childminder's own positive example and through simple, age appropriate explanations when their behaviour is not acceptable. The childminder promotes good behaviour through keeping children well occupied

with a range of activities which they enjoy and which engage and interest them. She encourages kindness and cooperation through her own example and through praise and encouragement. She recognises that children's behaviour is often closely linked to their developmental stage and is part of their learning experience and so she works closely with parents to work through these age or stage related difficulties to help children move on. She supports children in developing good manners and social skills as she feels that these skills will help them to cope more positively with difficult feelings and situations and have more positive relationships with their peers and adults.

The childminder provides parents with written information about herself, her family and her childcare approaches to help them make an informed decision about the care they choose for their child. She encourages good communication through making parents feel comfortable in her home and providing daily opportunities for them to chat with her about the progress of their child's placement. She listens to parents and respects their wishes and expectations, for example, in relation to children's diets.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder is in the process of completing all required training. She is half way through her paediatric first aid course and intends to complete this in the very near future. She is aware that this must be completed within six months of her registration and is working towards this. The childminder is aware of her responsibility to liaise closely with Ofsted in relation to changes in her circumstances which might have an impact on her registration. She recently applied for a variation to her registration to enable her to use an additional room in her home. This has now been agreed and the changes made to her registration. Space is used appropriately to provide for children's play and relaxation and, although the childminder does not have a garden where children can play outside, she makes very effective use of other local facilities to provide for children's enjoyment of the outdoors.

The childminder has a positive approach to training and sees this as way of helping her to develop her knowledge and understanding of childcare and education. She is looking forward to attending a number of early years courses, including healthy eating, cultural diversity and child protection in the near future.

The childminder's records and documentation are generally well organised and up to date, although she has recently misplaced her public liability insurance certificate. The National Childminding Association confirm she is insured with them until June 2007. The childminder has a good understanding of how to deal with incidents and complaints from parents, but at present has not devised the necessary recording systems that are required. Overall, the provision meets the range of the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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.

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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):

- ensure that the premises are secure at all times and that children are not able to leave unsupervised
- devise recording procedures for incidents (st.11) and complaints (st.12) and ensure that evidence is available that public liability insurance is maintained.

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