



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	308337
Inspection date	03 February 2007
Inspector	Margaret Baines
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 is registered to provide care for a total of three children from birth to eight years. She lives with her husband and two adult daughters in a terraced house close to all local amenities, including schools and a park, in Blackpool. Minded children have access to all rooms on the ground floor and bathroom facilities upstairs. A secured outside area at the rear of the house is also available. There are currently four children on roll who attend on a part time basis.

The family has a small dog as a pet. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a very good range of activities which contribute to their good health. Activities are planned, for example, regular visits to the local park where children enjoy running in the fresh air and playing on the apparatus, which helps develop their physical skills. They become increasingly aware of how activity affects their bodies and know when they need a drink or a rest. Children may rest in comfortable surroundings in their prams, on the sofa or in a travel cot, whichever meets both their needs and parental preferences. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate, therefore she feels most confident to deal with a first aid situation. She is also a qualified nurse, which ensures parents feel happy when leaving their children with her.

Children are secure and cared for in a cosy, warm and clean home where they learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. For example, children are developing an understanding of why they must wash their hands at certain times of the day to avoid ill health from exposure to germs. Children tell the childminder that they are washing their hands before lunch and readily access their own towels and flannels. Children also are encouraged to clean their teeth as they learn the importance of good dental care to promote good health.

Children are beginning to understand the benefits of healthy eating. They enjoy nutritious snacks and meals which include fresh fruit and vegetables, for example bananas, melon, strawberries and mango. Children also enjoy helping the childminder prepare their snacks and thoroughly enjoy making the toast and sandwiches. The childminder encourages children to try new and exciting foods to broaden their taste and appreciation of foods that are good for you. Children have access to drinks at all times to ensure they are not thirsty. The childminder is mindful of parental requests and children's preferences in all aspects of the foods. Children's dietary needs are met extremely well in the care of the childminder through consultation with parents and a keen awareness of children's preferences.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The environment for children is cosy and bright, is visually stimulating and offers different areas where they can choose to play. Space is used well so that quiet, active and imaginative play opportunities are catered for. For example, children can choose to play in the front lounge or go through to the dining area to enjoy some creative play. The areas for indoor play are well equipped to promote choice for the children. Toys and equipment are organised in such a way that allows children easy access, for example, toy boxes and low-level storage are readily available.

Children are kept very safe and secure within this home and when on outings, as the childminder has due regard for safety procedures. She keeps the front door locked at all times and has safety equipment in place, for example, she ensures the fire guard is always in place and the safety gates are in appropriate places. She also teaches the children how to keep themselves safe by learning to pick up toys, to walk and not to run and to be careful when outdoors.

However, the small family dog does, on occasion, come very close to the children, which could be a safety concern.

Emergency fire procedures are in place which the children have practised with the childminder, learning how to keep themselves safe. One of the children took great delight in telling the inspector what happens when the fire alarm goes off. Children learn the importance of safety for both themselves and for each other through careful explanation by the childminder.

Children's welfare is further safeguarded because the childminder has a clear understanding of the responsibilities for recording and reporting alleged abuse of a child and maintains contact details of relevant bodies. She has completed a revision child protection course and is very confident to deal with any concern that may arise by informing the appropriate agencies, so protecting the children in her care very well.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children feel relaxed and secure because they settle very well with the childminder and others in the setting. They thoroughly enjoy their play and this extends outside the home by partaking in outings and socialising with children at the toddler groups that they visit with the childminder. Children spend their time purposefully. They are developing their language skills as they enjoy chatting and the good selection of books made available to them. They enjoy counting, for example, the puzzle pieces and the cars. Children's creativity is encouraged through the good activities, which include role play, painting and drawing. One of the children present eagerly drew a selection of pictures to give to 'mummy' and the childminder, and also gave a drawing to the inspector.

Children are enthusiastic in their play; they play happily together, sharing and taking turns. They are very proud of their achievements and are eager to share them with others, which promotes their self-esteem very well. Children benefit from the childminder's understanding of the ages and stages of development of the children in her care and of how to meet their needs, promote their development and ensure their well-being. She plans activities which offer a range of exciting experiences. In particular, the children enjoy craft activities and walks to the park.

The childminder has in place the 'Birth to three matters' guidance, a framework to assist in the implementation of this aspect of practice. However, she has yet to implement this in aspects of her practice. The childminder offers children in her care a stimulating and fun day, in which to develop and enjoy their time as they flourish in this environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely valued and respected as individuals, which gives them a real sense of belonging. They experience a most positive view of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity through excellent images and experiences offered to them. For example, the childminder reads stories about children in other countries and encourages them to join in

making food that comes from different parts of the world. Children love to prepare tortilla wraps for lunch, broadening their experiences of foods and our wider world in a fun activity. The childminder is particularly supportive of children with learning difficulties, through her extreme dedication and commitment to both the children and families. As a result, children thrive and enjoy their time in her care. She liaises with other agencies in consultation with parents to enhance the learning for children who may struggle with some aspects of development.

Children learn about good behaviour effectively, through very positive reinforcement and excellent examples set by the childminder, who is extremely calm and caring. She takes lots of time to explain and uses appropriate strategies, taking into account individual levels of understanding. Children therefore show care and concern for each other as they learn to share toys and to take turns.

The childminder promotes an excellent partnership with parents through her dedication and enthusiasm. She shares very comprehensive information about her childminding practice and herself and asks that parents provide her with detailed information about the children to ensure she can meet their individual needs in a most effective way. She shows commitment to both the children and parents by being an amazing support particularly in times of crisis. For example, she is willing to accompany parents on emergency visits to hospital out of normal childminding hours. She also is more than happy to go along to parents' evening to support the children and parent at the parents' request, which benefits both the children and the families who feel very secure and happy in this lovely caring environment. Consequently, excellent links are forged with parents, which benefits the children, who feel very secure within her home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children feel settled and content within this home, which provides an organised environment with play and rest areas clearly defined. Information is shared with parents on a regular basis in the form of verbal and written communication. For example, she completes daily diaries for the children in addition to the daily discussions she has with parents, ensuring that she is fully up to date in all aspects relating to the children. Consequently, she can meet the children's individual needs very well. Parents also have access to the policies available for aspects of practice.

The childminder has a very good awareness of children's developmental needs, which ensures that she plans activities appropriately, taking into consideration the ages of children she cares for. She strives to create a stimulating environment where children are happy and content. She has available the 'Birth to three matters' framework to enhance the care of children from birth to three years, but has not fully implemented it in her practice to date.

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 children are always released from the care of the childminder to individuals named by parents. She has in place a system which ensures children are only released to those persons designated to collect the children.

She also agreed to improve fire safety precautions by providing and maintaining smoke alarms at every level of the house and practising emergency evacuation plans. The fire officer has visited the premises and advised on the positioning of smoke alarms to ensure children are safe when in this home. As a result of these improvements, the care of the children is significantly enhanced.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 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):

- develop the use of the 'Birth to three matters' guidance to enhance this aspect of practice
- ensure that the dog does not have close access to young 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