



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306168
Inspection date	14 February 2007
Inspector	Suzette Butcher
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 1996. She lives with her husband, one adult son and three year old daughter in Heswall, Wirral. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for minding children and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

There are currently five children aged under eight and one child over eight on roll. They attend on a part-time basis. Children are taken and collected from local schools and pre-schools. The childminder takes children to toddler groups and on outings in the local area. The childminder has completed a Level 3 early years qualification and 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 comfortable and well cared for in the welcoming home, where good hygiene routines are in place to protect them and minimise the risks of cross infection. Procedures are in place to document children's individual health needs and accurately record specific details, such as accidents or medication. Younger children are supported and encouraged during toilet training programmes and they learn to manage their own personal care with discreet prompts and reminders from the childminder. Good nappy changing routines are in place for babies and toddlers. Children are encouraged to understand the purpose of following good health and hygiene routines through regular discussion with the childminder.

Regular energetic games in the garden and outings in the local area, provide opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. Children learn about the importance of participating in regular exercise as an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy doing exercises indoors or have fun running around in the park. They gain confidence and learn to move with control when they climb on the large apparatus in the garden or negotiate the slide. Toddlers are supported and encouraged as they tentatively take a few steps. Individual routines for rest and sleep for young children are respected so that they do not get over tired. Children learn to use different tools and materials as they improve their fine motor control. For example, they have fun using fingers, pens or paint brushes to create a picture.

A choice of healthy options, such as fresh fruit or rice cakes, are available for children's snacks. The childminder provides a selection of home cooked, healthy meals to protect children's good health. Children learn about the benefits of a healthy diet during informal discussion and involvement in planning menus with the childminder. They enjoy making their own pizzas or mixing a smoothie to drink. Children are encouraged to try a small amount of new foods and different tastes. They are offered a selection of foods from different cultures to try, such as houmous, mild curry or pasta. Mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions where children and adults sit together and enjoy each other's company. Children's health and individual dietary needs are protected in accurate records and met at all times. Young children's drinks are left at a low level where they help themselves when they are thirsty. Fresh drinking water is freely available and children are encouraged to drink fluids on a regular basis to remain hydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are secure and well supervised in the childminder's home where they move about freely and safely between the different play areas. Access to potentially dangerous areas is carefully restricted with safety gates when toddlers are eager to explore. Older children learn to respect the boundaries within the home and understand the purpose of house rules. The childminder completes regular risk assessments to identify and minimise dangers and hazards. However, the lock on the bathroom door is unsafe and accessible to young children and there are no drain covers in the outdoor play area. Children are encouraged to consider the consequences of their actions as they learn about what is dangerous and how to keep themselves

safe. For example, they discuss safety as they learn to cross roads or consider why it is dangerous to play hide and seek in the park.

A wide selection of good quality toys and resources are available to meet the needs of children across the age ranges. Resources are rotated from the large selection in storage to provide variety and maintain children's interest. Toddlers confidently select their own toys from low accessible areas or they point to items that they cannot reach. Safety standards are maintained with all resources and children are encouraged to take care of equipment. Children's welfare is safeguarded by the childminder's secure knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures. Booklets clearly outline the childminder's responsibility to protect children although information has not been updated to reflect revisions within the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young children are happy and relaxed in the childminder's care. They enjoy warm relationships with many hugs and cuddles from the childminder as they play or seek reassurance. Toddlers develop a stronger sense of identity and belonging when they examine their faces and touch their features in a large mirror with the childminder. Children have enough time and space to choose their own games as they develop independence and self motivation. This gives them the opportunity to practise and apply their learning in different situations as they make good progress in all areas of their development. The childminder is aware of when to step back and allow children's ideas to develop and when to interact, to encourage or extend children's learning. Toddlers have fun as they experiment with sound and action toys and gradually learn that their actions create a response. They develop new skills, such as twisting, pressing or sliding buttons, as they achieve success through trial and error. They smile in delight and share their interest and pleasure with the childminder when they catch a small ball or play with a balloon. Toddlers begin to compare and make connections when they bring their own toy computer to play with alongside an adult's laptop or look for the car outside when they see a set of keys. Children enjoy experimenting with different sensory materials and have fun exploring different natural materials or textures. For example, a snowy day provides an ideal opportunity for children to investigate the changes and compare snow, ice and water.

Early communication and language skills are skilfully encouraged and developed by the childminder, as she listens and responds at an appropriate level of understanding to individual children's sounds and words. Toddler's babbling and attempts at speech sounds are gently repeated and reinforced. Young children happily and confidently communicate through different facial expressions, pointing, signs or gestures. For example, they smile warmly and wave goodbye or they point to a toy they cannot reach. Nursery rhymes and action songs introduce and reinforce rhymes and rhythms as children have fun playing 'Row, row your boat'. Sharing interesting interactive books and listening to exciting stories further develops children's language and literacy. The childminder skilfully maximises learning opportunities in everyday activities as she introduces shapes, colours, letters or numbers to reinforce learning. Children use their imagination in role play games when they play with a toy kitchen unit or in the play house. Every child has fun playing a part as they create a puppet show together. Young children

investigate small world toys in a large wooden doll's house. All the children enjoy participating in practical creative activities, such as making cards or using colourful glittery shapes to create a collage. Older children happily activate computer programmes or take turns to sing a song with a microphone. Links are maintained with children's schools when, for example, they extend their current topic work on Egypt with the childminder's support and wide range of resources.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young children are gently guided and supported as they form relationships with adults and other children. They are encouraged to share and take turns and minor disagreements are skilfully dealt with in a way that is appropriate to each child's age and stage of development. For example, children who are testing out their social skills are awarded with a colourful sticker on a chart for 'being gentle', 'saying sorry' or 'sharing'. This positive approach is continued at home and at pre-school. Consequently, children develop an awareness of different emotions, learn to consider other people's feelings and think about the consequences of their actions. Toddlers are offered frequent praise, reassuring smiles and encouragement which helps them to develop confidence and self-esteem as they learn to recognise right and wrong. Older children are helped to understand and respect the purpose of house rules and consequently follow clear boundaries within the home.

Children's individual needs are recognised and met in a caring, supportive environment. The childminder works in partnership with parents and appropriate support agencies to promote children's individual needs and help them to make progress. Every child is included when activities are adapted and children have equal access to resources. For example, young children are actively involved and offered appropriate support when they create a Valentine card with a group of older children. Positive images of race, gender or disability are promoted through a wide range of resources. Children are helped to consider and value diversity when they consider celebrating different festivals and learn about different cultures. They have fun decorating pictures of pigs during Chinese New Year celebrations. Issues about diversity and equality are explored in stories and books that introduce meaningful examples which are relevant to young children's lives. Children subsequently learn to respect and value others as they consider issues during informal discussion and learn from the childminder's positive attitudes.

Information about children's progress, daily activities and interesting events are shared with parents in informal chats. Details are recorded in a diary for toddlers and babies to ensure that parents have important, accurate information on a daily basis. This good practice promotes effective continuity of care for children and their families. Parents are given clear information when they join the setting and a friendly, professional relationship is established to ensure that children are settled and secure. An informal record of children's progress is recorded in a colourful scrapbook of their pictures, creative work and progress charts.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder demonstrates a strong commitment towards continually improving the quality of the childcare that she provides. She has completed a Level 3 National Vocational Qualification and uses her underpinning knowledge and understanding of early education to effectively evaluate and enhance her childminding practice. She holds a current first aid qualification and has a basic understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. She has recently moved premises and she is currently exploring ways to improve areas within her home to maximise opportunities for children's play and learning. For example, she has identified an area in the garden to provide opportunities for children to plant seeds and grow their own plants to increase their awareness of their natural environment. Children are settled and relaxed in the homely environment and the childminder makes effective use of local facilities, such as visits to the library, zoo or adventure playgrounds. Children are taken to and collected from a nearby school and pre-school in a clearly planned timetable. Good links are maintained with staff in the different settings where children regularly attend and information is shared to promote continuity in their busy lives.

Documentation and accurate records are well organised, stored securely and effectively support the care of children. Confidentiality is maintained at all times and the childminder has a comprehensive complaints procedure available for parents. 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 provider agreed to obtain signed parental permissions for taking any photographs of their children and for outings in the car. Parents now sign their permissions on their child's contract when they join the setting. This improves the overall safety and quality of care for children.

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.

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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):

- make the lock on the bathroom door safe and cover outside drains
- revise child protection procedures to include contact details of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

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