

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY235591
Inspection date	21 May 2007
Inspector	Sheila Iwaskow
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 2003. She lives her husband in the Stockton Heath area of Warrington. Her husband is also a registered childminder and they work, on a daily basis, as a team to provide care for minded children.

The whole of the ground floor of the house is used for childminding purposes; this comprises of the dining room, lounge and kitchen. Children also have access to three bedrooms on the first floor. Toilet facilities are available on both floors of the house. There is a fully enclosed area for outdoor play. The family have a non-poisonous corn snake, which is not accessible to minded children.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time, working alone, and up to seven children when co-minding with her husband. Currently, the childminder and her co-childminder are caring for nine children, who attend on a variety of placements. Care is also offered to older children after school. Both childminders offer care to children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The childminder and her husband are members of the National Childminding Association and both hold an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children clearly thrive because the childminder follows effective and robust hygiene procedures to ensure that children are cared for in a warm and clean environment. The risk of cross-infection is minimised by daily routines, which promote children's understanding of good hygiene practices. The childminder provides appropriate support and equipment to ensure that children become independent and develop good self-help skills. For example, a step stool is provided, which enables children to reach the sink to wash their hands, and the brightly coloured pump-actioned soap dispenser encourages children to use soap. Good nappy changing are routines in place and each child has their own bedding, which is colour-coded to ensure consistency.

All aspects of documentation relating to health and in place and of a very high standard. Accident records are particularly well kept, giving good detail as to how, when and why an accident occurred and steps taken to deal with any injury or upset. The childminder holds a first aid certificate and a first aid box is within easy reach, ensuring that any minor accidents or injuries are dealt with appropriately. A comprehensive sick child policy is in place and ensures the best interests of all who attend are taken into account. Parents are provided with a list of communicable diseases and incubation periods.

The childminder has an excellent knowledge of nutrition and has devised well-thought-out menus, which cater for children's individual needs and taste. These menus are readily available for parents and include recipes for the meals provided. Children enjoy choosing from healthy options, such as salmon rissoles and stir-fried noodles. Fruit and vegetables are provided at all times. Drinks are accessible to allow children to quench their thirst. The childminder holds a food hygiene certificate, ensuring that food provided is hygienically stored, prepared, cooked and served. Meal and snack times are relaxed social occasions where the childminder sits and chats with the children. Brightly coloured plates and cups make eating a more pleasurable experience for children. Young babies are held closely whilst being fed and sleep according to their needs.

Regular walks from school and to the park help children appreciate the importance of exercise to a healthy life style. At the park children have lots of fun as they run around in the fresh air and play on fixed equipment, such as swings, slides and seesaws. The childminder's back garden supports aspects of children's physical development. Coordination skills are enhanced as children play with bats and balls and ride on bikes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children experience a warm and welcoming environment, where they have a large amount of space to move around freely and play in comfort. The childminder's home is very well maintained and the rooms in which children play are light, bright and airy. Space is made available where older children can do their homework or simply relax after a busy day at school. There is a good range of furniture to allow children to sleep, rest and eat in comfort. Both childminders work as a team, checking sleeping children on a regular basis to ensure their safety. Children access a wide range of developmentally appropriate resources, which are safe and are in good condition.

Resources are stored at child-height, which allows children to make informed decisions about their play. Children gain lots of pleasure from selecting toys that appeal to their interests.

High priority is given to children's safety. Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised, with the childminder taking all necessary precautions to keep children safe both indoors and outside. Good procedures are in place for the safe collection of children at the end of the day and entrances and exits to the premises are secure. Fire drills are carried out with the children on a regular basis, allowing them to know what to do and where to go in the event of a fire or emergency evacuation. Children are restrained appropriately when travelling by car and in buggies. The childminder ensures children respect the Green Cross Code when out walking.

Children are well protected because the childminder has a clear awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse. She has completed additional training in child protection and a detailed written policy is in place with all the relevant contact numbers. The childminder uses a flow chart and the government booklet 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' to inform her practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young children smile happily and giggle in the childminder's home. The childminder spends every opportunity sitting on the floor interacting with them as they play. Toddlers freely give the childminder a cuddle and look towards her for support and reassurance. As a result, children are happy, confident and secure in her care.

Communication skills are developing well. The childminder responds to babies' babbles to reinforce early speech patterns and words are repeated for toddlers to enhance language development. Colourful and sound action toys are readily available for exploratory play and musical instruments are introduced into children's routine to encourage them to make sounds. Children develop mathematical skills routinely as they play. For example, they identify the colour of the building blocks and count how many pieces they have in their model.

Good use is made of questioning skills to build on and extend children's knowledge. For example, the childminder asks the children what they had for their breakfast and then extends this learning opportunity by asking them what their cereal tasted like. Story time is a popular activity and the children snuggle in close to the childminder as she reads to them. Regular trips to playgroups, Chester Zoo and Blue Planet Aquarium provide children with opportunities to explore different environments and socialise with other children.

Children develop their senses as they explore the contents of the feely bag, manipulate play dough, paint the bubble wrap and feel the texture of flour as they bake. A range of dressing up clothes are available to encourage children to engage in imaginary play. Children are secure in the routines that operate within the childminder's home. They understand that shoes should be removed and coats put tidily on the banister. Such sensible procedures teach children to respect the environment in which they play.

The childminder works closely with her co-childminder to jointly plan a range of exciting activities, which children clearly enjoy. Both childminders have accessed training on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are successfully incorporating it into their childminding practice.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are consistently shown that they are valued through such activities as celebrating their birthdays. The children's needs are well met because the childminder works closely with her husband to seek good information from parents before a child is placed in the setting and continues to do so through regular verbal and written dialogue each day. A good range of resources is available to promote children's awareness of diversity. However, insufficient emphasis is placed on celebrating festivals from other cultures. This limits opportunities for children to gain an all-round appreciation of the world that they live in. Children with learning disabilities and difficulties are welcomed into a sharing and inclusive environment. The childminder recognises the importance of working closely with parents to ensure that the best possible care is offered.

Children are delightful and well behaved. A comprehensive behaviour management policy underpins the childminder's and her co-childminder's approach to behaviour management. House rules, such as 'Be kind to each other' and 'Take care of toys and furniture', help children understand the standard of behaviour that is expected of them. Strategies that are appropriate to the age and maturity of the child are used to deal with any issues of unacceptable behaviour. Children's efforts are constantly praised, which helps boost children's self-esteem and makes them feel good about themselves.

Children benefit from the close working relationships that the childminder has established with their parents. A comprehensive range of well-written policies inform parents of the childminder's and her husband's childcare practices. Newsletters are sent out to parents on a regular basis to keep parents informed about what has been happening within the setting. Questionnaires allow parents to express their views on the service provided and any suggestions for improvement are given due consideration. Parents have the highest regard for the service provided. They are 'impressed and reassured by the quality of care' and comment that their children have come on 'leaps and bounds'. A complaints log is in place to record any concerns expressed by parents. However, the system currently being used does not respect confidentiality.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder has a number of years' experience working as a nanny and within day care settings and she uses her knowledge and experience to effectively enhance her childminding practice. The childminder and her husband are very committed to attending regular training to enhance the quality of care they provide and self-evaluate their practice on a regular basis.

The day is well organised to provide children with a good balance of rest, learning and play. There is a clear timetable in place to collect children from a local primary school. Space is well organised to provide children with a balanced range of activities. All adults working and living on the premises have completed checks to establish their suitability to do so. Registers indicate that the childminder and husband care for children within their registered numbers at all times. Both registration certificates are displayed, keeping parents informed of their conditions of registration.

Records relating to the care of children are in place, are organised to reflect confidentiality and are of a very high standard.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection the provider agreed to ensure that parents have access to the details of the regulator. This issue has now been fully addressed. A written complaints policy is now in place, which includes Ofsted's details. This ensures that parents know who to contact if they wish to make comments about the service provided by the childminder.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required Ofsted or the provider 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.

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):

- provide children with activities that raise their awareness of different cultures
- further develop the procedures for recording complaints to ensure confidentiality.

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