

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 310630  
**Inspection date** 13 March 2008  
**Inspector** Frank William Kelly

**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](http://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 1997. She is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and currently cares for eight children on a part time basis.

She lives with her husband and their son aged 13 in the Birkdale area of Southport in Merseyside. The whole of the ground floor with the exception of the family lounge is used for minding the children. An enclosed rear garden is available for outside play.

The family have a dog and a rabbit as pets.

The childminder is a member of Sefton Early Years childminder network and the National Childminding Association. She takes the children out to local places of interest on a regular basis.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being is promoted as the childminder has good policies and procedures in place which include the exclusion of children whilst they are sick or infectious. She provides good support regarding the administration of medication by keeping efficient records that include details of when the last dose was administered before children came into her care. First aid training is up-to-date and a suitably stocked first aid box is easily accessible to enable her to attend to children's minor injuries. All records of accidents are recorded and signed by parents as required and information about children's specific health needs is sought before children are cared for. However, there is some inconsistency with regards to written parental consents for the seeking of emergency treatment as these are not held for all the children. This means in the event of a serious incident some children's well-being may be affected.

The young children demonstrate a familiarity and eagerness to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day. This includes following use of the toilet, touching the dog or when getting ready for snack. The children's personal hygiene is further promoted as they have their own individual hand towels and the childminder supervises them well, prompting them with gentle reminders and explanations about why they need to keep their hands clean.

Every day the children are taken out to enjoy the fresh air as they visit the local sand dunes and nature reserves to walk the family dog. The children enjoy opportunities to run and jump thus raising their heart rate. In the garden there is a good selection of resources for them to climb, slide and ride. Inside they develop their hand to eye coordination through matching and fitting jigsaws together, using craft materials and playing lotto games where they have to place a disc over the pictures.

Children's dietary needs are well met as the childminder has effective systems in place for seeking information from parents. The childminder prides herself on the quality of meals and snacks that she provides for the children. She prepares most of them using fresh ingredients and monitors the ingredients of commercially produced items, such as fruit squashes' to ensure that they do not contain additives or excessive sugars. During the visit the children eagerly ate a selection of fresh fruit including slices of apple and red and green grapes.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a suitably maintained home that is made to feel very warm and welcoming as the children's photographs, paintings and other creative work are displayed positively on the walls. The children's self esteem and pride is clearly evident as they talk to the visitors about their individual pictures. The rooms and the home are comfortable and organised so that children can play safely throughout. Toys, furniture and equipment are in sufficient quantities and variety to meet the differing needs of the children cared for. It is maintained well and is safe and suitable for its purpose. The childminder has a system for cleaning and checking equipment in place.

The children are kept safe as the childminder has taken actions, such as fitting child proof locks on draws and cupboards in the kitchen, dummy covers in the electrical sockets in the rooms that children can access. The childminder ensures that the children are well supervised whilst

in her care. She talks to them about road safety when they walk to and from school; the older children present explain to visitors about having to stay close to the childminder when walking along the pavement. All consents are in place for transporting the children in her care which is appropriately maintained and insured. Good policies regarding lost and uncollected children have been considered and formally recorded to share with parents.

Fire safety has been considered with smoke detectors fitted on all levels of the home by the fire brigade. A fire blanket is suitably located for easy access and a written evacuation procedure is posted on the wall alongside a whistle to raise the alarm. The childminder stated that she practises the drill with the children. However, no records are maintained so it is not possible to keep track of when and which children have had the opportunity to practise what to do in the event of an emergency.

Children's safety is further promoted as the childminder demonstrates a sound understanding of the procedures to follow to safeguard children should she have concerns about them being abused. Policies, procedures and contact details are all held and are consistent with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and secure in the childminder's care, they have plenty of fun in the childminder's home. She plans a wide range of activities around children's interests, helping them to make good progress in their all-round development. They are relaxed and confident when visitors arrive as the childminder has explained that they may be coming.

Children's early years experiences are enhanced through activities outside the childminder's home. They go for lots of walks and enjoy regular visits to places of interest, for instance, the local library for story time, the Botanical gardens and Norden Park. Younger children regularly attend toddler group. This provides them with very positive opportunities to socialise with others and access different play experiences, whilst the childminder is close by for reassurance.

The childminder uses spontaneous opportunities to good effect to help extend children's learning and understanding. For example, when the children are completing an alphabet floor puzzle, one of them finds the X for X-ray. The childminder explains to the child in simple terms what an X-ray is. She suggests it is a photograph that the doctor takes to look at your bones. When supporting the younger child who is holding the Q piece, she suggests that the child look for 'a Queen'. She realises that the child may not know what a queen is so suggests she looks for a crown. When the child still looks puzzled she suggests that a queen looks like a princess. The child then understands and begins to look for the picture. Whilst out walking the childminder encourages the children to look for numbers in their environment. She talks about what the number of the house is and depending on their age, she encourages them to practice simple calculations by adding the two numerals on the door together.

All children enjoy opportunities to talk and express themselves. The childminder shows interest in what the children have to say. During conversations she allows the children thinking time and does not rush them. Consequently the children are eager to talk. For example, the older children present clearly enjoy number and letter games as they freely engage visitors in discussions about how old they are, using their fingers to show that they are three and four. They count the visitors fingers with confidence. When looking at the alphabet jigsaws the children confidently seek the first letter of their name.

Children enjoy a range of creative activities including making cards, paintings, and collage, although, much of the creative work is adult led in that the outlines have been pre cut or drawn. That said children enjoy using a range of pens, paper, glue sticks and freely choose the colours of their preference. Regular baking activities including making Easter egg nests take place.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children demonstrate a sense of community as they talk about the other children that attend the setting. The younger child becomes very excited when the childminder suggests it is another child at the door. The childminder is aware of the importance of supporting and including all children. For example, during a board game she sits the younger children on her knee and helps them to play along, thus, helping them to be fully included without it detracting from the older children's enjoyment. The childminder has an appropriate understanding of ways to support children with learning difficulties or physical disabilities.

Toys, books and other resources provide children with images that promote the diversity within today's society. The childminder enhances this learning further by introducing activities linked to cultural celebrations. For instance, making lanterns, colouring pictures of Chinese dragons and tasting foods, such as noodles and prawn crackers to celebrate Chinese New Year. This is helping the children to gain an awareness of cultural similarities and differences, thus encouraging positive attitudes and developing children's early citizenship.

Children play happily together and are well behaved. They are very confident, and at ease in the childminder's home. Their access to activities of their choice along with the good adult interaction means that they are busy and engaged. Consequently, they have little time to become bored or fractious. Activities such as bingo lotto and the beetle game help them to learn about turn taking and being patient with each other. The childminder is a very good role model with a soft tone and calm manner which the children mirror well.

The partnership with parents is very good because the childminder takes time to develop positive relationships with the parents of minded children. Parents are well informed of their child's time with the childminder, due to the effective sharing of information. There is lots of written information about the childminders service, along with photographs of what the children have been doing. The childminder shares daily verbal updates with the parents on arrival and collection times. She takes the time to find out what is happening within the children's families, such as when visitors are at the children's homes. She talks to the children about what they have been doing which helps the children feel valued.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

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

The childminder has a secure knowledge of how children learn. She is enthusiastic about her role and demonstrates a love of children and a commitment to providing them with stimulating and warm care. The home is well organised to provide children with play and rest opportunities without disturbing each other. Daily routines are organised so that children get to enjoy activities both inside and outside of the home. Free access to toys and the bathroom are enhancing the children's independence skills. However, there are some missed opportunities to extend this

further as at present the do not contribute to pouring their own drinks or helping to set up at snack time.

She evaluates her service annually and updates training on a regular basis to enhance and compliment the service that she provides for the children. There are detailed policies and procedures in place, which are shared with parents. This helps to keep them well informed about the provision. All regulatory documentation is maintained as required, which includes important details about the children's likes, dislikes and medical history. These are readily available and used well to meet children's individual care and learning needs, thus, promoting continuity in children's care.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, three recommendations were made regarding documentation and safety. Since then the childminder has taken action to improve the children's safety and parental partnership by ensuring that parents sign all medication administration records, have access to the complaints procedure which now includes the regulator's contact details and when in the garden children are now always fully supervised to ensure that they do not play near the low-level cellar glass window. The childminder discussed with the inspector further possible actions to improve this and is considering a screen that can be put in place when the children are present.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection Ofsted received concerns in relation to National Standards 2 - Organisation and National Standard 6 - Safety. The Complaints, Investigation and Enforcement team contacted the childminder. The childminder provided an investigation response regarding the concerns raised. Ofsted are satisfied the provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- ensure that written consent for the seeking of emergency medical treatment is held for all children
- maintain records of any drills to ensure that all children have an opportunity to practise the emergency evacuation procedure.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)