

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 310713  
**Inspection date** 31 January 2008  
**Inspector** Rachel Ruth Britten

**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 was registered in 1999. She lives with her two children in a house in a residential area of Lydiate between Ormskirk and Maghull. The whole of the ground floor of the house is used for childminding and the upstairs bathroom is also available. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder is registered for a maximum of six children under eight years of age and she currently has a total of eight children on her roll. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and also uses a car for trips and longer journeys. The family have a pet dog and hamsters but the dog has a separate kennel and run and does not come into contact with minded children.

### THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

#### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children stay very healthy because the childminder follows meticulous health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. She keeps an immaculately clean home and employs first class hygiene procedures with all children according to healthy eating, food hygiene and dental hygiene courses that she has attended. She ensures that the pet dog is clean and immunised

and kept separate from minded children and that children are taught to handle the hamsters sensibly, washing their hands thoroughly afterwards. She encourages school age children to adopt hand washing before meals and continues to talk to them about the importance of good personal hygiene in order to prevent cross infection because there are a number of persons in the household.

The childminder is exceedingly well prepared for illness and health difficulties and communicates this through her sickness policy document. She uses a comprehensive list of communicable diseases and their exclusion periods so that she is clear about how to act in every instance of illness. She uses her experience and first aid and health knowledge to support and assist children if they have an accident or if medication is needed and she has written parental consent for emergency treatment or advice to be obtained if necessary. She keeps comprehensive records which are always signed by parents to acknowledge each entry. Her preparation for difficult circumstances is good because she has back up from her mother should she, or one of the children, have a medical emergency.

Children enjoy fun physical activity and are physically fit because they have daily opportunities to walk or play outside. They walk to and from school in all weathers and use tunnels, tents, bouncy castles and space hoppers in the rear garden. They also explore nature and the local canal, woods, farms, aquariums and parks. They learn to take care of their health through fun activities, such as decorating their own sun visors, making individualised placemats and making displays of healthy choices of foods. Children are exceedingly well nourished because the childminder gives healthy fruit or vegetables in all the home made meals and snacks. On the day of inspection they enjoy a choice of fruits for snack after school. Fizzy drinks are never given and sweets or chocolate are only ever a rare treat. Instead, children drink water, milk or weak juice and learn about healthy ingredients, by making fruit smoothies.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from access to varied, light and well laid out floor and table top play space and areas where they can relax. A wealth of suitable toys and resources are available and are organised extremely well so that children can select and set things up for themselves. For example, school age children choose a board game and play it on the playroom floor, later sit to the breakfast bar to read magazines, use the kitchen table for snack, and sit on the sofas in the lounge to watch television. Children can see pictures of themselves at play in various activity records and lots of their work decorates the walls.

Children are cared for in an extremely secure and safe environment because the childminder has thought very carefully about all aspects of safety and works successfully to minimise all hazards, without compromising children's emerging independence. She conducts daily checks, uses written risk assessments fully and makes full use of appropriate safety equipment. For example, the childminder regularly checks her smoke alarms, uses safety straps in all buggies and chairs, and uses sponge door stoppers, cupboard and cooker locks. Children learn about the importance of safety from an early age as the childminder role plays strapping the baby dolls into their toy buggy. She also has written safety, fire evacuation, child protection, lost child and uncollected child policies which detail what she will do and which are always shown to parents so that they know that all contingencies have been considered. However, children have not practised the emergency evacuation procedure and are not familiar with exactly what to do. This jeopardises children's safety if they do not act quickly or the procedure does not work efficiently.

Children are kept safe on outings because the childminder obtains written parental consent, is vigilant at all times and takes a first aid kit, children's contact numbers, mobile telephone and drinks with her. She uses wrist straps with her mobile telephone number on when she goes on special trips in case a child is lost. She always makes full use of buggies, reins and appropriate car seats and reminds children constantly about road safety. Children are well protected from abuse because the childminder is well trained in safeguarding principles and practice. She uses books and materials to support her own personal skills in helping children to learn how to keep themselves safe from possible abuse by strangers. She has a detailed child protection policy, understands how to record any child protection concerns confidentially and knows to keep Ofsted informed if an allegation is made against her.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children respond extremely well and are developing quickly in all areas because the childminder is so dynamic. She is meticulously well prepared with activity ideas and choices and confidently provides a rich, varied experience in a natural way. She enthusiastically supports children's play and learning from babies through to the teenage years and is highly skilled at working together with children of varying ages. For example, children can spend all day together creating elaborate dens from huge boxes. They make and attach signs and devise role plays where the boxes are houses. Similarly, they create stories, make and colour paper puppets on sticks and put on shows about football crowd chaos, or knights in shining armour on their horses. Babies and toddlers too can feel a wealth of textures in treasure boxes full of materials and simple household objects. They use CD ROMs which promote early learning and speech about colours, shapes, numbers and the world around us. The childminder carefully sources a huge variety of craft materials, games, small world and construction toys which can be used in diverse ways and is she highly skilled to promote each child's interests and abilities.

Children's emotional well-being is outstandingly well fostered because the childminder offers each child consistent praise, love and support to play cooperatively and learn social skills together. She is sensitive to their home and school experiences and listens carefully to their difficulties and concerns. She includes children in all the aspects of the day, including preparing and tidying up. She always explains what is happening and what is happening next and is constantly adapting activities to capitalise on what children are showing an interest in. She ensures that she spends every moment actively contributing to their enjoyment and her love and care for them overflows into everything that she does with them, even simply when sitting with children after school at the dining table as they eat, read magazines or play board games. She ensures that they are secure, have individual attention and are properly rested, but also finds activities which children can enjoy together, such as decorating the paving slabs outside, making bead design pictures, or playing on the bouncy castle which she can regularly have from a local friend.

Large scrapbooks contain photographs of children's activities and various things they have made. The childminder also notes in them all kinds of examples of what children can do in the six areas of learning and under the aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, both of which the childminder knows in depth. The childminder uses her wide ranging knowledge and skills to full effect to plan ways to build upon children's successes so that they can make progress and take the next steps in their learning with ease and enthusiasm.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are included fully in all aspects of the life of the setting, and as a result they have a superb sense of belonging, alongside the childminder's own children. Their toys, art work and photographs are all around them, including their names and hand prints painted onto the playroom wall. Their achievements are celebrated and they feel special and loved, often writing and drawing pictures for the childminder expressing this. The childminder actively involves them in choosing what to play with, what to eat, what to dress up as, what music to play and what stories to hear. As a result, they cooperate extremely well and join in enthusiastically and put away toys that they have finished with.

Children's awareness of diversity is excellent because the childminder is knowledgeable and passionate about the rights of children to be fully included as individuals regardless of background, need, gender or disability. She involves them in charitable endeavours to raise money through walks and bicycle rides and children have themselves benefited from a hosted trip to Camelot, thanks to Prince's Trust volunteers. The childminder ensures that children have equal opportunities to play, discuss and learn to respect diverse cultures and disabilities. Inviting resources are used which show positive images of other cultures and of disability and dressing up, role plays, dolls, books and play figures are all used. As a result, children are self-confident yet also caring and considerate of others.

Children have their individual needs met. The childminder is consistent and caring, teaching children to distinguish between right and wrong and building their self-esteem by listening sensitively to their concerns. She has a 'care and share' motto which all children learn to follow. Cuddles and reassurance are always on offer, as is freedom to choose and gentle criticism when needed. The childminder offers herself as a calm, consistent role model. She keeps things calm, does not shout or raise her voice, uses distraction, explains what behaviour is wanted and does not dwell on any misdemeanours. The childminder knows how to use incident recording correctly to record significant incidents of unwanted behaviour and any necessary physical intervention by an adult. This ensures that parents are kept informed when things are not going well and strategies to deal with it can be discussed.

Children receive exceptional care because the childminder continues children's routines and preferences and is open, approachable, flexible and reliable. She establishes professional but also genuinely caring relationships with parents who have complete confidence in her abilities. She keeps parents fully informed about the service from the outset through a detailed information portfolio and policy document. Relationships with parents are outstanding. Parents are delighted with the photographs and other evidence of their child's progress with the childminder and many have sent references and cards of appreciation. Parents seen on the day of inspection comment that the childminder is a godsend and flexible. They love the room and the way everything is there for them to choose. They comment that the childminder is great with the little ones. A written thank you card says, "I am particularly happy with the relationship between the childminder and my child and the effort she obviously makes with this".

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are cared for by a childminder who has an excellent knowledge and understanding of child development. This is continually being updated as she critically evaluates the quality of her service and frequently attends and incorporates ideas from training. For example, she has

attended health and safety, hygiene and healthy eating, child protection, behaviour and the 'Birth to three matters' framework training. She utilises ideas from courses about using music, the outdoors and treasure baskets to enhance children's play and she is signed up to start the National Vocational Qualification to level three in childcare and education.

The organisation of the childminding promotes mostly outstanding outcomes for children because it is thorough, flexible, and is both child and adult led. The environment and resources are extremely well organised and the childminder is exceptionally committed to providing the best individual care for every child attending. She demonstrates this in a portfolio of statements, photographs and materials illustrating her attention to each of the five outcomes for children under the Every Child Matters agenda. In addition, the childminder is organised for all the routines of the day so that she can spend quality time with children and so that they can learn both through play and through real life experiences. The daily register is accurate and up to date and all times and the childminder knows exactly which children are expected from her print out for every session of the working week.

All policies and procedures are robust, transparent and work in practice to support the outcomes for children. The policy document and operational plan is set out under the five outcomes for children. Documentation is updated as regulations change, for example, to incorporate the new Early Years Foundation Stage, and child details and parent agreements are regularly reviewed and altered as children's needs change.

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

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

There were three recommendations made at the last inspection in October 2004. These have all been addressed. It was recommended that the childminder increase her resources showing positive images of disability. She now has a range of small world figures and dolls which children play with which have a range of physical disabilities and aids, such as callipers, wheelchairs, glasses, sticks and a toy guide dog. It was also recommended that the childminder increase her knowledge of infectious and notifiable diseases. She has a comprehensive list for reference which is easily accessible and can be shown to parents upon request. Thirdly, the childminder was recommended to provide parents with regular information about their children's progress. This is currently being done with a daily diary for babies until parents no longer want this and scrapbooks of photos showing all the children's activities and examples of their art and craft work. The childminder's actions improve children's learning experiences, support their health, and support partnership with parents.

### **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 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):

- practise the emergency escape plan to ensure that it works with all children who attend.

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)