

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY347527
Inspection date	21 August 2007
Inspector	Margaret Patricia Mellor
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 2007. She lives with her husband and child aged 17 months in Liverpool. The lounge, kitchen and an upstairs playroom of the childminder's home are used for childminding. There is a secure, fully enclosed yard for children's outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children aged under eight years at any one time. There is one child on roll aged 17 months. The childminder either walks or uses her car to take children places. She regularly attends the local toddler group, gym tots and library story times.

The childminder has an early years child care qualification. She receives support from the local authority. She is a member of the National Childminding Association and local childminding network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's interest in a healthy lifestyle is fostered and encouraged. They enjoy opportunities throughout the day to be active or restful, according to their respective needs. They love to be active and negotiate space well, responding with gusto when moving to music, splashing in puddles and rolling, bouncing or climbing in the ball pool. Toddlers skilfully turn the pages as they look at the picture book and have fun as they crayon or paint, promoting their hand and eye coordination through fun, play and learning experiences. They show plenty of curiosity and there are lots of chuckles as they freely explore their environment, fostering their self-esteem.

Children enjoy a good range of freshly prepared healthy food options and fresh fruit everyday, increasing their awareness of a range of different tastes and textures. The children's lunch is particularly wholesome and served in ample portions so that children are well nourished. The childminder is very keen to share healthy eating ideas with the children through discussions and planned activities. They all go to 'Big cook, little cook' workshops where they cut up fruit, make pizza, sandwiches and couscous. Children learn to listen to their bodies as they independently help themselves to drinks when thirsty or after exercise and develop their coordination as they drink from their feeder type cup.

Children are cared for in a clean, comfortable and homely environment. They develop their awareness of simple personal hygiene through their daily routine and as the childminder takes time to explain why being hygienic is important. Children begin to consolidate their learning and gain independence as they wash their own hands, brush their teeth and help to wipe the table or brush up sand. The childminder has a good understanding of health care issues, for instance, cleaning the toys and nappy changing. She provides children with their own towel, face cloth and tooth brush, which also helps to prevent cross infection.

Children's health is safeguarded well. There are effective procedures for sharing information about individual dietary needs, therefore parents' wishes are respected and children remain healthy. The childminder ensures children use sun creams, wear hats, have plenty of drinks and play in the shade on hot days. She has accessed food safety and relevant first aid training. She keeps three first aid boxes fully so that children's minor injuries are dealt with effectively. The childminder acts in children's best interests when they are ill, which is well supported by the detailed sick child policy and medication records.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and well maintained environment, which meets their needs very well. They play with a good range of play materials that are suitable for their age, whilst presenting appropriate challenges and stimulating their enjoyment. The childminder creatively organises the equipment and space, providing interesting areas of play for children to freely and safely access. Children's self-esteem is nurtured as they happily self-select play materials that appeal to them from the tables, trays and toy boxes at child height. They sit together in comfort and the child sized furniture promotes children's independence. Children enjoy a variety of safe challenges on the portable toys in the secure outdoor play area.

Children move freely and safely in the childminder's home because there are good safety arrangements. This is well supported by effective procedures for the collection of children in an emergency and lost or uncollected children. All the necessary safety equipment is in place, for instance a secure fire guard and door finger protectors, minimising the risk of children accidentally injuring themselves. Children sleep in safety and comfort because the childminder regularly records checks on them and is close at hand to respond to their awakening. There are effective and well thought out procedures for keeping children safe and well whilst enjoying outings. Children are appropriately seated and secured in the childminder's car so they travel in safety and comfort.

Children begin to learn aspects of personal safety as they practice what to do in the event of a fire. They build on their awareness through the childminder's gentle reminders about picking up toys and holding hands when out walking. Children's well-being is further safeguarded because the childminder covered child protection issues on her registration training and has prepared a policy statement. She has a copy of the local authorities booklet 'Your responsibilities when you have a concern about a child', demonstrating a sound understanding of the procedure should she wish to report a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children have a fantastic time in the childminder's home and are making very good progress in all areas of their development. This is supported by well planned activities, which engage children's interests. The childminder is using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities and uses observation very well to track children's development. Children are very involved in their play and make decisions, choosing whether to role play, mark make, play in the sand, look at books or play with the musical instruments. They begin to learn to cooperate and are highly motivated. They relate well to each other and the childminder, who spends time talking, listening and playing with the children. They relish the childminder's close contact as they play with the toys and singing rhymes with actions. Children are keen to engage the childminder in their activities, for instance, as they attempt to do simple puzzles.

Children begin to develop a strong sense of 'Me, Myself and I' as they smile at their reflection in the mirror, respond to their name and the names of others. They are developing their awareness of their physical needs, such as when tired or hungry. They begin to explore using their senses as they taste different fruits, listen to music, respond gleefully when finger painting with sand or smelling the cake mixture before and after it is cooked. They learn to sit and concentrate to complete tasks, for instance, building a tower with blocks. They enjoy listening to stories and singing. They become confident communicators. They repeat simple words they hear and sometimes point to shapes and colours when playing. They have access to many books for enjoyment and resources to practice their mark making. The childminder consolidates children's learning through repetition and displayed words, shapes, numbers and colours. She shows a keen interest in what children do and say. She asks children about their mark making and the shapes in the picture book.

Children's curiosity and investigative skills are promoted very well through interesting activities the childminder plans. They learn about living things when they visit the farm, where they have hands on with the animals and delight in feeding the goats. They love to hunt for bugs, draw pictures of the spiders they find and listen to the story of the hungry caterpillar. They have plenty of fun as they water the poppy or cress seeds they plant and watch them grow. Children are encouraged to develop their creative skills and freely express their own ideas and feelings

through art and craft. They make cards, do collage pictures, love to finger paint and relish playing in the sand. Children build on their creativity and have plenty of fun as they decorate the cakes they bake and spontaneously role play with the dolls.

Children's experiences are greatly enriched through activities outside the childminder's home. They go for lots of walks and love to play in the park and feed the ducks. They relish visits to places of interest, such as the museum, beach, farm or aquarium when they buy goldfish. Younger children begin to appreciate the company of others through regular visits to the local toddler group, childminder drop in sessions and library rhyme story times. This provides children with very good opportunities to socialise with others, whilst the childminder is close by for reassurance.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very confident, relaxed and happy in the childminder's home. Their sense of belonging is promoted well as they happily select activities, which help to make the environment relaxed, bright and attractive to them. The effective equal opportunities policy ensures that all children are included and valued as individuals. Children enjoy celebrating special events in their own lives, such as birthdays when they make cards and cakes for one another. They begin to develop a positive attitude to others. They celebrate cultural events, such as Passover and join in the children's festival activities when they listen to African drums. However, resources reflecting positive images and multi-cultural toys are not broadly incorporated into the range of play materials.

Children's self-esteem is nurtured in a very positive environment where they are encouraged to feel good about themselves. Their art work is highly valued as it is displayed in the childminder's home, promoting a welcoming environment for children and their parents. The childminder is a good role model, very polite and attentive, encouraging children to express their interests and talk about what they are doing. Children begin to develop good social skills as they learn the concept of sharing and gain independence as they help to tidy away the toys. They follow simple instructions, such as sitting at the table for snack. Children are well occupied and very involved in their activities, resulting in them behaving very well. They respond warmly to the childminder, for instance, as they listen to a story, children curl up on the childminder's knee and make themselves comfortable.

Children settle well and happily join in the activities because the childminder works closely with parents to ensure she understands their individual needs and home routine. Parent's comment very positively in letters they write about their children's care, activities and the warm relationships they enjoy with the childminder. They are given a welcome pack about the childminder's activities as part of the enrolment procedures and there is a resource file for parents to view. There is very good ongoing sharing of information as the childminder takes time to write in children's diaries about their day and to chat to parents as they arrive. Children have their own scrapbook as a memento of their achievements, further reassuring parents that children's interests come first. Children's continuity and the quality of care offered is enhanced through this meaningful relationship between home and the childminder.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are cared for as part of the family in a very warm, stimulating and homely environment. The childminder creatively organises the space with an exceptionally good balance of activities, allowing for both active play and relaxation. Children gain confidence and have great fun, whilst pursuing activities that appeal to them. They begin to make choices about playing inside or out. They enjoy very good levels of individual support, which is clearly reflected in the children's happiness, confidence and strong sense of belonging. The childminder plans the activities very well, affording children an excellent balance of home based care with outdoor visits, when they meet up with others.

Children are afforded excellent adult support. The childminder has an early years childcare qualification and several years previous experience of working in a day nursery setting. She has a fabulous understanding of how children learn. She provides a wide range of challenging activities, appropriate for the age and ability of children attending. She demonstrates plenty of commitment to improving the care and learning for all children. She uses resource materials very well and regularly attends childcare courses, for instance, 'Working with the under three's'. Children are involved in purposeful activities, which are greatly enhanced by the childminder's knowledge of child development, contributing to the quality of care offered.

Children's well-being is safeguarded particularly well. The childminder has prepared well written policies and effective procedures so that the children are not left unattended with non-vetted persons. She has accessed training, such as first aid, food safety, and health and safety, contributing to a very good service for the children. All the necessary regulatory daily documentation is maintained well, stored with regard for confidentiality and made available for inspection. Children's continuity of care and learning is very positively nurtured through the regular sharing of information with parents.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- continue to build upon the range of children's resources that promote equality issues.

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