

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 322290 |
| Inspection date | 30 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 1997. She lives with her husband and two teenage children in Liverpool. Children use all of the ground floor of the childminder's home for their care and play experiences. There is a secure, fully enclosed outdoor play area. The family has a tortoise.

The childminder is registered to provide care for a maximum of six children aged under eight years at any one time. There are four children on roll aged from three to five years. She walks to take children to places. She regularly attends the local toddler group and childminder drop in sessions.

The childminder has an advanced certificate in childminding practice and is working towards a further childcare qualification. She receives support from the local authority. She is a member of the National Childminding Association and local childminder network group. She has an accredited quality assurance award.

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 show plenty of curiosity as they freely explore their environment, fostering their self-esteem. They begin to cut with scissors and relish mark making, making models with play dough or doing puzzles, promoting their fine motor skills through fun, play and learning experiences. Children love to be active and negotiate space well. They respond with gusto when climbing on soft play, exploring rhythm to music, splashing in puddles or rolling in the ball pool. Children are provided with opportunities throughout the day to be active or restful, according to their respective needs.

Children enjoy a good range of healthy food options freshly prepared by the childminder, ensuring that children are well nourished. They relish a wide variety of fresh or dried fruits as snacks, increasing their awareness of a range of different tastes and textures. However, there are few practical activities for children to consolidate their awareness of healthy eating options. Children learn to listen to their bodies and develop their coordination as they independently help themselves to drinks when thirsty or after exercise.

Children are cared for in a clean, comfortable and homely environment, meeting their needs very well. The childminder has a good understanding of health care issues, for instance, ensuring children use sun creams, wear hats, have plenty of drinks and play in the shade on hot days. There are well thought out procedures for children handling animals on visits to the farm. Children develop their awareness of simple personal hygiene through their daily routine and as the childminder takes time to explain why being hygienic is important. They talk about how washing their hands helps get rid of germs. Children build on their awareness through displayed pictures of brushing teeth and activities, such as bathing the dolls.

Children's health is safeguarded well. They are provided with individual towels, which helps to prevent the spread of cross-infection. The childminder has a relevant first aid certificate and keeps the fully stocked first aid box close at hand so that children's minor injuries are dealt with effectively. Children's individual dietary needs are communicated very well, therefore parents' wishes are respected and children remain healthy. 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. They play with a good range of toys and equipment that are suitable for their age and stimulate enjoyment. The childminder follows effective health and safety procedures for checking the resources so that children remain safe. She creatively organises the space, promoting children's self-esteem as they independently self-select play materials that appeal to them from the tables and toy boxes at child height. Children sit together in comfort and the child sized furniture promotes children's independence. They enjoy a variety of safe challenges in the secure outdoor play area.

Children move freely and safely in the childminder's home because there are good safety arrangements in place. This is well supported by visitors records and daily premises checks to effectively address any areas of concern. All the necessary safety equipment is in place, for

instance, cupboard locks, fireguard and safety gates, minimising the risk of children accidentally injuring themselves. Children sleep in safety and comfort because the childminder regularly checks 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 learn aspects of personal safety as they regularly practise 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 staying close together when playing in the park. Children's well-being is further safeguarded because there are effective procedures for the collection of children in an emergency. The childminder has a copy of the government leaflet 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'. She has accessed safeguarding training and has prepared a policy statement. She demonstrates a strong understanding of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedure should she wish to report a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have a fun time in the childminder's home and are making good progress in all areas of their development. The childminder is using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to help plan activities and promote children's learning and development. Children are involved in their play and make decisions, choosing whether to dress up, mark make, play with the small world toys or sit at the table to make models with play dough. They sit and concentrate well to complete tasks, for instance, putting simple puzzles together. Children engage with interest at story time and enjoy singing. The childminder reinforces children's learning through repetition and shows a keen interest in what children do and say. She asks children about what they make with the play dough.

Children are motivated and become confident communicators, initiating conversations with adults and singing rhymes. They have access to many books for enjoyment and relish telling stories as they look at the pictures. Children confidently count to five, and recognise colours and shapes when playing. There are plenty of pencils and paper for children to practise their mark making. Children delight in playing with the toy telephones, cash register and calculator, developing their awareness of technology. A computer is also available for children to use, promoting their hand-eye coordination through fun learning experiences. They begin to move the mouse to click on pictures and match shapes.

Children begin to explore using their senses as they smell the cake mixture before and after it is cooked, listen to music, and respond gleefully when feeling the paint on their hands as they make butterfly pictures. They learn about living things through the strawberry plants they grow, feeding the family tortoise and handling the rabbits on visits to the farm. Children are encouraged to develop their creative skills and freely express their own ideas and feelings through art and craft. They have plenty of fun as they paint, do collage pictures, decorate cakes and spontaneously role play. Children happily display their art work in the childminder's home fostering their self-esteem and a welcoming environment for themselves and their parents.

Children's experiences are further enhanced through activities outside the childminder's home. They go for lots of walks and love to play in the park. They relish visits to places of interest, such as the fisheries or museum, when they join in activities about the human body and have fun on the climbing wall. Younger children begin to appreciate the company of others through regular visits to the local toddler group and childminder drop in sessions. This provides children

with very positive experiences to play sociably alongside one another and with each other, whilst the childminder is close by for reassurance.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop good levels of self-esteem and the childminder forms close and caring relationships with children. They respond warmly to the childminder and one another, for instance, hugging times and snuggling up together when listening to stories. The effective equal opportunities policy and government booklet about the 'Disability Discrimination Act and Early Years' ensures that all children are valued as individuals. Children begin to develop positive attitudes towards others as they play with the dolls in wheelchairs, different nationality dolls, small world toys and look at books or do puzzles. They enjoy celebrating special events in their own lives, such as birthdays when they have a party. Children begin to learn about other cultures through festivals, such as Ramadan, building on their awareness of the world around them.

Children are confident, at ease and very 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 childminder manages children's behaviour well, providing a very positive environment where children are encouraged to feel good about themselves. She is a good role model encouraging polite interaction, resulting in children showing a growing awareness of what is expected of them. Children play happily together and younger children begin to develop the concept of sharing the toys. They are well occupied and involved in their play, resulting in children behaving very well.

Children settle well and happily join in the activities because the childminder works closely with parents to ensure she understands children's individual needs and home routine. Parents say that they are very happy and satisfied with 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, reassuring parents that children's interests come first. The childminder takes time to write in the children's diary about their day and diaries of achievements keep parents well informed about all their children's progress. Children's continuity and the quality of care offered is enhanced through this meaningful relationship between home and the childminder.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for as part of the family in a warm, stimulating and homely environment. The childminder creatively organises the space with a good balance of activities, allowing for both active play and relaxation. Children gain confidence and have plenty of fun pursuing activities that appeal to them. They enjoy good levels of individual support, which is clearly reflected in their happiness, confidence and strong sense of belonging. The childminder plans the activities well, affording children a good balance of home based care with outdoor visits, when they meet up with others.

The childminder shows plenty of commitment to improving the care and learning for all children. She is enthusiastic about her own self-development through regular attendance on childcare courses, for instance, 'Story Sacks' and 'Birth to three matters'. She accesses resource materials from the internet or library to support with activity planning. She uses her knowledge of child

development well so children are provided with a broad range of play and learning experiences. She regularly attends the childminder network meetings and has a quality assurance award, further enhancing the quality of care offered.

Children's well-being is safeguarded because the childminder has prepared well written policies and effective procedures so that they are not left unattended with non-vetted persons. She has accessed training, such as first aid, nutrition and health and safety, which also helps to provide an effective service for the children. All the necessary regulatory daily documentation is in place, stored with regard for confidentiality and made available for inspection. Children's continuity of care is 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

At the previous inspection two recommendations was raised in order to meet the National Standards and improve the quality of care offered. These referred to organisation. The childminder has introduced a child protection policy, and reviewed the sick child policy to include notifying the regulator of any infectious diseases. Therefore, the quality of care offered has been improved.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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.

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 improve children's awareness of healthy eating.

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