

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	303393
Inspection date	08 February 2008
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 satisfactory. 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 partner and two children aged 12 and 15 years in Widnes. Children use the playroom and kitchen of the childminder's home for their care and activities. There is a secure, fully enclosed garden for children's outdoor play. The family has a rabbit and hamster.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children aged under eight years at any one time. There are six children on roll aged from 10 months to six years. She either walks or uses her car to collect children from school or take them on outings. She attends the local toddler group.

The childminder receives support from the local authority. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's awareness of a healthy lifestyle is encouraged. During nice weather children play in the garden. They love to ride on wheeled toys, play ball games and race against one another, contributing to their coordination and spatial awareness. They enjoy lots of walks and regularly visit places of interest, for instance the park, when they run around in the fresh air. Babies develop self-assurance as the childminder helps them to bear weight on their feet, stimulating walking. Toddlers show curiosity as they freely explore their environment. They develop their fine motor skills as they crayon, post shapes into boxes and eat finger foods. Children are able to be active or restful, according to their respective needs.

Children enjoy a variety of healthy food options freshly prepared by the childminder. The children's meals and snacks are wholesome so children are well nourished. They have fresh fruit every day and sometimes make their own pizza with a choice of healthy toppings, increasing their awareness of a range of different tastes and textures. Younger children have regular drinks of fresh fruit juice or milk, and develop their coordination as they drink from a feeder type cup. School age children learn to listen to their bodies and gain independence, helping themselves to drinks to satisfy their thirst. There are effective procedures for sharing information about dietary needs, so that parents' wishes are respected and children stay healthy.

The childminder takes suitable steps to help promote children's well-being. Her home is warm, clean and well maintained. She encourages children to learn aspects of personal hygiene through their routines, helping to minimise the risk of cross infection. She has a relevant first aid certificate and a fully stocked first aid box, so that children's minor injuries are dealt with effectively. She stores medication in an accessible place out of children's reach and helps to protect them from the harmful rays of the sun. Children use sun creams, wear hats and play in the shade on hot days.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's well-being is generally well assured. They begin to learn aspects of personal safety. They regularly practise the fire drill and crossing roads on school runs. The childminder has a sound understanding of child protection issues and a copy of the government booklet 'What to do if you are worried about a child'. She is less familiar with the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures should she wish to report a concern.

Children move freely and with confidence in the childminder's home which is spacious and affords them plenty of natural light. There are effective procedures for the collection of children in an emergency. All the necessary safety equipment is in place, minimising the risk of children accidentally injuring themselves. Children enjoy a variety of safe challenges in the secure, enclosed garden. When travelling in the childminder's car they are appropriately seated and secured so they travel in safety and comfort.

Children play with a suitable range of toys and equipment, which are appropriate for their age while presenting them with appropriate challenges. Babies develop self-assurance stretching to seek out what they want to play with, whilst more able children confidently self-select play materials that interest them from the toy boxes at child-height. The childminder follows

appropriate health and safety procedures so that the resources are maintained well and children remain safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are relaxed and at ease in the childminder's home, promoting their personal, social and emotional development. The childminder is attentive, sitting on the floor with the children to support and motivate their learning. Younger children begin to learn to cooperate. Younger children particularly enjoy playing peek a boo games with adults and relish her close contact as they play with the toys. They have fun as they sing rhymes with actions and love to look at colours in picture books. School age children are keen to engage the childminder in their activities, for instance, board games.

Children begin to learn about living things. They have fun watering the sunflower seeds they plant, collecting leaves, hunting for bugs with magnifying glasses and visiting the animal park. Children are encouraged to develop their creative skills and freely express their own ideas and feelings through art and craft. They love to paint, make models with play dough and do collage pictures. They build on their creativity when icing cakes they bake, dressing up or role playing. Children relish sensory experiences as they listen to music, finger paint and run their fingers through the water.

Younger children progress generally well. They learn to count through everyday routines and point to colours or shapes when playing. They begin to make connections. They press the buttons on the interactive toys to create visual and sound effects. They benefit from activities outside the childminder's home. They sometimes attend toddler group, providing them with opportunities to socialise with others and access different play experiences, whilst the childminder is close by for reassurance.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop a sense of belonging. The childminder knows the children well, making allowances for their different personalities and they respond warmly to her. Activities are non-gender specific and all children are encouraged to play with the toys. They enjoy celebrating special events in their own lives, such as birthdays or Christmas but there are few opportunities for them to learn about other's cultures. Multicultural toys or resources reflecting positive images of disability are not fully incorporated into the range of play materials. Therefore, children's awareness of diversity and other's cultures is not fully promoted.

Children are happy and enjoy a warm relationship with the childminder. They are cared for in a positive environment, fostering their self-esteem. They happily select play materials, which helps to make the environment relaxed, bright and attractive to children. The childminder uses appropriate strategies to manage their behaviour. She is calm and consistent in her approach, using plenty of praise when children behave well. She is attentive and younger children relish her close contact as they play with the toys or show signs of tiredness. School age children are encouraged to share, take turns and be kind to each other.

Children are settled and content. The childminder works closely with parents so that she understands their individual needs and home routine. She encourages new children to bring things to carry, suck or play with, recognising that this may help them move between home

and a new environment. There is effective ongoing sharing of information about the children. The childminder takes time to write a day sheet for the under threes and chat to parents as they arrive. Parents comment in letters they write that they are happy and satisfied with their children's care and play environment. This warm relationship between home and the childminder contributes to children's continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's well-being is safeguarded generally well. There are effective procedures so that they are not left unattended with non-vetted persons. The childminder has accessed first aid training, assisting her in providing an effective service for the children. She keeps all the necessary regulatory daily documentation up to date, stores it with regard to confidentiality and makes the paperwork available for inspection. The complaints records, although, none have been made, are not in line with new guidance.

Children are cared for as part of the family in a caring and homely environment. They benefit from regular fresh air and a balance of home based care with outdoor visits. The childminder is experienced in childcare and provides suitable levels of individual support, reflected in the children's happiness and sense of belonging. She has recently accessed a workshop introducing the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' but has little knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Child development for younger children, therefore, is not fully promoted.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection three recommendations were raised to meet the National Standards and improve the quality of care. This referred to health and safety. The childminder has reviewed the contents of the first aid box, updated the consent for medication records and provided a safety gate at the foot of the staircase. Therefore, the safeguarding and quality of care offered has improved.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the previous 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 satisfactory. 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):

- improve knowledge of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures
- develop the range of resources and activities that promote children's awareness of diversity and other's cultures
- review the complaints records
- improve knowledge of child development for children aged under three years.

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