

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	314973
Inspection date	19 February 2008
Inspector	Wendy Brooks
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 has been registered since 1999. She lives with her husband and three children aged 12, 14 and 16 years. They live in Appleton, Warrington, within walking distance of local shops, schools, nurseries, library and park. The areas of the house used for childminding are the playroom which adjoins the kitchen, with access to a downstairs toilet. There is an enclosed garden with large play equipment for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to provide care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time. She is currently minding seven children under the age of eight years, who attend at different times. The childminder walks to local schools and nurseries to take and collect children.

The childminder attends local parent/toddler groups, visits to the library and park on a regular basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children begin to learn the importance of good hygiene by following daily routines, such as washing hands when they return from nursery and before lunch time. Older children learn to do this independently and a notice in the bathroom reminds them of the importance of washing their hands after using the toilet. Younger children are supported by the childminder to clean their hands after nappy changes and before eating, although on occasions this task is overlooked.

An effective sick child policy ensures the children's medical needs are well met and they are cared for appropriately if they are ill. The childminder has a first aid box available should it be required, however, some contents are not suitable for use with minded children. The childminder's family have a pet dog who spends most of the time in the house away from minded children, but accompanies them on walks to and from school. Children are encouraged to wash their hands after petting the dog and develop an understanding of how to care for and handle animals.

The childminder encourages the children to walk to and from school and nursery as often as possible which helps them to develop healthy routines. Children are provided with various opportunities for outdoor play, such as visits to local parks and playgrounds and the childminder takes younger children swimming on a regular basis. Children have access to an enclosed rear garden where they can play with a variety of equipment to further develop their large physical skills.

Children enjoy a healthy diet. They are offered drinks on a regular basis throughout the day and the childminder encourages healthy snacks, such as banana, apricots and grapes. Dietary needs and preferences are met as the childminder discusses individual needs with parents and provides nutritious meals, such as jacket potato, sandwiches and spaghetti bolognese. Some children bring packed lunches from home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well maintained environment where risks are identified and minimised allowing children to move around safely, freely and independently. Children learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, the childminder reminds them to sit down if they are eating as it is not safe to walk round with food in their mouth. Regular fire drills are practised with the children to develop their understanding of what to do in an emergency.

The childminder provides appropriate equipment to suit the children in her care. For example, harnesses on high chairs and buggies are used with younger children and toddlers wear wrist straps when they are out and about.

All the required documentation with regard to child protection procedures is in place and the childminder ensures that up to date contact numbers and guidance for the Local Safeguarding Children Board are available. This means that children are protected from harm. The childminder ensures that children's welfare is her priority although at present she is unsure of the correct procedures to follow.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy and very settled in the childminder's care. They enter the house confidently and make themselves at home. They relate well to each other and to the childminder and are relaxed in her care. The childminder provides activities to suit individual children's interests and needs and ensures they remain engaged and motivated. After reading a story about 'The Gingerbread Man', the childminder extended the children's enjoyment by providing further activities, such as baking real gingerbread men and decorating them, drawing pictures and making characters from modelling dough.

Children are free to select from a wide variety of toys and resources which are stored at low level to include construction, cars, garage, play food and kitchen, dolls and books. Further resources are available which children ask for with confidence. Older children are also provided with age appropriate table top board games.

The childminder plans stimulating and interesting activities, such as arts and crafts, visits to toddler groups and outings to places of interest to suit the ages of the children cared for at various times. For example, while minding only one younger child the childminder tries to visit the swimming pool knowing that she can provide the individual care and attention required.

Children's progress and development is very well monitored by the childminder. Through detailed observations and planned activities children are encouraged to take the next steps in their development. Each child has a scrap book showing their achievements and details of how the childminder intends to help them to progress further.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others is developed through a meaningful range of activities and resources to promote a positive view of the wider world. For example, children celebrate various cultural and religious festivals with the childminder to include Ramadam, Christmas and Halloween. Resources, such as dolls, books and posters which children access on a daily basis reflect positive images of diversity.

Children are valued and respected as individuals and their needs are well met. The childminder encourages children to develop independent skills, offering appropriate support to younger children when required. An effective behaviour management system using praise and encouragement ensures that children behave very well. Gentle reminders from the childminder help children to understand the importance of not throwing toys inside the house. Pictures are displayed on the wall which reflect the rules of the house.

Effective partnerships with parents enhances the care provided to children. Daily verbal exchanges keep parents up to date. Parents of younger children have daily diaries which keeps them informed of all aspects of their child's day. Each child has an individual folder showing their progress which is updated on a regular basis and shared with the parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's welfare, care and learning are promoted through effective policies and procedures and by ensuring that adult-child ratios are always met. The childminder attends regular training courses to ensure her knowledge of childcare initiatives is up to date. For example, she has certificates for attending a song and sign course, an autumn crafts course and initial training for the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Space is managed well and resources are suitably organised because the childminder has a sound knowledge and understanding of childcare. Detailed policies and procedures are in place to ensure children are protected from harm, and their well-being and development are supported. All necessary records are maintained, however, the informal method for recording medications administered to children means that the information is not clear or easy to understand.

Parents are kept informed of their children's progress and details about the provision. They are encouraged to share comments and concerns with the childminder. This contributes to continuity in the children's care.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were made for the childminder to improve her practice. The childminder now ensures that parent's signatures are obtained to acknowledge entries of medication administered to children, although this is not done on a clearly identified medication record form.

The childminder was also required to obtain a copy of the information booklet 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused-summary', which she has done.

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):

- reconsider the format for recording medication administered to minded children.

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