

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY283783
Inspection date	21 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 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 2004. She lives with her husband and two teenage children in St Helens, Merseyside. 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 childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children aged under eight years at any one time. There are five children on roll aged one to five years and five children aged over eight years. She walks to collect children from school and to take them various places. She regularly attends the local toddler group.

The childminder receives support from the local authority. She is a member of the National Child Minding Association and local childminder network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's awareness of a healthy lifestyle is nurtured and encouraged. During nice weather children play in the garden. They love to push or ride on wheeled toys, play ball or skipping games and have plenty of fun as they crawl through the play tunnel. They walk everywhere they go, relish exploring movement to music and wriggle like a snake when singing rhyme's, contributing to their coordination and spatial awareness. They happily mark-make, do peg puzzles, post shapes into boxes and older more able children skilfully manoeuvre the mouse on the computer, promoting their fine motor skills through fun learning experiences. Children are afforded plenty of opportunities throughout the day 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, therefore they are well nourished. They have plenty of fresh fruit everyday, increasing their awareness of a range of different tastes and textures. 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.

Children's health is safeguarded and promoted. The childminder's home is warm, clean and very well maintained. She encourages children to learn aspects of personal hygiene through their routines. She provides children with their own towel and encourages them to take their shoes off indoors, 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 good.

Children's well-being is generally well assured. They begin to learn aspects of personal safety. They regularly practise the fire drill and colour in fireman Sam work sheets. They practise crossing roads and talk about staying close to familiar adults on walks. There are effective procedures for the collection of children in an emergency. The childminder has a sound understanding of child protection issues and a copy of the safeguarding booklet 'A guide for childminders and nannies'. She is less familiar with the Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures should she wish to report a concern.

Children move freely and with confidence in the childminder's home. All the necessary safety equipment is in place, minimising the risk of children accidentally injuring themselves. Children sleep in safety because the childminder regularly checks them and is close at hand to respond to their awakening. They enjoy a variety of safe challenges in the secure, enclosed garden. There are effective procedures for keeping children safe and well whilst enjoying outings. There is written parental consent and children are appropriately secured in prams so they are safe and comfortable.

Children freely and safely access the resources and activities. They play with a good range of toys, which build confidence, stimulating conversation and enjoyment. Younger children show curiosity as they freely explore their environment and develop self-assurance seeking out what they want to play with from the toy boxes at child height. They sit in comfort with their friend because the child sized furniture and brightly coloured cushions, promotes children's independence. The childminder keeps toys with small pieces out of reach and follows appropriate procedures for checking the play materials, therefore children remain safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

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. They 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 picture books. Older more able children are keen to engage the childminder in their activities, for instance, board or word search games. Children show a good awareness of how to behave.

Children's curiosity and investigation skills are promoted well. They plant cress seeds and learn that they need light, sun and water to grow. They love to watch the squirrels in the park, see the pigs or ponies on visits to the farm and have plenty of fun as they hunt for insects in the garden. Younger children begin to make connections. They press the buttons on the interactive toys to create visual and sound effects, responding gleefully at hearing the different sounds. They begin to explore using their senses. They relish listening to music, tasting different fruit, and love feeling crinkly or silky fabrics and running the sand through their fingers.

Children's creative skills are nurtured and encouraged. They freely express their own ideas and feelings through art and craft. They explore colour, texture, shape and form, through a range of media, such as collage, sticking, painting, sand and water. They have plenty of fun as they do leaf printing, make glasses out of pipe cleaners, do collage pictures with lots of glitter and make lion masks. They extend their creativity as they decorate the cakes they bake, dress up and spontaneously role play with the dolls. Examples of the children's drawings are displayed in the playroom, fostering their self-worth and providing a welcoming environment for themselves and their parents.

Younger children progress well in all areas of their development. They develop a strong sense of self, smiling at their reflection in the mirror, responding to their name and gaining control of their physical needs, such as helping themselves to drinks. They learn to count through everyday routines and sometimes point to colours or shapes when playing. They repeat simple words they hear, such as 'teddy' or 'monkey' when looking at the animal book. They benefit from activities outside the childminders home. They regularly attend toddler group, music mayhem and library story times. This provides younger children with very positive 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 good.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging. The childminder knows the children well, making allowances for their different personalities and they respond warmly to her. All children are

encouraged to play with the toys and join in the days activities, discouraging stereotyping. They begin to develop very positive attitudes towards others as they play with different nationality dolls, small world people in wheelchairs, dress up, do puzzles and look at books or flash cards. Children also learn about their own and other's culture through celebrations, such as birthdays, Easter and Chinese New Year.

Children are happy and content, fostering their self-esteem. They are cared for in a positive environment, where they are encouraged to feel good about themselves. They happily select play materials, which helps to make the environment relaxed, bright and attractive to children. The childminder manages children's behaviour well. She is calm and consistent in her approach, using plenty of praise and encouragement 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. Older more able children are encouraged to be kind to each other, take turns and share their favourite toys.

Children, needs are met very well. 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, helping them to settle into their new environment. She provides new parents with a welcome pack about the childminder's activities. There is good ongoing sharing of information about the children, reassuring parents that their interests come first. The childminder takes time to write in the under fives day diary and chat to parents as they arrive. Parents comment very positively in letters about their children's care, play and environment. This warm and meaningful relationship between home and the childminder enhances children's continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's well-being is promoted in a caring environment. There are written policies and effective procedures so that they are not left unattended with persons not vetted. The childminder has accessed training, such as first aid and food safety, which also helps to provide an effective service. All the necessary regulatory daily documentation is maintained well, stored with regard to confidentiality and the paperwork is made available for inspection. The regular sharing of information with parents fosters and encourages children's continuity of care.

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

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection one recommendation was raised to meet the National Standards and improve the quality of care offered. This referred to positive contribution, and the childminder has increased the range of children's play materials that promote equality issues. Therefore, the quality of children's care 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 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):

- improve knowledge of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

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