

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	322314
Inspection date	21 February 2008
Inspector	Gillian Sutherland

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 1996. She lives with her husband and two adult children, in Mossley Hill which is a suburb of Liverpool. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to look after a maximum of six children aged under eight. She currently has ten children on roll, the majority of whom attend on a part time basis. The childminder walks to local schools and pre-school to take or collect children. She attends a local childminding group and takes children out to local places of interest.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and is also supported by Liverpool Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a varied range of activities and experiences, both indoors and outdoors, which promote being healthy. Children develop their physical skills, as in the garden they access a range of age-appropriate outdoor resources. They also walk to and from school or pre-school on a daily basis and sometimes weather permitting, they visit local parks, where they access the wider open play spaces and access the climbing and outdoor play equipment. The childminder and younger children also attend the local childminder group, where the younger children have a chance to meet up and socialise with other children of their own age.

Children are cared for in a home that is very warm and welcoming to them, where they learn about the importance of good health and personal care as part of their daily routine. For example, children are encouraged to wash their hands independently after playing outside, participating in a messy play activity and always before snack and lunch times.

An accident book is used to record all accidents and parents countersign each entry. Regarding medication, the childminder has the appropriate documentation for parents to complete before any medication is given to the children. The childminder maintains a current first aid certificate and has a first aid kit which is easily accessible to her and which she checks regularly and replenishes items as required.

Children learn about healthy eating as the childminder introduces them to a varied range of healthy foods and snacks. Prior to care commencing, the childminder discusses with parents the range of snacks and foods that she provides. Children's individual dietary needs are made known to the childminder during this discussion and an agreement is reached as to how those needs will be met whilst the children are in her care. Children's individual dietary needs are then recorded on their enrolment form. This practice ensures that children are looked after in accordance with their parents' wishes and their individual dietary needs are met.

The childminder herself has a good understanding of healthy eating. She provides children with a varied range of home cooked meals including different vegetables. She ensures that she always has a selection of fresh fruit available for children to access. Children, depending on their age, eat their meals sitting around the table in the rear lounge and are encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Snacks are enjoyed as the children are playing or watching an appropriate television programme. Drinks are freely accessible to the children at all times and the choice of drinks includes very diluted fruit juice and water.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are allowed to move round freely and play safely and this is due to the childminder taking many steps to minimise or eliminate any potential risks or hazards. The childminder has fitted effective safety equipment in different areas within the house, for example, the childminder has used protective coverings on all unused sockets in the play areas accessed by children and in the garden she stated that the covering on the small pond is safe and cannot be removed or lifted.

Children are well informed about road safety dangers through discussion and participation in good practice as they walk to and from school and pre-school on a daily basis, and also as they go to local parks and places of interest.

Regarding fire safety, the childminder does have smoke alarms fitted on each level of the house and children cared for have participated in fire drill practises, therefore ensuring they become familiar with the evacuation procedures that would be implemented in the event of a fire. A detailed record of when these have taken place is maintained.

Children can very easily access which toys they want to play with as they are stored in such a way that promotes freedom of choice. They freely self-select toys of their choice from a wide and varied range of toys and resources, all of which are clean and well maintained. The range of toys and resources is appropriate for children in the different age groups which the childminder currently cares for.

The childminder has a sound knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and has the contact details for the appropriate agencies that she may need to contact should she have concerns about a child in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very content, happy and thoroughly enjoy their time at the childminder's home, where they relax and settle quickly into an environment which is very warm and welcoming to them. Children's individual needs are well met; the childminder recognises the individuality and abilities of each child.

Children become independent as they self-select which toys they want to play with or which activities they want to participate in. For example, many of the toys and resources are stored in low level cupboards and drawers in a sideboard in the rear lounge. Others are stored in storage boxes which the childminder sets out in the front lounge and the children then choose which toys from those boxes they want to play with. The boxes are changed frequently throughout the day thus ensuring children do not become bored.

Interaction is very good and children are confident in the care of the childminder, who is involved and interested in their play and ensures that the activities provided are stimulating and fun. Children enjoy their 'role play' and here the children enjoyed playing with their dolls and associated resources. They had dolls, prams, clothes and blankets plus feeding and changing requisites. The childminder watches the children and engages them in conversation as she talks to them about whether their baby needs feeding and checks with the children that their babies are warm enough or cold. This activity promotes much discussion with the children accessing these resources and then she prompted the children present to change the daily weather chart which is situated in the hall.

Children's creative skills are developed as they access a range of different activities which help them to identify colours, shapes and textures. This was observed as children participated in an activity using small coloured plastic tubes, each one fitted with a magnetic ball. Children were amazed at how they could join these tubes up through the magnet and create different shapes and sizes. They talked with the childminder about the different shapes created and she responded by explaining the finished shapes were either a square or a triangle. They also talked

about the different colours and lengths of the plastic tubes used. The childminder and children then counted how many shapes they had created in total.

Children make good progress in all areas of their development as the childminder uses her knowledge and understanding of early years guidance and personal experience to provide good quality care. All children spend their time purposefully and the childminder ensures children are stimulated and challenged. Their time is extremely well organised as they have access to an extensive range of resources and activities to gain their interest.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with equal concern and have access to a varied range of resources, many of which reflect the different needs of people in their own environment and also in the wider community. The childminder also incorporates into their play activities some different festivals and one of those celebrated each year is Chinese New Year and at this celebration some of the children were taken into China town in the centre of Liverpool, where they enjoyed a meal in one of the restaurants there. Photographic evidence was also seen of the children as they enjoyed this outing and there are always other activities, including some creative ones that are incorporated into this celebration.

Children's behaviour is very good. The childminder leads by example, speaking to the children politely and praising them appropriately during their play, raising their self-esteem. The childminder supports children's learning about behaviour, through setting clear, consistent boundaries and providing simple age-appropriate explanations. The childminder has a written behaviour management policy which all parents are given a copy of and she is always available to discuss with parents the ways in which she manages incidents of unwanted behaviour.

The childminder respects all children she cares for and ensures their individual needs are met. Children's needs are discussed with parents prior to care commencing and information gained is recorded on their enrolment form and an agreement is reached with parents as to how the individual needs of their child will be met. The childminder works well with parents to ensure the needs of the children are met and written consent for children to participate in some activities and events is always obtained.

Good practices are implemented by the childminder which ensure that parents are fully informed about the activities that their children participate in. Parents are informed either in writing or verbally how their child has been during the day and what activities they have participated in. The childminder has devised her own set of policies and procedures, the majority of which comply with the requirements of the regulator, and she ensures that all parents receive their own set of these documents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's enjoyment and time spent with the childminder is enhanced by her good organisational skills. The areas of the house indoors which are accessed by children are well organised. As a result, children benefit from a thoughtfully prepared environment where indoor and outdoor space is set out to maximise play opportunities for children of all ages.

Children benefit from the childminder's knowledge of early years guidance and also the considerable experience she has had of providing child care, in her home. Her enthusiasm for her work is visible in the way she uses information gained, to enhance the play opportunities available to the children. This ensures that the individual needs of the children are met and that they are looked after in accordance with their parents' wishes.

The childminder has devised a set of policies, the majority of which comply with current legislation and support her childcare practices. The childminder has spent some time revising her documentation, however, the childminder has omitted when revising her records to obtain written permission for her to seek any emergency medical advice or treatment. Also the complaints procedure does not fully comply with current guidance regarding how the childminder responds to parents when a complaint has been made. The remainder of the required documentation that contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place.

The childminder has developed a very good working partnership with parents and keeps them fully informed about their child's day and the activities they have participated in. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the childminder does have relevant information relating to childhood illnesses and also infectious diseases. She is aware of the need to inform relevant agencies if a child in her care is suffering from one of the more infectious illnesses and the childminder would follow the guidance as listed. At the last inspection the childminder was required to review the attendance register to ensure that it includes when children are present. The childminder does now record accurately the times of arrival and departure for each child present, but needs to develop this a little further by indicating when a child is attending pre-school or another child care setting.

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 complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- review the documentation to ensure all parents are requested to provide written permission for the childminder to seek any necessary medical advice or treatment in the future
- ensure that the complaints procedure complies fully with current guidance and legislation, to ensure that complainants are notified of any action taken to address the complaint within 28 days.

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