



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	313064
Inspection date	10 November 2005
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 2001 and lives in the Prescot area of Merseyside. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's home is used for childminding. There is a secure, fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time. There are four children on roll aged from 15 months to 6 years and three aged over 8 years. The childminder walks to collect children from school or take them places. She regularly attends the local playgroup.

The childminder is supported by the local authority and a member of the National Childminding Association. She informally networks with other local childminders.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, warm and welcoming environment. They thrive because the childminder follows good hygiene practices throughout her home, such as wiping down surfaces with antibacterial wipes. This helps keep children healthy and free from infection. The childminder acts in children's best interests when they are ill and a fully stocked first aid box is close at hand so she can quickly respond to any minor accidents, which further contributes to children's wellbeing. Young children show patience as they begin to learn simple good personal hygiene practices as the childminder sensitively helps them with such things as washing hands and wiping noses. This fosters children's understanding of how to help stop germs spreading and keep themselves healthy.

Children's interest in food is nurtured because the childminder provides them with many healthy snack options which helps promote their growth and development. They are encouraged to try a variety of tastes, such as grapes, bananas, cheese and yoghurt which increases their awareness of a range of textures. All children bring a packed lunch from home that contributes to their dietary needs and parents' wishes so they remain healthy. Young children independently drink from a feeder type cup, which improves their coordination, and older children help themselves to tap water that quenches their thirst and benefits their health.

Children benefit from fresh air and a change of environment every day through walks to the park, shops or school. They love to move to music, ride on wheeled toys and play ball or skipping games in the garden, which helps them to balance and improve their coordination. This further contributes to children's physical development and understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play and move around the childminder's home safely and with confidence. Older children take responsibility for keeping themselves safe through the childminder's gentle reminders not to have too many toys out because they may trip and hurt themselves. Young children begin to learn about personal safety as they practice what to do if there is a fire and as the childminder talks to them about crossing roads when they go for walks. This contributes to children's understanding about what is dangerous and how to keep themselves safe.

The childminder takes all the necessary precautions to ensure that her home is safe, such as safety gates so children can not wander into areas that compromise their protection. This means the risk of children accidentally injuring themselves is

minimised. Young children are handled sensitively as they show signs of tiredness and their welfare is safeguarded because the childminder is close at hand to monitor them and respond to their wakening. Children's safety and protection is further assured through the childminder's sound understanding of indicators of abuse and what to do in the event of identifying a concern. Her willingness to make notes on existing injuries and discuss these with parents ensures that the wellbeing of children in her care is a high priority.

Children independently choose activities from a wide range of resources, which comply with safety standards and are in good condition. The carefully chosen resources are stored appropriately so young children cannot reach toys with small pieces so their safety is not compromised. Children are very interested in their many toys and have much fun as they play with the cars, read books, do jigsaws and relax in comfort using the child-sized furniture available. Young children gain independence as they confidently self-select play materials that appeal to them, which helps build their self-esteem and sense of achievement.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are clearly relaxed and at ease in the childminder's home, which helps build on children's personal, social and emotional development. They benefit from consistent everyday routines, such as meals, quiet times and school runs that help children feel secure and content. The childminder helps children feel good about themselves through her positive support, praise and encouragement, which contributes to children's self-esteem. She is very attentive and takes time to listen to what children have to say and what they think, which helps children feel valued. Children play well together, taking turns and sharing their favourites toys. Young children relish the childminder's close contact as they play and move about with growing confidence as they show interest in the toys and activity going on around them. This helps build young children's confidence to initiate their own play and learning.

Children have a good time at the childminder's home because she fills their time with many enjoyable activities, which helps children develop their skills through play. They love to use their imaginations as they role play, make models such as castles out of recyclable materials, explore paint and have regular story times, which contributes to their creativity. Young children make good progress because the childminder adapts such activities as story telling and singing to meet their developmental needs. They listen and respond gleefully to rhymes with actions and repeat simple words they hear as the childminder talks to them about the pictures in the story book. There are lots of chuckles as young children make themselves heard. All children explore a wealth of living things from trees to feeding the ducks to watching the squirrels and watching the seeds they have planted grow, which helps them learn about the natural world.

Children further benefit from activities outside the childminder's home as they go for walks to such as the park or shops. Young children begin to appreciate the company

of others through regular attendance at toddler group, which enables them to play sociably alongside one another and with each other while the childminder is close by for reassurance.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are highly valued because the childminder has a good understanding of special needs, which sometimes involves her working in close partnership with parents and outside agencies. This means that all children are included and given the same opportunities as the others. All children develop a generally good appreciation about people in the wider community through walks to the park and as they play with the dolls, read books, do jigsaws and role play. However, activities that help foster children's understanding of different cultures and lifestyles are not fully extended.

Children behave very well and the childminder's continual use of praise and encouragement helps create a positive environment where children feel good about themselves. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour through such means as the childminder's gentle reminders to help tidy away toys. Older children understand the childminder's behaviour expectations such as not to jump on the furniture and this helps them learn right from wrong. Children are happy, play harmoniously together and respond warmly to the childminder.

The childminder works in close partnership with parents. At the initial visit she shows parents her portfolio about her activities, which reassures parents that children's interests come first. She works closely with parents to ensure that she understands children's individual needs and home routine so they settle well. There is good ongoing sharing of information through young children's diaries, chats at going home time and children's individual art file. Parents are warmly greeted as they arrive and comment very positively about their children's care and the warm relationships they have with the childminder. This meaningful relationship between home and the childminder clearly contributes to children's continuity and quality of care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well protected because the childminder's home is secure and she takes all the necessary precautions to ensure that unvetted persons are not allowed access to them. All children enjoy freedom of movement as the childminder organises the available space well. This means children can relax or sleep or be active according to their respective needs. Children further benefit from consistent everyday routines and a good balance of home based care with outdoor visits through the childminder's good organisation of activities. Information is shared with parents regularly, which contributes to children's continuity of care.

The childminder is experienced in child care and shows much enthusiasm about

improving her knowledge of child development. She regularly attends training events such as Birth to 3 matters and 'play and activities'. The childminder uses this knowledge effectively so children are provided with a range of activities, which enhances the quality of care offered.

The childminder maintains all the relevant documentation well, which contributes to the effective management of the childminding provision and helps promote children's wellbeing. She has prepared well-written policies, which include behaviour management, complaints and emergency evacuation procedures. This helps build meaningful relationships and reassures parents that children's interests come first. Good documentation in combination with training such as first aid, child protection, 'healthy eating' and 'promoting a safer environment' helps the childminder safeguard children's welfare and safety.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were four actions and four recommendations in the previous report that referred to documentation, health, safety, child protection and children's play materials. The childminder has: boxed in the water pipes in the hall; purchased a fireguard; completed a relevant first aid course; reviewed the contents of the first aid box; updated her medication and attendance records; attended foundation child protection training and become familiar with the Area Child Protection Committee procedures; and obtained a suitable range of children's play materials that reflect diversity. These are further safeguarding children's wellbeing and fostering their understanding of people in the wider community.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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.

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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):

- provide an appropriate range of activities that foster children's understanding of different cultures and lifestyles.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk