



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	503898
Inspection date	26 May 2005
Inspector	Linda McLarty

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 1992.

She lives with her husband and grown up daughter.

They live in a house in Aigburth, south Liverpool. The rear playroom and bathroom are used for childminding.

It is a non-smoking household. The family have two dogs.

The childminder runs a local childminder drop in for minded children on a weekly basis. She is a member of the National Childminding Association and member of an approved childminder network. She has also been selected by the Early Years Childminding and Development Partnership to support new childminders.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning to keep themselves healthy because the childminder encourages good hygiene practices such as washing hands before eating, or after using the toilet. Children are protected from cross-infection because the childminder disinfects all surfaces regularly, and encourages the children to use individual hand towels. The care of the two dogs is well thought through to ensure that children's health and safety is not affected, whilst they benefit from learning about animals and their care. The children do not have access to an outdoor play area but the childminder takes them regularly to local parks to play football, and use the climbing and other playground equipment. This helps them to learn to enjoy exercise and contributes well to their overall physical development. The children choose from a selection of mainly healthy snacks and lunches, and their individual dietary needs are met because the childminder uses information from parents and carers well when planning the menus.

Babies' overall physical development is fostered well because for the majority of the time there is sufficient space for babies to move around, crawl, and pull themselves up in a very clean environment. They are praised for trying to spoon feed themselves, and this encourages their independence. The healthy snacks foster good eating habits from an early age. The childminder's first aid course has expired and this is addressed as a recommendation.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are kept safe because the childminder is vigilant about removing potential hazards, such as items on the floor that the baby might pick up, or trimming loose threads on the rug. Children receive valuable play experiences in outings to the local park, which compensates for the fact that the rear yard is not being used because it is currently not safe. Children are supervised at all times, and wear fluorescent arm bands with the childminder's contact number, and wrist bands, to further safeguard them during outings.

Children's safety is also fostered satisfactorily by playing with well maintained, good quality stimulating toys, books and resources, in a clean and safe environment. Children also enjoy a range of toys hired from various toy libraries, which are fully checked for safety. Children's overall development is enhanced by the variety of resources made available and accessible to them for everyday play experiences.

The childminder has a sound understanding of how to recognise and report any child protection concerns, and has recently accessed child protection training, although her child protection policy is incomplete. This is included as a recommendation from this inspection. The room used for childminding is very welcoming, and well organised so that the different needs of children attending can be met, but is quite small. This may prove a problem for the baby to have sufficient crawling room when the childminder cares for the eight children she looks after for a short period after school on Tuesday afternoon. Younger children are protected from accessing toys meant for older children, which may have potential hazards such as small parts because storage is well organised according to the age of the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy many well planned play and learning experiences in a caring and supportive environment, because the childminder knows and understands their needs, preferences and temperaments. They enjoy using all of their senses in topics such as "mini-beasts" and in outings, for example to the museum to further investigate "mini-beasts", or to the local "Field of Hope" daffodil display. They are able to follow their own interests at length, for example, a child who was very interested in trains was encouraged to use this interest to motivate his playing with dough, reading, drawing, making a train track from a construction kit, and making cakes and decorating them with a train motif. The childminder's child-centred approach values children's opinions and fosters their self-esteem well, and promotes active learning which engages and maintains their attention. This helps children learn to concentrate, persevere and play sociably together. They have access to a good range of quality toys and resources, supplemented well by use of toy libraries, and by regular outings to the childminder network group to share in joint activities and topics such as celebrating food from various cultures.

The childminder makes learning fun, for example, the baby's interest in shiny objects is used to encourage her to turn the pages of a book which sparkles, and attracts her attention. Younger children and babies are fully included in simple craft activities such as painting, hand and foot printing, and simple collage, which fosters their creative imagination, and helps them start to represent ideas. Their work is displayed with respect, which also fosters self-esteem. Children are praised for effort and achievement, and this also promotes their confidence and their ability to relate well to others, for example all children help tidy up so that the baby will not pick up anything dangerous from the floor. Children of all ages thrive in the patient attention of the childminder, who shows her enjoyment of their company in ways which encourage a strong sense of self-esteem and confidence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy many interesting activities to help them learn about the wider world, for example, they attend organised activities such as dressing up in various costumes

and eating food from a variety of cultures. They listen to music from different traditions, and have access to some good quality toys and books which reflect diversity. These are supplemented well by resources from the toy libraries. Children learn about their local community in visits to the park, shops, museum and other venues organised with the childminder network. This helps children become aware of and sensitive to the needs and customs of others. The children benefit from the childminder's commitment to learning about how to promote their knowledge and understanding of the needs and traditions of a diverse society.

Although no children with special needs currently attend, discussion indicates that the childminder would offer good quality care for children with additional needs. She values close liaison with parents and external agencies, and she knows where to direct parents for professional support. Children would benefit from the childminder's previous experience of caring for children with needs such as language delay, as she knows where to access further professional help, and has experience of working with professional agencies to target her care for children with special needs.

The childminder works closely with parents to offer care which meets individual needs, and parents appreciate the loving support she gives children, and praise her skills at managing diverse temperaments. This helps children to feel valued, and contributes to their good behaviour because they respond well to her high expectations and simple explanations. Children also behave well because they are productively employed in interesting activities, which pre-empts the unwanted behaviour which sometimes comes from boredom. The day is adapted well to meet the children's particular needs, with sufficient time for children to relate well to each other and to the childminder in a relaxing environment. The children's care is enhanced by the good working relationships between the parents and the childminder, who acts upon information given by parents to ensure that the care offered is based upon each child's particular needs and preferences.

Young babies are fully included, and older children learn to help to take responsibility for the safety of the group, for example, when they tidy up items from the floor in order to protect the baby from putting small objects in her mouth. All children develop a positive sense of self, because they are praised for effort and achievement, and this helps young babies and older children learn a sense of being a valued member of the group.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a small, but stimulating, safe and well-organised room which is dedicated to the childminding practice. All adults in proximity to children have been fully checked. The children benefit from the childminder's commitment to continually improving her practice, for example, she attends training on subjects such as race awareness, and use of music in the early years. She uses information from these courses well to develop the range of quality care, learning and play experiences offered to children. The rear garden is currently not safe, but the childminder has made alternative arrangements for outdoor play experiences. The children's care is in

line with the childminder's written policies and procedures, although her first aid certificate has expired and the child protection policy is incomplete. Parents receive satisfactory information about the way the childminder works, which gives them genuine choice before they agree to place their children in her care. Children receive continuity of care because the childminder tries hard to respect parental wishes in how she cares for their children. On one afternoon the number of children cared for is eight, including two children aged over eight years of age, who are collected from school. The childminder plans this session carefully to ensure that care of older children does not have an adverse effect upon care of the younger children. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children for whom care is provided.

Improvements since the last inspection

In the previous inspection the childminder was requested to record hours of attendance for minded children and to ensure that the child protection policy includes the procedure to follow in the event of allegations of abuse while a child is in the care of the childminder. These recommendations have been partially addressed, and the arrival and departure times of minded children are now recorded. The childminder attended child protection training in January 2003, which enhances her understanding of child protection issues, although her own policy still does not contain details of procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against the childminder, and this is carried on from this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints to report from 1st of April 2004.

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):

- include in the Child Protection policy a statement of procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against the childminder and make this available to parents and carers
- renew the first aid certificate as soon as possible.

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