



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY297720
Inspection date	19 October 2005
Inspector	Sheila May Price

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 April 2005. She lives with her 3 children aged from 2 years to 12 years in the Walton district of Liverpool. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding, with the first floor and back yard excluded. The front garden can be safely enclosed for some outdoor activities.

The childminder is registered to look after a maximum of 5 children aged under 8 years. She currently has two children on roll aged 4 and 8 years. She escorts her own and minded children to and from school. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have a good balance of rest and exercise to promote a healthy lifestyle. For example, they are escorted to school by car. The childminder ensures they also regularly walk to a local field where they play ball games and can let off steam. Children develop their physical skills and co-ordination as they climb and balance at an indoor activity playground; they use wheeled toys to ride on. There is a suitable range of jigsaws and some construction activities to improve the hand to eye co-ordination of younger children.

Children have a very good understanding of personal hygiene. The childminder establishes good hand washing routines with the children so that they know you wash your hands after going to the toilet and before eating and why this is necessary. They also regularly brush their teeth after meals using a sticker chart to show this has been done.

The childminder ensures children use individual towels to prevent cross contamination. Her own procedures for keeping the premises and equipment clean, the care of pets and awareness of food safety procedures contribute to the healthy environment. There is good care for children who have asthma as the childminder gives reassurance and helps them learn to administer their own medication properly.

The childminder meets children's individual dietary needs well through good partnership with parents. Children are encouraged to eat a little of everything, thus learning to accept new tastes and textures which will broaden their range of choices. Meals and snacks are nutritionally balanced to contribute to the 'five a day' healthy eating plan. Children have ready access to drinks of water and diluted pure fruit juice for their good health and refreshment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder makes generally adequate assessments of risks within the household to keep the premises safe for children. For example, by pushing furniture back she makes sure children have sufficient space to be able to play safely. She keeps safety catches on cupboards to prevent access to potentially harmful cleaning products. There is good security to prevent children getting out or intruders getting in. However, not all potential risks are identified, such as the possibility of children accidentally knocking the fire guard out of place while the fire is on and getting burnt, because it is not secured to the wall. The casing around a gas meter is missing exposing sharp edges children could fall against.

Children are well supervised and kept within the childminder's sight at all times. They use toys that meet safety standards and are suitable for their ages and capabilities. For example, the childminder knows that small pieces of equipment that could cause

a choking hazard must be kept away from small children. Children understand fire evacuation procedures and to call 999 in an emergency. They learn road safety procedures and how to behave safely when out so that they stay safe. The childminder considers risks to children's safety when deciding whether or not to use the local park.

The childminder has an adequate knowledge of signs and symptoms of abuse and how to record and report a concern for children's safety. She is not, however, familiar with the working together strategy for safeguarding children as stated in the booklet, 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused'. The childminder obtained the relevant information on this during the inspection to inform her future practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children flourish in the friendly and lively atmosphere created by the childminder, which builds their confidence and self esteem. For example, the childminder makes the environment very welcoming with a children's corner in the dining room where there are toys, colourful posters and art work displayed. This helps children settle very quickly and feel at home. The genuine interest the childminder takes in the children and their welfare helps them feel confident enough to talk about their needs and ask questions. There is always lively conversation going on, which helps children learn and take an interest in the world around them.

There is a well balanced routine and a good range of activities to promote children's development and learning. For example, children have a free play time when they can select what they want to play with as well as organised activities planned for them. When they come home from school they know that although homework must be done there will also be other activities, which are fun to do. Four year olds are given language and maths activities to promote learning, although not through the best methods for this when using workbooks. During holidays a special activity each day or an outing is always organised, which helps children appreciate the wider world and expand their experiences. These include cooking, art and craft, visits to the zoo and farm and going to the library.

Children take great enjoyment in activities that develop their creativity and imagination. For example, they jump up and down with excitement and anticipation as the childminder brings out ingredients for decorating food, wondering what they are going to make. They eagerly design their own faces and animal characters on the biscuits and meringue cases, concentrating hard on what they are doing for a considerable time. They proudly show others what they have made. Although the childminder provides a good range of materials for art and craft activities, which children enjoy using, she sometimes makes too many suggestions or limits the scope of an activity through lack of awareness of children's creative potential.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children make a very positive contribution by being actively involved in the domestic routines. For example, they help tidy away equipment and to set the table. Children have a good awareness of the needs of others, which the childminder has helped them learn through encouraging older children to help the younger children. For example, when they are doing jigsaws or having difficulty getting the paint out.

There is a strong emphasis on co-operative play that helps children develop good social skills. Children behave well according to their differing ages. This is partially due to the good example set by the childminder in her own manner towards others and partly due to her sensitivity and understanding of children's capabilities. All the children use social conventions, such as please and thank you as second nature without the need for prompting.

The childminder values each child as an individual and encourages others to do the same. When organising group activities she adapts these for children's different capabilities, thus ensuring they are equally included. Children have access to a good range of resources, which reflect racial and cultural diversity beyond their own experiences. By reading stories, dressing up and tasting food, children begin to appreciate similarities and differences in people's tastes and customs. Children also learn to appreciate what it is like to have certain disabilities and develop a positive attitude towards what people can achieve.

There is good partnership with parents, which is used well to ensure children's individual needs are met. Good written policies and records are used to ensure parents understand and agree arrangements, so that there is a business like approach to the childminding while still keeping relationships informal and friendly. Children's welfare is discussed on a daily basis and parents express both verbally and by letter how happy they are with the service and how well their children enjoy themselves and make progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder puts her experience as a parent and former childcare assistant to good use in creating a healthy, happy and stimulating environment, where children develop particularly good social skills and enjoy being creative. She has completed her required training and attends additional courses, such as one on racial equality to enhance her service. She has identified areas in which she wishes to improve her knowledge and will be continuing with her professional development as a childminder.

The childminder organises her space and numbers well so children are safe and can be kept under good supervision. She understands the limitations of space on the premises and the impact on care if she had too many children to be able to transport them in the car to places of interest. She makes good use of resources and mostly organises the premises well for children's safety.

Records required for children's safety are well organised, kept up to date and stored in a secure location for confidentiality. The childminder keeps a portfolio of written

information about her service to share with parents and complies with the regulation to have a system in place to record any complaints. This ensures there is a good partnership to support children's welfare and development. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

The childminder 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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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 methods by which risks are assessed and continually reviewed and knowledge of how different agencies work together to safeguard children
- build on the already good methods used to support children's development through gaining a better understanding of the Birth to the three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance.

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