

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	256176
Inspection date	06 February 2008
Inspector	Joan, Patricia Flowers
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 1998. She lives with her two children who are aged 10 and 15 years in a residential area of Chorley in Lancashire. Children are cared for from the whole of the downstairs area of the home. No outdoor play area is available on the premises but the childminder takes children to open play spaces every day. There are five children on roll. Their ages range from 15 months to three years, and all attend at different times during the week. The childminder has gained childcare qualifications to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 and is a member of the local childminder network. Support, training and advice are obtained from the local authority Sure start development team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted through the childminder's established routines. For example, children are encouraged and supported to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet or playing outside. When they handle the guinea pigs children always wash their hands, therefore they learn good hygiene habits and are protected for cross-contamination effectively.

They use liquid soap and individual towels to prevent cross-infection. The childminder holds a valid first aid certificate and maintains accurate accident and medication records, which are countersigned by parents. Children's well-being is therefore maintained well.

Children benefit from and enjoy eating the healthy nutritious snacks and meals provided by the childminder. For example, homemade lasagne with salad and stews are a couple of the menu options offered. All main food groups are included in the weekly menus, so children are well nourished and have plenty of energy to grow and develop. The childminder limits the amount of treats, such as biscuits, so children learn to develop good eating habits when they choose healthy snacks like fresh and dried fruit instead. Drinks are readily available at all times. Children can help themselves to their own beakers whenever they are thirsty and the childminder provides regular times for drinks so that children are always hydrated.

Children have regular outside play opportunities to develop their physical skills. Opportunities during visits to the toddler group provide them with the chance to use small wheeled toys and to climb, as they learn to control their bodies using age appropriate equipment like the small slide. They also visit local parks where they can run in open spaces and go on nature walks as they see the seasons changing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have access to a wide range of safe and stimulating play resources. These provide for and match children's age and stage of development appropriately. The childminder uses her resources very well to support children's learning and development. Consequently, children are interested and are eager to explore and extend their learning in the wholly fitting and welcoming home care environment.

The health and safety of children is the childminder's priority. This is effective because of the good procedures the childminder follows. The childminder's home provides suitable spaces for play and is a secure environment. Risk assessments, both in the home and on outings, identify and minimise accidents effectively. The childminder uses safety equipment and good supervision techniques within the indoor and outdoor environments. Children's protection against dangers are hence minimised effectively. Children's safety when walking outside the home is a high priority for the childminder. She uses strategies such as hand holding and transporting younger children in prams. The childminder also has a good awareness of the importance of teaching children road safety. This means that children are aware of clear, safe routines for crossing the road and know to 'look and listen' for traffic. This acts to minimise the risk of a road traffic accident as children learn how to stay safe in public outside areas.

The whole of the premises are secure. Children take part in regular emergency evacuation drills and the recommended fire safety equipment is in place. Because the childminder tests this equipment monthly to ensure it is in working order, children's safety is assured. The childminder is, in the main, proactive in keeping abreast of child protection procedures to protect and safeguard children from harm or neglect. The written child protection policy is clear, however, it contains out of date information about the reporting agency's name. Also, a government child protection publication, that all childcare providers must take account of, is not available for reference.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and well settled in the childminder's home. They are able to initiate their own activities that promote all areas of their development. Children are encouraged to make decisions about their play and are able to self-select from an interesting range of age-appropriate toys and resources. This promotes their confidence and independence. Children enjoy looking at books and join in with interest as the childminder reads to them and praises them as they carefully turn the pages over. The childminder records and discusses children's individual routines with their parents so that children have time to be active and to rest. Topics are shared with parents so that themes can be carried on at home to expand children's learning.

Children have regular opportunities to develop their physical skills when they go to the toddler group or when they run and use fixed equipment in the park. Infants are able to toddle safely and play with a variety of age appropriate resources. Children learn with increasing skill how to use tools, such as paintbrushes, pencils, cutters and scissors, when being creative. Routines of the day help children to develop a sense of time. For instance, children enjoy a singing session or a story before going to collect the childminder's children from school. They are learning to sing songs like 'The Wheels on the Bus' as they watch the DVD.

Children's self-esteem is actively fostered because the childminder offers them appropriate levels of support when needed and praises and encourages them for their individual achievements. Children enjoy visits out of the home, for example, to see other childminders in the network group and their minded children. Children hence develop their social skills and confidence as they interact with others, learning to share and make friends. The childminder shares with parents their child's accomplishments using individual daily diaries. Children take things they have made home to proudly share with family and friends, thus boosting their feelings of self-worth.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met to a good extent. The childminder takes time to find out about specific needs by the use of an initial 'this is me' book. This enables partnerships to be developed right from the start so that children's care needs can be accommodated according to their own routines and stage of development. Contracts and comprehensive written policies are agreed with parents from the outset. A complaints record, however, has still to be devised so that a record can be available if this was ever required in the future. Children's welfare is promoted rigorously through the regular exchange of information, both verbally and via daily written diaries for each child.

Children's self-esteem is well promoted. This is due to the childminder using praise and encouragement throughout their daily routines and activities, thus encouraging their very positive behaviour. Children are valued and respected as individuals. They are able to make decisions and initiate their own play, which enhances their time spent with the childminder. Although there are no children currently attending the setting who have additional needs, the childminder is able to provide care which includes them in the life of the setting. Discussions with parents ensure that every child's needs are taken into account and acted upon where necessary, changing the environment and activities to suit individual needs.

Children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others are increased because they are able to access a meaningful range of resources that promote a positive view of the wider world. The children and the childminder play together using resources that show positive images of race and gender, for example, books, dolls and small world figures. They take part in art and craft activities connected to different festivals and learn songs such as Dragon Dragon as they prepare for the Chinese New Year. The childminder and the children are becoming familiar with using simple signing techniques to communicate. This provides good ways for children to convey their feelings to the childminder effectively and provides them with added skills as they socialise with other children and adults.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children feel at home within this effective and welcoming childcare setting. As a result, they are very confident and become actively involved in meaningful play as they make choices and decisions. Children's activities are planned for and organised to make them interesting and to provide challenge and enjoyment. Consequently, children busily explore and learn new skills within the well-organised home environment. They get plenty of very positive one-to-one support during their activities as the childminder interacts and plays with them constantly. Children are therefore confident and secure.

Children benefit from the childminder's commitment to and interest in keeping her childcare knowledge and skills up to date. Through training courses and discussions with other childminders, her increased knowledge benefits children greatly. She is aware of the soon to be introduced Early Years Foundation Stage and the changes this will mean for the way she organises her childcare service. The recording of required regulatory information is good and storage of these, including individual children's information, maintains confidentiality very well. Care records are in place for each child and there are effective systems for sharing these with parents.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to address two recommendations. These were to develop a procedure that informs parents how they can make a complaint and to ensure accident records remain confidential to each named child.

During the intervening time the provider has ensured that she displays information for parents and carers informing them of how to make a complaint to the regulator. Accident entries are now recorded in such a way so as to protect confidentiality. The changes that the provider has made have improved partnership with parents and ensure that information held about individual children is only made available to that child's parent or carer.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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.

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):

- devise a system of recording complaints that can be shared with parents on request
- update the wording of the child protection policy to show the correct name of the social services referral agency and obtain the booklet 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'.

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