

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	304059
Inspection date	28 January 2008
Inspector	Ron Goldsmith
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 outstanding. 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 1985. She lives with her husband in Great Sutton, Ellesmere Port. The area which is used for childminding is a designated playroom in the childminder's house and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

She is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time. There are currently eight children on roll attending at various times. The childminder walks or drives to schools to take and collect children. She attends local childminder groups and takes the children to the local library and other places of interest. The childminder is a member of the National Child Minding Association. She has a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in childcare.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is promoted in an exemplary way by the childminder. All aspects of ensuring children adopt a healthy lifestyle are given careful consideration within the daily routines. Children eagerly go to the bathroom to wash their hands before snack time and visual reminders,

such as word and picture cards in this area, help children to do this efficiently. Children use disposable towels and understand how to dispose of these in the lidded bin so that there is no risk of cross-contamination. The children are well protected because the childminder follows robust health and hygiene routines.

Comprehensive policies are implemented to prevent the spread of infection and thorough records are maintained to ensure children's medical needs are met and information is shared with parents. Children's medical needs are met in an emergency as the childminder maintains a current first aid certificate and ensures relevant information is carried with her at all times. In this way she is able respond appropriately in any situation.

Children benefit from a very healthy diet. The childminder vigilantly gathers information about children's individual dietary requirements, their feeding routines and preferences so that she can effectively meet their needs. She offers a wide variety of home cooked meals that are both healthy and nutritious. Imaginative menus are devised and displayed by the childminder and often provide opportunities for children to be involved in some of the preparation so that their interest in food is fostered. The childminder has completed food hygiene training so that she is aware of good practice when storing and preparing food, and fully implements this within her practice so that children's health is safeguarded. Children learn about the importance of good nutrition through the daily routines and activities such as growing vegetables. They know that their individual drinks containers are always directly available to them wherever they are playing. They look forward to their mealtimes and enjoy discussion about how healthy food makes you 'big and strong'.

Children fully benefit from a wealth of activities that encourage them to be active. Excellent opportunities are provided for children to develop new skills outdoors using a comprehensive range of good quality toys and equipment. Children ride wheeled toys and play imaginatively in tents. They have regular opportunities to be in the fresh air as they walk to and from schools or groups and play in the childminder's garden. Further outings, such as trips to the park, the sea aquarium or the river ferry, ensure children's well-being is promoted. Children's overall physical health is also supported by providing appropriate periods of rest and quiet activities. Younger children rest undisturbed in a calm and carefully supervised way according to their own needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an extremely welcoming and well organised environment that totally meets their needs. The childminder makes excellent use of the dedicated play room to provide space and resources to meet the needs of all the children who attend. Children benefit from the use of vibrant and stimulating space that also offer a homely, familiar and comforting feel. Mealtimes are enjoyed here and children sit together with the childminder on appropriately sized furniture to share their food in a sociable and relaxed manner. The playroom is a wholly child centred environment where children's work, displays and photographs are used to decorate the walls and ensure children feel at home. First class organisation of the superb range of resources maximises children's opportunities to select items independently. For example, all of the storage boxes and drawers are labelled with pictures showing their contents so that pre-readers are able to find what they want and replace it after use. Children consistently make independent choices about what they would like to play with.

Children's safety is given a high priority. The childminder fully implements the robust safety policies and procedures and effectively minimises any potential hazards so that children are protected. Children are well supervised at all times. Children play an active role in contributing to their own and others safety as they learn house rules and good practices that avoid accidental injury. For example, they understand the poster which is displayed on a door highlighting the need to be safe at all times and they work on individual projects in work books which emphasise the importance of remaining with the childminder and staying safe. Excellent systems are in place to ensure children are protected and know what to do in the event of fire. They also develop an awareness of personal safety when out of doors. The childminder has an excellent regard for children's safety whether they are in her home or on outings. Full and comprehensive documentation is maintained so that she can respond appropriately in any emergency.

Children's welfare is promoted because the childminder has an excellent understanding of her responsibility towards protecting children from abuse and neglect. She demonstrates a clear understanding of the appropriate action to take should she be concerned about a child. She has recently completed relevant training and has policies and procedures in place to guide her practice. Effective steps are taken to ensure the home is secure at all times and that collection arrangements for children are agreed with parents in advance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children flourish due to the consistently high level of care provided by the childminder. She provides them with many exciting and stimulating experiences that promote all aspects of their learning and development. Planning for individual children's learning is securely linked to what they already know and can do and takes very good account of the childminder's excellent knowledge of both the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage'. Rich, varied and imaginative activities often build on children's knowledge and interests. For example, one recent theme has involved children learning about butterflies and the life cycle. Children remember these projects and retain lots of information and knowledge which helps them talk about what they know.

Children develop an extensive verbal and non verbal vocabulary and learn to express themselves clearly. The use of Makaton to sign supports early language development. During creative activities children are eager to participate and keen to include their own ideas. For example, younger children enjoy experimenting with paint and freely paint their arms, face and nose to experience how it feels and tastes. They hold paintbrushes and chalk confidently to mark make. The childminder ensure that activities are differentiated to offer appropriate levels of challenge for different children in order to build confidence and self-esteem. Excellent relationships are established so that children play cooperatively with one another. Children show care and concern for each other.

Sensitive and skilful interactions from the childminder promote children's learning. For example, a game in which children remember what fruit has been taken away from a group of fruit and count the pieces left on the snack table, fully engages and interests the children taking part. Use of inspiring resources, such 'All about me' books or involving children in opportunities to grow lettuce, vegetables or flowers in the garden, allows them to explore with all their senses. Regular outings for children ensure they benefit from a wide range of experiences. This includes visits to local community groups where younger children can socialise more widely. Occasional outings, for example, to a sea aquarium or the Mersey Ferry, provide a wealth of learning opportunities that are further developed at home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are valued and cared for according to their individual needs. They learn to share and take turns and play cooperatively. They behave exceptionally well and understand what is expected of them. Even young children begin to work cooperatively with others and to solve their own problems. For example, two children understand that they need to share the games and when working together they are more successful when they take turns. Children learn and follow simple house rules and routines that are clear, as a result, children's behaviour is very good. Children benefit from a childminder who notices and acknowledges when they are behaving well and is committed to giving them her time and attention. The childminder and children interact well and form a close relationship which results in children being confident and secure.

Children all have equal access to toys and activities and they receive equal attention from the childminder, who acts as a very good role model for the children in her care. She supports children with praise and encouragement so that children's self-esteem is fostered. As a result, children show high levels of care and concern for others. They begin to learn about differences within society as they have access to an excellent range of resources reflecting positive images, such as dolls, books, pictures and posters. The children learn about the wider world and cultures through simple activities such as an art and craft activity related to a particular festival, for example, Chinese New Year or Diwali. The childminder takes care not to gender stereotype children's play, making sure all the toys are accessible to the children. The childminder has recent training in caring for children with learning difficulties or disabilities and has a positive attitude to providing an inclusive environment for all children.

An excellent partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being. Full information is exchanged on a daily basis so that parents are aware of what their child has done and achieved. This ensures parents are well informed and made to feel welcome from the beginning. Detailed information about the children's day, including their educational progress, and daily chats with parents keep them up to date with their child's progress and welfare. Comments from parents show the high levels of satisfaction experienced by current users of the childminder's service. Helpful information is displayed in and around the home and the childminder has many advisory leaflets to support parents with aspects of children's care.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Outcomes for children are outstanding because the childminder uses all her knowledge and skills to provide the very highest standards of care and learning for children. She is well qualified and is pro-active in attending training which she implements to inform best practice in her setting. She has a clear understanding of how to deliver high quality outcomes for children and an expert ability to reflect on and evaluate her own practice, so that she constantly strives for improvement. The childminder is highly motivated and shows an enthusiastic level of commitment in the service she provides for children and parents.

Exceptional organisation ensures children benefit from excellent adult support so that they feel secure and confident. Daily routines are well established, allowing children time for quiet and active play. Effective use of the home environment and wider community provides a wealth of experiences for all ages of children. This exemplary practice is successfully enhanced by clear and personalised policies and procedures. Documentation is very well organised and used to

ensure clear information is recorded and maintained to promote children's safety and welfare. 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 it was recommended that the childminder maintain a record when fire drills have been practised. This has been completed and now an appropriate record is readily available. This indicates the frequency that fire drills are practised and is used in conjunction with a written fire evacuation policy.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action in order to meet National Standard 6 - Safety. The provider agreed to ensure all children are supervised and in her sight at all times. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider met the National Standards and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

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

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

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