

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306183
Inspection date	24 January 2008
Inspector	Gillian Sutherland

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 satisfactory. 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 1997. She lives with her husband and adult daughter in Eastham, an area on the Wirral. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding, except for the kitchen. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and works with another childminder. In total there are currently 16 children on roll, many of whom attend on a part time basis. The childminder walks or drives to local schools to take and collect children and to local places of interest. The family have a guinea pig as their family pet.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a wide and varied range of activities and experiences, both indoors and outdoors, which promote being healthy. They develop their physical skills as they access age appropriate

toys and resources in the childminder's spacious outdoor play area or as they visit the nearby parks and toddler groups. Outings to local places of interest include the childminder drop in centre and the local library.

Appropriate documentation is used to record all accidents and parents countersign each entry. Regarding medication, the childminder ensures that parents provide written consent before any medication is given to the children. The childminder has a first aid kit in her home and two more which she keeps in the car, which she checks regularly and replenishes items as required.

Children are cared for in a home that is warm and welcoming to them, where they learn about the importance of good health and personal care as part of their daily routine. For example, children are encouraged to wash their hands after playing outside, participating in a messy play activity, and always before snack and mealtimes.

Children learn about healthy eating as the childminder introduces them to a varied range of healthy foods and snacks. Children's individual dietary needs are made known to the childminder prior to care commencing, and specific needs are recorded on their enrolment form. This ensures that children are looked after in accordance with their parents' wishes and their individual dietary needs are met. The childminder discusses fully the range of snacks and meals that she provides with parents as part of the pre-admission discussion. Although drinks are given to children at meal and snack times and also when requested, drinking water is not made freely accessible to them during the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play safely whilst in the care of the childminder. The areas used for childminding are all on the ground floor and children cared for have no access to the upstairs areas. The designated playroom plus the rear lounge and dining room ensure there is sufficient play space for the number and different ages of the children cared for by the childminder and her co childminder. The play space available and the way in which the play equipment is stored, allows children to freely self- select the toys and resources they want to play with or the different activities they want to participate in. For example, children may choose to participate in a creative activity, or to play using the role play resources, all of which are easily accessible to them.

To ensure children's safety, the childminder has taken steps to minimise potential risks or hazards and where appropriate safety equipment has been fitted. Examples of such equipment include safety gates fitted across the doorways across the bottom of the stairs and also across the entrance to the kitchen. Children have no access to hazardous products or substances in the bathroom.

Smoke alarms have been fitted on each level of the house, and the childminder is aware it is her responsibility to ensure they are checked regularly and in working order. Children practise fire drills, thus, ensuring they are aware of evacuation procedures which would be implemented in the event of a fire. A detailed record of when fire drills have been carried out and which children were present is maintained.

Children are taught about road safety issues as they go out and about with the childminder. The childminder takes the contact details of the children with her, as they go on their outings, thus, enabling her to contact their parent immediately if necessary.

Children are protected as the childminder has a satisfactory knowledge of safeguarding children. The childminder has most of the required contact details of the different agencies she would contact should she have a concern about a child in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are content, happy and enjoy their time at the childminder's home, where they relax and settle quickly into an environment which is warm and welcoming to them. Children's individual needs are responded to, as the childminder recognises the individuality of each child. Children become increasingly independent as they self-select the toys they want to play with from the varied range of resources. The toys and resources are all stored in low level units, thus, ensuring they can be easily accessed.

Children are kept interested and occupied as they access a selection of appropriate toys, games and craft resources. Interaction between the childminder and the children is good, as they talk to her about what they are creating using their play dough. Children learn how to use the small cutting tools and shape cutters effectively and safely. The childminder also talks to children about the meal she is preparing for their lunch, including the ingredients she is putting in to create the Spaghetti Bolognese.

All children spend their time purposefully and their time is organised as the childminder provides them with a varied range of activities to gain their interest. Children enjoy looking at books and the childminder has created a small and cosy book corner where children can sit together and relax as they look through the books. The childminder introduces number and letter work into their play activities through counting as they build, story telling and singing different rhymes. Good adult-child interactions are very supportive of their early communication skills.

Children enjoy painting and some of these undertaken during the day are taken home with the children either at the end of the day or at various times throughout the year. The childminder keeps individual books, which contain samples of the children's work, and this is given to each child's parents as they leave to go to school.

The childminder takes children out to the local library and also to the local childminder group where they have the opportunity to socialise with other children of the same age group. Weather permitting children also enjoy and regularly access outdoor play in the childminder's spacious garden. This area is well equipped with a varied range of resources including a play house, rope ladder, footballs and goal posts and a range of wheeled toys and resources.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are made to feel very welcome and are relaxed in the childminder's home. Each child's needs are identified during a pre-admission discussion with their parents and an agreement reached with the childminder as to how those needs will be met. Parents are informed either verbally or in writing about how their child has been whilst in the care of the childminder and also what activities they have participated in.

Children have access to a range of toys and resources; many of which reflect diversity and this increases their knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Children have the opportunity

to self-select which activities they want to participate in and which toys they want to play with; there is no gender bias.

Children's behaviour is very good. The childminder leads by example, speaking to the children politely and praising them appropriately during their play, thus, raising their self-esteem. The childminder supports children's learning about behaviour through setting clear, consistent boundaries and providing simple, age appropriate explanations. The childminder always discusses the strategies she uses to manage incidents of unwanted behaviour with parents prior to care commencing, as this results in achieving a consistent approach to managing behaviour.

At the pre-admission discussion the childminder ensures that parents are made aware of her policies and practices whilst the children are in her care as these are fully discussed with them. Some of the written policies are available to look at during the pre-admission discussion, including equal opportunities, behaviour management and confidentiality. The childminder ensures that all parents are made aware of her complaints procedure and the action she takes to ensure that any concerns of the parents are dealt with and comply with the requirements of the regulator, Ofsted.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an environment where they are made to feel at home. The childminder holds an appropriate early years childcare qualification and has attended many additional courses to update her knowledge and understanding of current childcare practices. However, she does not hold a current first aid certificate. As a result, the childminder is in breach of her registration conditions.

The childminder ensures that all documentation relating to childminding is accessible and available for inspection. The childminder's registration certificate is on display, a daily register is maintained and includes the times of arrival and departure for each child cared for. Documentation is stored in such a way that it ensures confidentiality for the children and their parents. The childminder is fully aware of how long records relating to childminding should be kept.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the childminder has improved the safety of children by attaching a piece of wood to the safety gate across the bottom of stairs, thus, ensuring that children cannot open this gate and gain unsupervised access to the upstairs area.

Complaints since the last inspection

In November 2007 Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 2: Organisation, National Standard 6: Safety and National Standard 8: Food and drink. A childcare inspector visited the nursery. Actions were raised on National Standards 2, 6 and 8 and these were satisfactorily met by the registered provider. The provider remained qualified for registration.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- consider how drinks, including water, can be made freely accessible to children
- revise safeguarding children documentation to ensure the contact details include those of the local police
- ensure that a current first aid certificate is maintained.

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