

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306250
Inspection date	23 January 2008
Inspector	Rosalie Mary Turner
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 1999. She lives with her husband, who acts as her assistant, and their adult daughter in a residential area of Wallasey on the Wirral peninsular. The whole of the ground floor, except for the kitchen, is used for childminding plus the bathroom and small front bedroom on the first floor. There is a secure back yard for outside play and children are regularly taken out to use the local parks and promenade. The family has two cats.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and, when she is working with her husband, four of those children may be aged under five years. The childminder is also a registered foster carer. She is currently minding five children on a full or part-time basis. The childminder also cares for children who are over eight years of age.

The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. She takes and collects children from school and she is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health needs are rigorously promoted. They are cared for in a very warm and clean home where the childminder places a consistently high emphasis on children managing their own personal hygiene. For example, all children clean their teeth after eating and she talks to them about the importance of keeping their hands clean to explain they have 'to get off the germs and bugs that you can't see'. The childminder supplies individual hand towels that are laundered each day to prevent cross-infection so that children gain an excellent understanding that robust hygiene practices will help to keep them healthy. Furthermore, the childminder has developed extremely effective practices to safeguard babies' health, especially when changing their nappies. She always uses disposable gloves and disinfects the changing mat between use to stop germs from spreading.

The childminder discusses children's dietary requirements with parents before she provides care to ensure the food she serves meets individual needs. She carries an EpiPen at all times and is trained to use it if children suffer a severe allergic reaction so that their health is exceptionally well protected. Children thrive because they are provided with a well-balanced range of nutritious, freshly prepared snacks and meals that contribute significantly to their understanding of a healthy diet. Parents are given a weekly menu and the childminder works very closely with them to help them to understand that sugary foods and fizzy drinks are not good for children's health. Children have superb opportunities to learn about healthy foods by tasting a rich variety of fresh fruit and vegetables, fish, meat or pasta dishes. They take great delight in cooking and particularly enjoy sharing their finished product at snack time. Children are offered regular drinks as a way to maintain their health and their individual drinking containers are always within reach.

Children join in all areas of physical play enthusiastically because the childminder plans and organises a stimulating range of activities to help them to learn that exercise has a positive effect on their health. They relish playing in the fresh air to help them stay healthy, especially when it is raining. Even the youngest children put on their waterproof clothing and excitedly jump in the puddles. Children have great fun when they are taken to the local 'Play Planet' to help them use up their surplus energy on the soft play equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are emotionally secure because they are warmly welcomed into a very safe, child-centred home where they are able to gain a sense of belonging. There is a rich and stimulating toy room provided for the specific use of the children that contains an exciting range of easily accessible, high quality resources and attractive displays. The toys are very skilfully stored on shelving that allows all children to help themselves but only to items that are suitable to their stages of development to ensure their safety.

The childminder has an excellent understanding of safety issues and she creates a commendable balance between encouraging children's freedom and setting limits to maintain their safety. She is diligent in checking her home to reduce any potential hazards so that children can play freely. For instance, all electrical and gas appliances are professionally inspected to ensure they are safe and children understand how to use the resources such as scissors correctly through

the close supervision and support that they receive. In addition, children are confident in their understanding of how to keep themselves safe from a very early age especially when they are taken for walks or trips out. The childminder discusses road safety with all of the children so that they know how to avoid the dangers from traffic. They are encouraged to keep the floor tidy and, as a result, they are learning to be responsible for the safety of others. Children are exceptionally confident in evacuating the house quickly and safely because they practise regular fire drills and have helped to produce colourful notices to identify the main fire exits. Furthermore, children have visited the local fire station to help them to understand the importance of fire safety.

Children's welfare is superbly promoted and they are extremely well protected from the risk of possible harm. They are particularly safe from the risk of 'stranger danger' because they are never left alone with persons who have not been vetted or released to adults unless the childminder has permission from their parents or a password is known. The childminder has completed in depth training in child protection to become a foster carer and her knowledge of procedures is impressive. She has developed a robust policy which is shared with parents to ensure that they understand her responsibilities to safeguard their children and demonstrates an excellent ability to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible child abuse. Therefore, children are very effectively safeguarded from the risk of possible harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very confident and exceptionally relaxed in the setting. They have formed an extremely strong bond with the childminder who is kind, affectionate and clearly enjoys working alongside them. All areas of children's development are significantly enhanced by the superb quality of the childminder's interactions and toddlers greatly benefit from the close personal attention they receive. For example, she enthusiastically encourages them to help themselves to the wax crayons and praises them when they are successful in making marks. Older children demonstrate competent pencil control and are able to form recognisable letters to write their names.

Children are excited by the extensive range of bright, colourful resources that they are able to independently access in the toy room and are becoming self-assured from an early age. Their communication skills are very well promoted because the childminder shows a genuine interest in the children, sitting with them as they play and continually asking 'How many?' or 'What colour?' to help them to make progress. She speaks clearly and repeats words so that toddlers learn to talk or extend their vocabulary.

Children are making excellent progress because the childminder makes extremely effective use of 'Birth to three matters' and the Foundation Stage curriculum. She identifies each child's current achievements with their parents and plans an exciting programme of new experiences that ensure children are totally absorbed in meaningful play.

Children work extremely well together as the childminder carefully adapts activities to ensure they have opportunities to play together. For instance, she quickly recognises that toddlers are eager to copy the older children and provides a booster seat so that they can sit together to complete art and craft activities. Children thoroughly enjoy books and they regularly visit the local library to choose fiction or reference books for themselves. School age children relish being competent role models to the toddlers. They complete their homework by reading to them so that their interest in books is nurtured. Cooking is very popular activity that is also

commendably used to help children work together. The childminder helps them to weigh out the flour, talks about how the ingredients change as they are mixed and children develop their sensory skills by experiencing the aroma and flavour of the freshly cooked food.

Children approach all areas of their play with great enthusiasm and interest. They have great fun with numbers because the childminder asks them to count items within everyday situations such as the pigs at 'Tam O' Shanter's Farm'. Children seize opportunities to use the computer to demonstrate their increasing skills. They load the age-appropriate programs for themselves and beam with delight when the childminder praises their achievements. Children are thrilled when they see themselves as the recording of their trip to the fire station is played.

The childminder knows the children well and uses her comprehensive understanding of how they learn to provide challenging activities that are extremely well matched to their needs and interests. There is a very good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities and children respond to challenges with real enthusiasm. The childminder displays an exceptional commitment to her work and, as a result, she maintains a vibrant learning environment. She selects themes such as 'the seashore' to plan an exciting but flexible programme of activities, both inside and outside the home, that cover all areas of learning. Consequently, children achieve exceedingly well as the experiences they are offered support them to do things that go just beyond their capabilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are exceptionally quick to learn to value and respect each other because the childminder treats them all fairly and equally. She warmly welcomes families from all walks of life and skilfully divides her time so that all children benefit from individual attention. Each child is included in every aspect of the daily routine and they feel a true sense of belonging.

The childminder is very experienced and skilled in providing care for children having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. She has a superb awareness of the stages of child development and is quickly able to recognise any delays in reaching milestones. The childminder works closely with parents or carers if a child causes concern and meets with children's physiotherapists and portage workers to ensure she is successful in meeting their additional needs. Consequently, children of all abilities receive excellent support and they are able to make rapid progress towards their full potential.

Children behave very well because they are able to model their reactions on the childminder's superb example. For instance, she is firm but fair and thanks children or praises their positive actions so that they are repeated. The childminder provides commendable guidance to the younger children. She gets down to their level to make sure that they can see her face and quietly talks about their actions. As a result, children learn to distinguish between right and wrong from a very early age and they play harmoniously together. The childminder works with the older children to develop positive house rules and she agrees her policy with parents and carers. She uses techniques that are consistent with home so that children know what is expected of them, therefore, their behaviour is exemplary.

Relationships with parents are very strong as evidenced by the wealth of 'thank you' cards and letters the childminder has been given. Parents are exceptionally satisfied with the childminder's care stating 'I have 100% confidence in the childminder's abilities to help raise a happy and contented child' and 'I would not have any hesitations about recommending her to anyone'.

The strong lines of communication that the childminder has established support children's welfare and learning extremely well. For instance, she gives all new parents a comprehensive welcome pack that details the high quality care that is provided for their children. The childminder continues to keep parents up to date with themes and events via daily diaries or developmental reports and through conversations as children are delivered or collected. Furthermore, parents can see the fun children have for themselves because the videos that the childminder makes of their days out provide a vivid account of how they spend their time. The relationships with parents and carers ensure children have outstanding support to develop their skills and flourish in the childminder's care.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Overall, children's needs are met. Their well-being is exceptionally well supported through the skilful management of the premises and the pleasing organisation of the resources. Children benefit from a happy atmosphere and the company of an enthusiastic childminder who plans her time around them to ensure that they are safe and well stimulated. Older children can initiate their own play and extend their learning because the toys are presented at their level whilst babies have plenty of free floor space to explore and gain control over their bodies. The wipe-clean kitchen flooring enables children to experience messy play, such as paint or cooking, whilst the comfortable toy room provides opportunities for children to play quietly.

All legally required documentation is superbly maintained and the register is marked by the minute that children arrive and depart. In addition, the childminder maintains a visitors book so she knows who has access to them at all times. Consequently, children's welfare is fully safeguarded. The childminder has developed an extensive set of policies that help her to negotiate arrangements for children's care to promote their well-being. Children's personal details and contracts with parents are reviewed every year, or sooner if details change, to ensure that the care provided is appropriate to their current requirements.

Children are effectively safeguarded because the childminder ensures all household members are vetted and she has an excellent knowledge of how young children learn. She is committed to continual improvement and has participated in numerous short courses to ensure that her knowledge and skills remain up to date. The childminder is highly motivated and continually evaluates her practice. She identifies gaps, for instance in her understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, and successfully seeks further guidance so that children's care and learning is superbly supported.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to include a previous injury record in the accident recording system and to ensure that no third party information is contained on accident records.

The childminder has developed her practice to use an exercise book to record any previous injuries that children have suffered. She has provided the National Childminding Association accident and medicine book so that all entries are recorded confidentially. As a result, children are fully safeguarded as the childminder is aware of their existing injuries and confidentiality is consistently maintained when their accident records are shared with parents.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 outstanding. 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

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