

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306313
Inspection date	21 May 2007
Inspector	Jean Evelyn Thomas

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 1994. She lives with her husband and two children aged seven and 12 years. The family lives in Upton, Wirral. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding three children under five all day and two children over five before and after school. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local toddler group. The family has a dog and hamsters.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy an excellent range of activities to develop their physical capabilities and a healthy life style. The consistent implementation of the excellent hygiene procedures and practices ensure children are protected from the spread of infection and develop their understanding of the importance of personal hygiene from an early age. The older children are proficient in their

self-care skills. They independently and without prompt from the childminder wash their hands after toileting. Wipes are accessible in the play room for children to clean hands after a play activity. Children confidently explain that they must wash their hands after touching the pet hamsters. Pictures above the wash basin and the pet cages remind children to wash their hands after toileting and having contact with the pets. Younger children are learning the importance of personal hygiene as the childminder talks to them about why they are washing hands after following the nappy changing routine. The children clean their teeth after meals. They develop an understanding about the importance of this aspect of personal hygiene through discussion with the childminder and the familiarity of the routine. Effective cleaning routines are in place to ensure children play with clean toys in a well maintained environment. Robust procedures are in place to ensure that the animals in the home do not present a health risk. The comprehensive written sickness policy is shared with parents and carers. It ensures a healthy environment for all children. The childminder holds a current first aid qualification which ensures children are cared for safely and that any incidents or accidents are dealt with in an efficient and prompt manner.

Children learn about the benefits of a healthy diet. From an early age children can identify the healthy foods. This understanding is achieved through the provision of healthy foods, discussion with the childminder and activities organised. For example, children regularly mark on the low level fruit and vegetable poster the foods they have eaten that day. They then count and calculate how these have contributed to their 'five a day'. Children proudly show the vegetables they are growing in the garden and photographs of themselves sowing seeds. They name the different vegetables and recall eating their own home-grown tomatoes and potatoes last year. Parents currently provide the lunches for their children and the childminder provides snacks. These primarily consist of fruit and vegetables. In the parents information pack there is guidance on healthy packed lunches. Children's preferences are respected in the snack foods offered. The childminder liaises closely with parents and carers regarding meal provision, allergies, preferences or needs on religious grounds. The childminder is meticulous in ensuring food is correctly stored to prevent food contamination. This knowledge has been gained through attending the food hygiene training. Children thoroughly enjoy sitting together with the childminder for snack and mealtimes where they chat happily in a very sociable setting. Children access drinks on a regular basis throughout the day, they are confident to ask for snacks when feeling hungry.

Children look forward to enjoyable outdoor play experiences. They actively participate in a very wide range of opportunities to be in the fresh air, for example, gardening, role play, sand and water play. They enjoy gaining confidence with varied and stimulating activities to motivate and develop skills, such as pedalling, throwing and balancing. Children access larger apparatus at the local parks. The garden is used as an integral part of the children's play experiences. The childminder ensures children are suitably dressed to enjoy these activities throughout the year. Children benefit from some sunshine owing to the childminder being adept in protecting them by using hats, protection cream and shade. This promotes physical development which significantly contributes to their health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in secure, welcoming and visually stimulating environment. This contributes to the children's strong sense of belonging and motivates children's enthusiasm to pursue play. The main play room is vibrantly decorated with child-friendly posters, photographs and the children's art work. The children excitedly point to photographs of themselves and describe

what they are doing and the friends they are playing with. The childminder effectively involves children in organising their environment which promotes self discipline and social awareness. For example, developing their understanding about the routine of putting toys back in correct place so they will be readily available when other children want to play with them. This is successful as children find the play materials they want in the designated boxes or areas. The main play room is organised to inspire children to use their own initiative and develop their own play ideas. A wide selection of play materials are set out at low level to allow children to make independent choices. Other play materials are stored in clear plastic boxes with a picture of its contents attached to the side for children to easily find toys of their choice or indicate to the childminder what they want to play with. Children are self-motivated in this stimulating environment and find items which interest them. Books are a strong feature of the service. Children freely access the books, they learn to handle them carefully and enjoy sharing books with the childminder. The childminder has an extensive range of play equipment which is further extended by using of the toy lending library facilities to offer children greater variety and challenge in their play. The childminder has equipment to meet the needs of the younger children for example a travel cot, booster seats for the dining room chairs, low level table and chairs.

Children are cared for in a safe setting where they can move freely and are protected from harm. This is achieved through the thorough risk assessment which is in place and reviewed on a regular basis, the detailed safety procedures and use of the safety equipment. The childminder keeps herself well informed about current health and safety issues to promote children's safety. This information is shared with parents and carers. The childminder is vigilant in supervising children to ensure their safety at all times. The outdoor play area is situated at the front of the home, and under no circumstances are children left unsupervised in this area. The children become familiar with safety procedures both in the home and when out in the community. The children explain in detail the fire drill and relate the procedure to a favourite story. The childminder has used this book to help children make connections and overcome any anxieties they may experience in practising this procedure. Children learn about keeping themselves safe when out in the community as they follow road safety procedures. This is reinforced in road safety projects, stories and art work.

The childminder works very closely with parents to ensure that the children in her care are most effectively protected from harm. She is very vigilant over the collection of children and ensures they are only collected by known adults. The childminder has a very secure knowledge of child protection issues. The childminder's thorough written child protection policy and lost and uncollected child procedure is shared with parents and carers so they understand the reasons for regulations which safeguard children. This promotes working in partnership for the protection of the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely confident, very independent and develop self-esteem. They play in a relaxed manner in the secure knowledge that they will have time to play at their own pace and for their chosen length of time. For example, the childminder does not expect play to stop when she offers a snack. The decision for children to continue playing is respected by the childminder.

Children are highly motivated and very interested in an excellent range of purposeful activities which provide consistently high levels of challenge appropriate to their age and stage of

development. The childminder has a flexible approach to implementing her planning responding to the wishes of the children. For example, the children clearly stated that they did not wish to make the play dough. Instead some children wanted to explore sticky foam shapes and make patterns whilst other chose to play with the new toy. Children are inspired and freely able to express themselves through a variety of media such as sand, water and mark making with different materials. They have fun digging in the soil as they plant seeds together and explore different sensory information in treasure baskets that are full of interesting objects and materials. Children develop high levels of concentration as they enthusiastically pursue activities which interest them. For example, children use the chalks, gaining control of their movements and using the board rubber to erase their work. They later return to this activity to continue to practise their skills. Children enjoy the challenge of constructing the new toy, using trial and error techniques for problem solving. Children are creative and use their imagination. Role play opportunities allow children to develop their own ideas whilst they have fun. They enjoy making meals with the play resources and taking their dolls for a walk around the playroom.

Children benefit from the childminder's highly skilled ability to balance her time interacting with children effectively and at appropriate moments leaving children to develop their own ideas. The childminder gives excellent levels of care and attention so that children are animated and meaningfully engaged in stimulating activities. Children gain maximum enjoyment from the interaction and thrive within the setting. Older children initiate the game of 'find the spider'. The children and childminder have fun hunting for the spider, the children are encouraged to give clues and guidance promoting their language. This is enjoyed by all with squeals of delight as they get nearer to the find. Informal opportunities are skilfully maximised to introduce, extend and reinforce children's learning throughout the day. Children are encouraged and praised as they proudly count the layers of packaging as they unwrap the new toys. The childminder uses size, shapes and positions in her language to develop an understanding of these concepts with the children. Comparisons are made with the different sizes of the toy animals and plants they are growing. Communication skills are given a high priority and children happily chatter and engage in conversations with adults. Children's individual progress is monitored. The childminder uses assessment records to plan specific activities to help children move to the next stage of their development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are very warmly welcomed and actively included by the childminder. They have excellent opportunities to learn about themselves and the wider world. All children are welcomed and have equal access to all activities and experiences offered which are stimulating and age appropriate. The childminder has a wide range of books and play materials which reflect positive images of race, culture and disability. Children's understanding of others and appreciation of 'differences' is encouraged through freely accessing resources, planned activities and discussion. The childminder's written equal opportunities policy and practice ensures children's equality of opportunity.

Children are valued as individuals in a fully inclusive environment. The childminder has attended relevant training to ensure that she has the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties and disabilities. She understands the importance of working closely with parents and relevant professionals to help individual children achieve their full potential.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Children are inspired and interested in the activities offered which has a positive impact on their behaviour. The childminder always helps children to feel

good about themselves and offers enthusiastic praise and encouragement to promote positive behaviour. Consequently, children develop excellent self-confidence, motivation and self-esteem. Children relate very well to the childminder and their behaviour reflects her caring and respectful approach. Children are skilfully encouraged to understand the consequences of their actions as they explore emotions and learn to relate effectively with others. The childminder uses toys as props in stories and discussions about feelings to help develop this understanding and awareness.

The partnership with parents and carers significantly contributes to children's well-being. Parents and carers are fully informed of their child's day through informal chats, a daily diary and regular reviews to discuss any possible changes to the children's care needs. The records reflect how they work together as children approach the different stages of development, such as potty training. Parents' and carers views are actively sought because their opinions are valued and acknowledged at all times. The introductory leaflet gives parents opportunity to provide explicit information and details about their child to enable the childminder to meet their individual needs. The childminder has prepared a comprehensive manual giving information about the service provided which is readily available at all times. The manual includes information about the National Standards and how these are met by the childminder, training certificates, policies and procedures. Parents and carers are given a condensed version of the policies and procedures to retain for reference. A wealth of information is displayed around the room which ensures that parents and carers are well informed of her practice. This includes information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the recently issued poster detailing the forthcoming Early Years Foundation Stage.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder is fully committed to continuing her own professional development to support children as she continually reflects, monitors and improves her excellent childcare practice. She regularly attends training on subjects such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework, behaviour management, growing food and vegetables and 'How babies think'. In addition to this she uses childcare literature and the internet to increase and update her knowledge.

The childminder continually and rigorously monitors and evaluates her own practice. Policies and procedures are reviewed and amended when there are changes to National Standards criteria, such as the complaints procedure. Improvement are made in the designs of forms used to improve the quality of the recording systems for children's welfare. The childminder is exceptionally well organised. She keeps high quality, well organised records to share information with parents and safeguard children. Systems have recently been introduced to link children's learning to the 'Birth to three matters' framework to provide a valuable record of young children's progress. Daily routines are successfully planned in advance with flexibility to meet the interests of individual children. A very effective weekly timetable ensures that everything runs smoothly as children are taken and collected from local schools and nurseries. She makes excellent use of local facilities such as libraries, parks and toddler groups for children's enjoyment and valuable contribution to their development.

The childminder's paperwork is exemplary. All legally required documentation and records relating to the minded children are retained ensuring that the childminder is able to care for children in a safe and confident manner. Confidentiality is ensured in line with her written procedure for children's protection. 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 completed all the recommendations which were raised to improve children's welfare. A wash hand basin has been installed in the ground floor toilet facilities. The vertical blind cords and television wires have been reduced in length and made inaccessible. A detailed complaints procedure has been prepared and is issued to parents. The action raised at the previous inspection no longer applies as members of the family over the age of 16 years are no longer living on the premises.

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