

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	310711
Inspection date	19 February 2008
Inspector	Margaret Patricia Mellor
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 was registered in 1993. She lives in Southport with her husband, two teenage children and grandchild aged one month. Children use all of the ground floor of the childminder's home for their care and activities. There is a secure, fully enclosed garden for children's outdoor play. The family have a goldfish.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children aged under eight years at any one time. There are five children on roll aged 12 months to seven years and four children aged over eight years. She either walks or uses her car to collect children from school or take them places. She regularly attends the local toddler group.

The childminder has a child care qualification. She receives support from the local authority. She is the treasurer of the local childminder group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminder takes good steps to help promote children's well-being. Her home is warm, clean and well maintained. She encourages children to learn aspects of personal hygiene through their daily routine. She explains the importance of hand washing and provides children with paper towels, helping to minimise the risk of cross infection. She has a relevant first aid certificate and two fully stocked first aid boxes, therefore children's minor injuries are dealt with effectively. She stores medication in an accessible place out of children's reach and helps to protect them from the harmful rays of the sun. Children use sun creams, wear hats and play under the shade of the parasols on hot days.

Children's interest in a healthy lifestyle is encouraged and promoted. In fine weather they love to play in the garden, pushing or riding on wheeled toys, crawling through the play cube, walking on stilts or playing ball games. They enjoy lots of walks and regularly visit places of interest, for instance, the park or beach where they run around in the fresh air. Younger children relish doing stretching exercises to music or exploring rhythm to music on the dance mat, building on their coordination and spatial awareness. They happily mark-make, do puzzles, cut shapes with scissors and older more-able children adeptly use the mouse on the computer, promoting their fine motor skills, through fun, play and learning experiences. They are given plenty of opportunities throughout the day to be active or restful according to their respective needs.

Children enjoy a variety of healthy food options, freshly prepared by the childminder. The children's meals and snacks are wholesome, ensuring that they are well nourished. They enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables everyday, increasing their awareness of a range of different tastes and textures. The childminder is keen to share healthy eating ideas with the children, for instance, going to the shops to buy fruit and growing their own vegetables. Younger children have regular drinks and develop their coordination as they drink from a feeder type cup. Older, more able children learn to listen to their bodies and gain independence, helping themselves to water to satisfy their thirst. There are effective procedures for sharing information about dietary needs, so that parents' wishes are respected and children stay healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move freely with confidence and pleasure in the childminder's home, which gives them plenty of space and natural light. All the necessary safety equipment is in place, minimising the risk of children accidentally injuring themselves. Children sleep in safety and comfort because the childminder regularly checks them and is close at hand to respond to their awakening. The garden is secure, providing children with a variety of safe challenges on the portable toys and larger play equipment. When travelling in the childminder's car, children are appropriately seated and secured, therefore, they travel in safety and comfort.

Children begin to learn aspects of personal safety. They regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedure and learn what to do in the event of a fire. They build on their awareness as they practise crossing roads on school runs and talk about staying close to familiar adults. Children's well-being is further assured because there are effective procedures for the collection of children in an emergency. The childminder has accessed safeguarding training and reviewed

her child protection policy. She has copies of the government booklet 'What to do if you are worried about a child' and local procedures, should she wish to report a concern. This makes the well-being of children in her care a high priority.

Children play with a good range of toys and equipment, providing appropriate challenges whilst engaging their interests. They gain confidence self-selecting play materials that interest them from the toy boxes, shelves and table at child height. They sit in comfort with their friends and the child sized furniture promotes their independence. The childminder encourages children's cooperation through good use of group games and resources, in particular egg and spoon races. The carefully chosen toys are in good order because the childminder follows appropriate procedures for checking them, therefore, children remain safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have a fun time in the childminder's home. Their development and learning is promoted well because the childminder is using the 'Birth to three matters' resource pack. She loosely plans a varied and flexible range of activities around children's interests, helping them to make good progress in their all-round development. She is beginning to use observation to track their progress. She has introduced individual scrapbooks, containing pictures children paint or draw and photographs, with captions of their play as a memento of their achievements and progress.

Younger children show lots of curiosity and wonderment in new events and objects. They begin to explore using their senses. They relish tasting different fruits, listening to music and respond gleefully when feeling the paint or texture of the sand as it runs through their fingers. They develop a strong sense of 'Me, myself and I'. They smile at their reflection in the mirror, respond to their name and are gaining control of their physical needs, such as going to the toilet and feeding themselves. They are motivated, demonstrating good levels of independence for their age and maturity. They put their coat on before playing in the garden, help tidy away toys and blow noses, with a little adult support. They follow simple instructions and confidently ask questions, such as 'What's that?'. They enjoy singing rhymes with actions and listen with interest to stories.

Children are clearly relaxed and happy in the childminder's home, promoting their personal, social and emotional development. They are very involved in their play, eagerly choosing whether to dress up, crayon, look at books, play with the small world toys or join in picture games. The childminder is very attentive sitting on the floor with the children to support and motivate their learning. Children are keen to engage her in their activities as they play with the small world toys. They concentrate well and persist in tasks to achieve outcomes, for instance, putting puzzles together or building a tower with blocks. They show a good awareness of how to behave.

Children's curiosity and investigation skills are promoted well. They plant vegetables and sunflower seeds, learning that they need light, sun and water to grow. They experiment with soap and water and learn that they can blow bubbles. They love to go for walks in the pinewoods and have plenty of fun on ranger days when they hunt for bugs in the sand dunes with magnifying boxes. They extend their learning as they make spiders with paper cups and pipe cleaners. Younger children begin to make connections. They respond gleefully when pressing the buttons on the interactive toys to create visual and sound effects.

Children's creative skills are nurtured. They are encouraged to freely express their own ideas and feelings through art and craft. They have plenty of fun, making a crazy golf course out of recyclable materials and a volcano out of paper mache. They extend their creativity as they decorate the cakes they bake, make models with play dough and spontaneously pretend to play cafes or hairdressing. Children are proud of their achievements. They happily display examples of their painting or drawings in the playroom, fostering a welcoming environment for themselves and their parents.

Children's experiences are enhanced through activities outside the childminder's home. They go for lots of walks and relish visits to places of interest, for instance, the beach, park and maize haze. They love to go along to the local fun days where they learn circus skills and badge making. Younger children regularly attend toddler group and meet up with other childminders in their homes or for breakfast in the town centre. This provides them with positive opportunities to socialise with other children and access different experiences, whilst the childminder is close by for reassurance.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and content. The effective equal opportunities policy ensures that they are all included and their individuality respected. Activities are non-gender specific and all children are encouraged to play with all toys. They begin to develop very positive attitudes towards others as they play with different nationality dolls, small world people in wheelchairs, dress up, do puzzles and look at language books. They have plenty of fun doing Aboriginal pictures on canvas and learning about the first peoples of America as they make teepees out of sheets. Children also learn about their own and other cultures through celebrations, such as birthdays, Easter or Diwali when they make clay diva lamps.

Children's self-esteem is nurtured in a very positive environment. They are encouraged to feel good about themselves, happily selecting play materials, which helps to make the environment relaxed, bright and attractive to children. The childminder uses good strategies to manage their behaviour. She is calm and consistent in her approach and reinforces children's good behaviour through constant praise and encouragement. She is very attentive and younger children relish her close contact as they play with the toys. Older, more-able children are encouraged to share, take turns and be kind to each other. They are happy and involved in their play, resulting in them behaving very well.

Children's needs are met very well. The childminder works closely with parents so that she understands their individual needs and home routine. She encourages new children to bring things to carry, suck or play, recognising this may help them settle in their new environment. Parents are provided with a leaflet about the activities, reassuring them that children's interests come first. There is good ongoing sharing of information. The childminder takes time to chat to parents as they arrive and children take lots of their paintings home. Parents comment in letters about how happy they are with their children's care, play experiences and environment. This warm and meaningful relationship between home and the childminder enhances children's continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's well-being is promoted and safeguarded. There are well written policies and effective procedures so that children are not left unattended with non-vetted persons. Training, such as first aid, safeguarding and healthy eating, assist the childminder in providing a very effective service for the children. She is beginning to monitor practice to ensure that quality standards are maintained through self evaluation. She keeps all the necessary regulatory daily documentation up to date, stores it with regard to confidentiality and makes the paperwork available for inspection. Although, no complaints have been made, the complaints records are not in line with new guidance.

Children are cared for as part of the family in a warm and caring environment. The childminder is very attentive. She provides plenty of individual support, reflected in children's happiness, confidence and strong sense of belonging. She creatively organises the environment allowing for both active play and relaxation. She provides children with a balance of home based care with outdoor visits. Children are afforded a wide range of activities, assisting them to develop their independence and pursue activities that appeal to them with their friends.

Children benefit from good adult support. The childminder has a childcare qualification and demonstrates plenty of commitment to her own self-development. She uses resource materials and regularly attends childcare courses, for example, 'Playdough to Snowdough' and 'Birth to three matters.' She uses her knowledge of child development well. She enthusiastically motivates children's learning, skilfully judging when to become actively involved and when to allow them to independently explore. Children's continuity of care is positively nurtured through the regular sharing of information 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 three recommendations were raised to meet the National Standards and improve the quality of care offered. These referred to organisation and positive contribution. The childminder has reviewed the children's medication records, and increased the range of resources and activities that promote equality issues. Therefore, the quality of children's care has improved.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the previous 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 complaint 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):

- review the complaints records.

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