

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	314886
Inspection date	10 January 2008
Inspector	Susan Patricia Birkenhead
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 1996. She lives with her husband, children aged 16, 14 and 10 years in the Great Sankey area of Warrington. The whole of the ground floor area 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 six children at any one time and is currently minding two children under five and two children over five, all part time.

The childminder has a dog, guinea pig and a cat.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because the childminder follows effective practices and procedures outlined in the informative policies for sickness, hygiene and the administration of medication. Children are well cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment and the rule for taking

outdoor shoes off at the door promotes a clean environment for babies at the crawling stage. Children are helped to understand that washing their hands before handling food, covering their mouths when they cough contribute to keeping them healthy and protect them from the risk of infection. Professional systems are in place to record the correct details following accidents and the administration of medication, safeguarding the children's welfare and respecting parents wishes.

Children take part in regular physical play to develop and extend their physical skills. For example, they enjoy the wide range of resources in the garden area, which include, wheeled toys, the large trampoline and the good quality structure for climbing, swinging and sliding. They visit the soft play area locally, dance to the music they play and as part of the 'farm' theme the move like animals. Children's opportunities for rest or sleep are accommodated within the daily routine. As a result, children learn to develop good control and coordination of their bodies, recognising that rest and exercise, contributes to a healthy lifestyle.

Children's good health is actively promoted because the childminder is very committed to the provision of healthy foods at meal and snack times. Fresh ingredients, such as fruit and vegetables are used in the preparation of meals, following a sample menu shared with the parents. The children's likes, dislikes and parents wishes are respected and the childminder has experience in catering for children's religious requirements. Meal times are social times when children sit around the table with the childminder, positively promoting their social skills. Children have access to fresh drinking water at all times, which older children can access independently. The drinking cups for younger children enable them to access drinks at times of their choice and remain hydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Indoor and outdoor space is effectively organised creating a secure child friendly environment which enables children to explore and take risks under close supervision. Children safety is given 'high importance' as reflected in the written health and safety policy. The childminder assess potential risks by completing visual risk assessments and uses the necessary equipment to minimise risks to children. These include, socket covers, safety gates and cupboard locks. The implementation of effective policies and procedures, such as lost or uncollected children further ensures children's safety. A wide range of good quality, play materials are stored within the designated play room making them easily accessible. These are well-maintained, regularly checked for safety and support the children's areas of development and enjoyment.

Children learn to keep themselves safe due to the effective practices in place, for example, boundaries are established as house rules are drawn up. They discuss stranger danger and practice road safety during outings. Children generally develop an understanding of safe evacuation in an emergency, because the written procedure and supporting diagram are on display in the play room. However, children do not practise evacuation drills. Children's welfare is safeguarded well because the childminder has a clear understanding of the indicators of abuse and the local safeguarding procedures for reporting concerns. The written safeguarding policy is shared with parents and information is on display in the play room.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and confident, as a result, of the childminder's calm approach to their care and the effective procedures for settling children in. This ensures a smooth transition from home to the childminding environment. They develop good relationships and friendships with others, which encourage them to play together as well as independently. As a result, children confidently turn to the childminder for support when needed. The broad range of activities and the regular rotation of play materials sustains children's interests and promotes all aspects of their development well. The childminder interacts positively with the children during play and they develop a good understanding of colour, shape and number during every day activities. For example, they count and recall the names of familiar colours as they replace the crayons into the box. Children make suggestions about their play and select additional play materials of their choice from the play room, which contributes to their overall enjoyment and learning. The childminder has a good understanding of how children learn and consults the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which is on display in the playroom to reflect on her practice.

Activities are approached with a good degree of planning, for example, the long term plans in place incorporate monthly themes throughout the year, which include, 'holidays', 'Halloween', 'transport' and cultural festivals. The monthly plans reflect the various opportunities children experience according to different areas of their learning associated with the themes. Activities are adapted well to suit the children's ages and developmental stages. Children use musical instruments to develop their understanding of rhythm. They play creatively with crayons and enjoy the experience of drawing around their hands. Children play alongside one another imaginatively as they are attracted to the domestic play materials in the play room that provide sensory experiences. Opportunities for them to develop their understanding of the natural world are accessible in the garden where they plant vegetables. Children attend toddlers weekly where they socialise with others outside the childminding environment. Visits to places of interest, for example, the duck pond, the local park and the library make children aware of the wider community.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals because information obtained from parents, enables the childminder to get to know them well. The well-written equal opportunity policy outlines the childminder's understanding, refers to children being treated with equal concern and develop a healthy respect for others. Children sufficiently learn about the world around them through the visits they make within the local community and the provision of some resources, which promote positive images of diversity through play. They celebrate certain festivals such as Christmas and Easter and children are introduced to Indian and Chinese foods. The childminder is willing to take on the care of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and recognises the importance of providing an inclusive environment for all children. She recognises the importance of working closely with parents and supporting children's developmental needs.

Children are generally well behaved and learn about acceptable behaviour through the childminder's intervention. For example, they are encouraged to share and take turns which is reinforced, when necessary by the childminder. Children are well mannered and politely say 'excuse me' when wanting to pass by the inspector. The associated policies generally outline the methods used, which are adapted according to the age and developmental stage of the child. These include, discussion, distraction and time out. The house rules in picture and written

format make children aware of the boundaries and effectively promote their learning of acceptable behaviour. However, the childminder refers to the use of a 'naughty chair' for periods of time out, which is not entirely consistent with a positive approach to behaviour management. She regularly praises children's good behaviour and achievements, which results in children receiving a certificate as reward, contributing to the development of children's confidence and supports the development of their self esteem.

Good relationships are developed with parents because the systems for communicating with them, which vary according to the children's ages are well established. For example, parents of children under three years receive a written account of their well-being and the content of their day. The very good exchange of information initially makes the childminder aware of the children's individual routine, needs, and development. This contributes to a consistent approach to their care. The detailed written policies provide parents with a good level of information about the childminder's practices, including the complaints procedure. Systems are in place for parents to share comments with the childminder through the 'compliment forms', which parents generally complete when leaving the childminder's care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder protects children well through continual supervision, therefore minimising risks to them from persons not vetted. The written policy outlines the procedure for 'allegations of abuse against the childminder', therefore, protecting herself and family from allegations of abuse and safeguarding the children's welfare. The childminder demonstrates a positive commitment to attending additional training to enhance her own knowledge and skills. More recently she has attended courses 'understanding Asthma' and food safety training, which therefore contribute to the good care children receive. The required first aid certificate has recently expired but evidence shows that a place on a paediatric first aid course is booked for the very near future. Space available is organised very well, to ensure play materials and equipment are on hand, to meet the needs of the children she cares for.

Most documents are used well to support the care of the children and to comply with regulations. However, due to the different style of forms used for recording children's information parental consent for the seeking of emergency medical advice or treatment is not in place for some children. Parents provide consent for various aspects of care and activities for example using the large trampoline, supported by the written policy in place. Records are easily accessible, stored securely and respect confidentiality. The certificate of registration is prominently on display making parents aware of the conditions of registration. The development of the detailed policy file and the positive references to the 14 National Standards throughout underpins the childminder's good practices.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

During the last inspection the childminder was asked to complete an appropriate first aid training course. Since then she has attended paediatric first aid training to further safeguard the children's welfare, however this has recently expired and the childminder has a place on training in February 2008.

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 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):

- practise emergency evacuation drills with children
- review techniques used when managing children's behaviour to ensure a consistently positive approach that builds children's self esteem and awareness
- ensure a consistent approach is maintained for obtaining written parental consent for the seeking of emergency medical advice or treatment
- complete a first aid course which includes first aid for infants and young children.

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