



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	315406
Inspection date	16 February 2006
Inspector	Wendy Brooks

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 2001. She lives in St. Helens with her husband and 3 children, aged 18 years, 15 years and 9 years old.

The childminder is registered to provide care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time. The childminder's husband also acts as an assistant. Minded children have the use of the front lounge, adjoining rear room and one first floor bedroom of the childminder's house. There is a ground floor bathroom for children's use. A rear yard is available for outdoor play. No overnight care is provided.

The childminder takes children to local playgroups, schools and nurseries.

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 learn the importance of good hygiene by following daily routines, such as washing hands after visiting the toilet, before eating and after playing outside. An effective sick child policy ensures that the children's medical needs are well met and they are cared for appropriately if they are ill. The childminder's husband, who acts as an assistant, does not have a qualification in First Aid at present.

Children benefit from a variety of outdoor activities, such as trips to the park to feed the ducks and regular walks to and from school. The fully enclosed yard at the rear of the house provides opportunities for children of all ages and abilities to develop their large and fine motor control, as they dig in the sand, play with balls and ride on wheeled toys. Children are becoming aware of their own needs, such as when to sleep or rest. The childminder is attentive to these needs and provides opportunities for quiet times throughout the day.

Dietary needs and preferences are met as the childminder provides nutritious meals and snacks that appeal to the children, such as toast, yoghurt and cereal. Children are offered a selection of fresh fruits and vegetables and are beginning to understand why this is necessary to maintain good health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a well maintained environment where risks are identified and minimised allowing children to move around safely, freely and independently. Children begin to learn how to keep themselves safe on the premises, for example children know what to do in the case of an emergency through discussions with the childminder. Children are kept safe from harm through the childminder's understanding of child protection procedures, however, the childminder does not have up-to-date contact numbers or guidelines from the local Area Child Protection Committee.

Children independently select toys and resources from a wide range of good quality equipment which is maintained and monitored by the childminder. Resources are stored within easy reach for all children and they choose activities and equipment from clearly labelled boxes. Young children are provided with a selection of age-appropriate activities which are arranged to allow children to access them independently.

Children are provided with a quiet area to rest or sleep and show an understanding of

their own needs which are respected by the childminder. The fully enclosed rear yard provides a safe and secure environment in which children can develop confidence in their physical skills.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the childminder's home. They relate well to each other and to the childminder and are relaxed in her care. Children become independent as they choose between a variety of books, toys and activities which appeal to all. Children develop their confidence when selecting what to play with.

Activities are planned to suit the development needs of the younger children by using examples from the Birth to three matters framework. For example, children enjoy exploring sounds and begin to learn about cause and effect through the use of musical instruments, such as rainmakers.

Children spend their time purposefully and explore a wide range of activities, which contribute to their creativity and imagination. They enjoy modelling with play-dough and building in the sand. Activities are planned to suit children's individual needs and interests. As a result, children are motivated and make many good links in their learning. Children have access to a wide selection of books which enables them to acquire new knowledge and develop their understanding of the world around them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals and their needs are well met. An effective behaviour management system using praise and encouragement ensures that children behave well. Children are supervised well, allowing them the freedom to develop independence but ensuring their safety and wellbeing at all times.

Children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others is developed through a meaningful range of activities and resources to promote a positive view of the wider world. For example, the children learn about different cultural festivals through stories and taking part in arts and crafts activities and discussions. Children also learn about their local community by visiting shops and local parks on routine visits.

Effective partnerships with parents enhances the care that is provided to children. Daily verbal exchanges keep parents informed of their child's day. Parents of babies benefit from daily written information on all aspects of their babies day. Each child has a written record of their progress which is updated on a regular basis and shared with the parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and at ease in the well-organised environment. This means that they are confident to initiate and extend their own play and learning. Children's welfare, care and learning are promoted through effective policies and procedures and by ensuring that adult-child ratios are always met.

The childminder has organised space and resources effectively to ensure children's needs are met. The rear room of the childminder's house is arranged specifically for childminding purposes. This means that resources, equipment and necessary documentation are well organised and easily accessible.

Parents are kept informed of their children's progress and details about the provision. Parents are provided with copies of the detailed policies and procedures for the provision and are informed of any changes that occur. This contributes to continuity in the children's care.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the childminder has developed children's understanding of the wider world by extending the amount of resources which reflect cultural and religious diversity. Children take part in activities which celebrate a variety of festivals and equal opportunities are promoted through discussions, activities and because the childminder presents a positive role model.

The childminder was also recommended to discuss the fire escape procedure with the children. She has done this and children have an understanding of what to do in an emergency. The childminder intends to further extend children's understanding by carrying out practise fire drills on a regular basis.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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

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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):

- to ensure that the childminder's assistant has a current qualification in first aid and written parental permission is obtained before he is left in sole charge of minded children
- obtain up to date contact numbers and guidance on child protection procedures from the local Area Child Protection Committee

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk