



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	315556
Inspection date	14 September 2006
Inspector	Anne Mort

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 1991. She lives with her two children aged 13 and 15 in Westhoughton. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed rear garden available for outside play. The family has guinea pigs which are kept outside.

There are three children on roll. The childminder attends the local childminder's drop-in sessions and takes children on outings. She holds an appropriate early years qualification and is a member of the British Association for Early Years Care and Education and the National Childminding Association, having obtained their Quality Assurance Award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are protected from the risk of infection because the childminder is an excellent role model to the children on hygiene practice. Their care is exceptionally well fostered through highly considered routines. Individual and personal information is discussed with parents to ensure children's health and medical needs, if identified, are adhered to, with full details recorded.

Children's health is extensively promoted through first-rate provision and valuable encouragement to enable development of self-care skills. Hand washing is a natural part of the daily routine and children are enthusiastic about keeping themselves healthy, with a real desire to become independent. The childminder's rigorous health risk-assessment of her provision has resulted in a paper towel dispenser being sited in the toilet facility to prevent cross-contamination. The childminder's nappy changing procedure also presents as excellent practice in preventing the spread of infection.

Children's health and physical development is thoroughly promoted and is part of the childminder's forward planning. Children benefit each day either through a planned or spontaneous activity designed to promote their physical well-being. Indoors the children take great delight in the fun activity of dancing to a musical toy. Outside they have ample opportunity to improve their physical skills and learn how to use and control their bodies. There is full encouragement for children to be active in the equipment provided, for instance, the use of a slide, toy cars, bats, balls, skipping ropes and skittles. Should the weather prove inclement, children still access fresh air as they wear protective clothing and are taken for a walk on a daily basis.

Meticulous and detailed documentation is maintained to fully inform parents of any issues relating to health and safety. Children's health is further supported by the childminder's sound knowledge of first aid, having attended a course, in the written guidance held and the plans in place to deal with a situation. A robust system is in place to record all accidents and the administration of medication. Children's emotional health and safety is given paramount importance. Parents are aware the childminder has the back up service of another registered childminder, who the children know, should she need to call upon support.

Children's need for a diet that will promote their health and physical growth is fully met. This is due to the childminder's forward planning. She takes full account of parental wishes and of a child's special dietary need or requirement. The childminder gives priority to children's nutrition and has attended a relevant course to further her planning in this area. A written menu plan is available to parents and she presents nutritious meals and snacks that appeal to the children. They understand what constitutes a healthy diet as she takes the time to discuss the benefit of healthy food and drink. On the day of inspection children sit with the childminder who promotes a relaxed atmosphere as they enjoy their snack of grapes and raisins.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are thoroughly safeguarded through the childminder's paramount concern and excellent practice. Safety in the home is given the highest priority and all necessary safety equipment is in place, for instance, a fire guard, fire blanket, smoke alarms and electric socket covers. Children play in comfort in a lounge and a designated play room where furniture is fixed to the wall and creativity materials and small piece resources are stored out of reach of young children. Both rooms are exceptionally clean and tidy and the childminder checks her premises on a daily basis.

Children are completely at ease in the highly organised environment and move around the rooms freely and with great confidence. This is due to the childminder's vigilant, but not overpowering supervision. They play in an attractive play room that is specifically furnished and equipped with first rate resources that considerably enhance children's enjoyment, learning and play. For instance, there is a multitude of exceptionally good quality toys, games, dressing up clothes and books that are neatly stored, labelled and easily accessed. In addition to these there is a computer area where children are kept abreast of computer technology. Older children use the main computer and keyboard and younger children access a laptop at a smaller table as this is easier for them to use.

Children's welfare is additionally promoted through the childminder's extensive knowledge and pro-active skills with regard to their safety. She has attended health and safety courses and uses the knowledge gained to continually improve her childminding practice, for instance, if out walking in poor light conditions children have the use of florescent over-jackets for added safety. There are written risk assessments in place with regards to the use of equipment, space within the house and in the garden, together with consideration given to outings and the use of transportation. Once identified, a hazard is addressed and the control measure noted. In addition to these excellent records there is a written emergency plan, a copy of which is given to parents, and an evacuation procedure on display. Children practise fire drills.

Children are protected from harm through the childminder's precise knowledge of child protection issues. The children's protection is vital to the childminder whose extreme dedication to each child and desire for ongoing training and further development ensure this. Parents view the relevant documentation and are made fully aware of her role in child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder has attended a course on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and uses the training and her knowledge exceedingly well to record a child's development and to note the steps planned to take their learning a stage further. Each child has their own record file to maintain confidentiality and parents view and discuss these with the childminder. Photographic records show children cuddling each other, at play indoors and outside, making models, dressing up and on outings, thus further demonstrating the childminder's absolute commitment to engaging the children in activities in line with the framework.

Children use an extremely bright, colourful, designated play room. It is specifically furnished and equipped to accommodate children's play and stimulate their interest and motivation in a dynamic way. The childminder ensures the resources are of the highest quality and stored where children can be independent and choose for themselves. The childminder carefully plans a broad range of interesting activities, based on themes, which greatly extend children's learning. On the day of inspection children were learning about the people and animals in Africa. In connection with this theme the children have already visited a safari park.

Children remain interested and motivated as they can view where Africa is on a map of the world, view African artefacts, pictures of people from around the world and use instruments to connect with African music. The resources are used by the childminder to develop the children's abilities and knowledge in a fun and interesting way. Children positively thrive in her interaction with them as she provides thoughtful support and encouragement in order for them to achieve. The childminder uses excellent questioning techniques to develop children's ability to recall events and to communicate their ideas, for instance, children remember listening to drum music on a different day and talk animatedly about their visit to the Safari park.

Children are competent and enthusiastic learners. They have ample opportunity to use basic mathematics. They sort out toy animals, group the same ones together, count them and match them to a laminated sheet that illustrates the same animal. They then choose to line the animals up on the carpet in order of size. Children receive constant care and attention and the childminder uses this activity to springboard and develop the children's language and conversational skills. The younger child cuddles in to the childminder, smiles, then laughs as she tries to copy the sounds of the animals that the childminder makes for her, whilst the older child talks with the childminder about which animal is the biggest or the tallest, for instance, deciding on the giraffe as the tallest.

Children rapidly develop a sense of rhythm as they are provided with high quality instruments including drums of different size and coverings. They choose a drum and can keep to the tune of the slow drum beat of the African music playing and are very competent at speeding up their arm movements in time to the music. In addition to this, after talking about monkeys, the older child asks for the dancing monkey and the children use expressive dance and copy the movements of it, laughing and thoroughly enjoying this impromptu activity.

Children's imaginations are inspired and in outside play they have decided which plants look like Africa, positioning animals under them for a jungle. In addition to this can be seen dinosaurs in other parts of the garden and at the bottom a set of small houses as children have considered that is where fairies live.

The children benefit greatly from the childminder knowing them well and responding to their needs and personalities during the inspection time. She creates and sustains a happy atmosphere in which the children's learning is significantly enhanced.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder is dedicated and fully committed to the children. She treats each child with care and respect and they benefit from a childminder who notices and acknowledges when they are being good. Children develop a huge amount of confidence and positive self-esteem through the interaction, care and attention they receive from the childminder. Children's input is valued and they have a sense of belonging as they are invited to bring items from home when play on a theme is being planned. They are consulted and their opinion asked in advance with regards to activities and outings.

The childminder has an incredible aptitude for engaging children in becoming aware of diversity. They are engulfed in a plethora of resources that illustrate the world around them and show that though people are different, they are all special. There is a wealth of multicultural resources and those that show people of different ages, with differing abilities. The resources provide children with a variety of ways in which to become acquainted with and improve upon their understanding of the wider world. Information is delivered in the form of artefacts from many countries, dolls, toys, posters, books, laminated picture cards, dressing up clothes, videos, music tapes, planned creativity sessions and outings.

Children's behaviour is exemplary on the day of inspection because the childminder works in an extremely calm and consistent manner, ensuring the children know what is expected of them. Children can freely choose where to play and what to play with. This develops their independence and their own thought processes as they use resources that interest them. The childminder is extremely skilful at taking a child's understanding a step further as she uses the resources and age appropriate language to stimulate the children into trying hard to achieve, for instance, children try to tap a drum directly in tune with the African drum music playing.

The childminder is pro-active in informing new parents about her childminding provision and presents a folder that includes all the necessary paperwork to be established, positive written comments from other parents, a copy of her most recent Ofsted report and copies of all policies and procedures. She also provides parents with an attractive brochure that informs of her qualifications, aims and objectives, together with details about communicating about a child's illness or accident.

Continuity of care for children is significantly promoted through the childminder's valued relationship with parents. She gives paramount importance to the exchange of information. Parents note on documentation all relevant details about their child and consents are agreed upon. The notice board in the play room displays topical information for parents and they know how to make a complaint as there is a written complaints policy and information that Ofsted can be a direct point of contact. The childminder verbally exchanges information with a parent on a daily basis as a child is brought or collected.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's welfare is given the utmost priority by the childminder who has excellent knowledge with regards to keeping children safe, especially from persons who have not been through a vetting procedure. She is extra vigilant when on outings with the children and researches a place of interest beforehand to be assured of its suitability and her own and the children's safety.

Children flourish in a setting where there is exceptional organisation of space and resources. Children have access to downstairs areas and an enclosed rear garden. These give ample space for free movement and safe exploration, thus the opportunity to promote children's care, learning and development is maximised.

Children's care is significantly enhanced by exceptional organisation. The childminder's portfolio evidences her commitment to providing a high standard of care for children. It includes extensive and well written policies and procedures that are a true representation of her first rate practice. In addition to these there are several certificates that illustrate the childminder's commitment to develop her practice and keep abreast of current affairs in child care. She puts this knowledge into highly effective practice in her childminding provision.

Paperwork is held that fully meets the requirements of the National Standard for childminding. It is clear, concise, jargon free and relates directly to the planning and delivery of an excellent childminding service. All documentation is robust and fully supports the practice and knowledge of an experienced and skilled practitioner. 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 partnership with parents has been vastly improved upon as the childminder has obtained their written permission to take photographs of their child. This was undertaken as it was the recommendation at the last inspection.

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