



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY343878
Inspection date	22 March 2007
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 2006. She lives with her husband and three children aged three, nine and 17 years, in St Helen's. Children use the whole of the ground floor of the childminder's home for their care and play experiences. There is no outdoor play area. The family have a cat.

The childminder is registered to provide care for a maximum of five children aged under eight years at any one time. There is one child on roll aged 18 months. She either uses her car or walks to take children out. She regularly attends the local toddler group and childminder drop in sessions.

The childminder receives support from St Helen's Sure Start Childcare Services. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable and homely environment. They thrive because the childminder has a good understanding of healthcare issues, for instance, nappy changing, cleaning the toys and looking after the family cat. Children have their own towel and face cloth, which also helps to prevent the spread of cross-infection and promote children's well-being. Younger children begin to learn simple personal hygiene as the childminder sensitively helps them with wiping noses and as they sing rhymes about how to brush their teeth. Children build on their awareness through the childminder's gentle reminders to wash their hands after going to the toilet and as she explains why being hygienic is important.

Children's health is promoted well as the childminder acts in their best interests when they are ill and stores medication in an accessible place out of children's reach. The childminder has a relevant first aid certificate and keeps a fully stocked first aid box close at hand so that children's accidents are dealt with appropriately. This is supported by parental consent for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and detailed sick child and medication policies.

Children's interest in food is nurtured because the childminder provides them with a range of healthy and nutritious home prepared foods. They enjoy a variety of fresh fruit as snacks during the day, increasing children's awareness of a range of different tastes and textures. Younger children's coordination is promoted well, as they drink from their feeder type cup. They learn to listen to their bodies as they independently help themselves to drinks when thirsty or after exercise. There are well thought out procedures for sharing information about children's individual dietary needs, so parents' wishes are respected and children remain healthy.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities that help to develop their physical skills through their play and learning experiences. They have plenty of fun as they crayon, make models with play dough and thread beads, promoting their fine motor skills. Children love to be active developing their coordination and spatial awareness skills as they climb, crawl through the play tunnel and push or ride on wheeled toys. Their gross motor skills are further enhanced as they explore rhythm, move to music and go for walks in the community. Children are able to be active or restful according to their respective needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and well maintained environment, which meets the children's needs very well. They move freely and safely and gain independence because the childminder takes all the necessary precautions to ensure her home is secure. This is supported well by effective procedures for the collection of children in an emergency. All the necessary safety equipment is in place, for instance, cupboard locks and safety gates and minimising the risk of children accidentally injuring themselves. Children are appropriately seated and secured in the childminder's car so they travel in safety and comfort.

Children enjoy a variety of safe challenges on the portable toys. They learn aspects of personal safety as they practise what to do in the event of a fire. Children build on their awareness through the childminder's gentle reminders about minding toes when opening doors and not eating berries or touching prickly plants when they play in the park. Younger children sleep in comfort while the childminder is close at hand to respond to their waking. Children's well-being is further assured because the childminder has accessed child protection training and shows a good awareness of the procedures should they wish to report a concern. This is supported by the child protection policy and a copy of Local Safeguarding Board Children procedures.

Children play with a generally good range of quality toys and equipment that are suitable for their age, stimulate enjoyment and present appropriate challenges. The childminder follows effective health and safety procedures for checking the resources so that children remain safe. She creatively organises the equipment and space, providing interesting areas of play for children to freely and safely access. Children's self-esteem is promoted and they gain independence searching out play materials that appeal to them from the tables, trays and toy boxes at child-height. Children sit, play and eat in comfort because the furniture is suitable for the range of children who attend.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have an enjoyable time in the childminder's home and are making good progress in all areas of their development. They are involved in a range of fun, play opportunities, which actively engage their interests. Younger children begin to learn to cooperate and relish the childminder's close contact as they play with the toys. They are gaining confidence as they build relationships with the childminder, who spends time talking, listening and playing with the children. They are keen to engage the childminder in their activities as they do puzzles and play with the small world toys. They are developing their awareness of their physical needs, for instance, when thirsty or going to the toilet. Children learn to explore and investigate using their senses. They listen to music, taste different fruits, and respond gleefully as they run their fingers through the water or sand in toddler group. Younger children begin to develop a strong sense of self as they sing rhymes for instance, 'eyes, nose, fingers and toes'. Children show a good awareness of how to behave and keep themselves healthy and safe.

Children's imagination is fostered well. They eagerly participate in a wide range of creative activities, such as dressing up, baking and they respond with gusto as they make collage pictures with lots of glitter. They look at books and listen to stories and sometimes recite numbers, shapes and colours when playing. Children's physical skills are promoted well by using wheeled toys, climbing and eating with spoons or their fingers at meal times. They begin to learn about living things as they hunt for bugs in the park and watch the seeds they planted grow. Children's experiences are enhanced through activities outside the childminder's home. They go for regular walks to the shops or park and relish play dates with other local childminders in their homes. Younger children begin to appreciate the company of others through weekly visits to the local toddler group and childminder drop in sessions. This provides children with positive experiences

to play sociably alongside one another and with each other, whilst the childminder is close by for reassurance.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and content in the childminder's home. They develop good levels of self-esteem and the childminder forms close and caring relationships with the children. The effective equal opportunities policy ensures that all children are included and valued as individuals. Children happily select activities, which help to make the environment relaxed, bright and attractive to the children, promoting a strong sense of belonging. Children begin to develop positive attitudes towards others as they enjoy a Greek morning tasting different foods and celebrate festivals, for instance, on Mother's day they make cards. Activities are non-gender specific, but there are few multi-cultural or positive image resources reflecting race, gender or disability. This means that children's awareness of different lifestyles is not fully extended.

Children's self-esteem is nurtured in a positive environment where children are encouraged to feel good about themselves. The childminder is a good role model, using plenty of praise to acknowledge what children have done well. She is very polite and attentive, encouraging children to express their interests and talk about what they are doing. Children are well occupied and very involved in their play, resulting in them behaving very well. They are developing good social skills as they begin to understand what is expected of them. Children are very courteous as they say 'please' or 'thank you'. Younger children begin to develop the concept of sharing and gain independence as they help to tidy away the toys. Children respond warmly to the childminder, for instance, lots of cuddles as they look at story books together and show signs of tiredness.

Children's needs are met very well because warm and friendly relationships have been established between the childminder and parents, and information is shared regularly. The childminder works closely with parents to ensure that she understands children's individual needs and home routine so children settle well. Parents are provided with an information pack about the childminder's activities as part of the enrolment procedures. The childminder takes time to write in the child's day ledger and chats to parents as they arrive about their activities and interests. Children have a portfolio of their experiences and achievements, which also reassures parents that children's interests come first. Children's continuity and the quality of care offered is clearly enhanced through this meaningful partnership between home and the childminder.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from good adult support because the childminder is experienced in childcare as a parent. She provides children with appropriate levels of individual support, helping to meet their needs. This is reflected in the children's happiness, strong sense of belonging, confidence and independence. The childminder regularly attends the local childminding group and has completed an approved local authority childminder registration course. She shows willingness

about improving her knowledge of child development through resource materials, but is not fully familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Children's experiences are happy and positive as they are cared for as part of the family in a very homely environment. The childminder plans the activities well, so children benefit from fresh air and a balance of outings with home based care. Children are assisted to develop their independence because the childminder has organised the activities and resources to meet the children's needs. They have plenty of fun and gain confidence as they self-select toys and pursue activities which appeal to them. Information is shared with parents regularly, promoting children's continuity of care.

Children are cared for in a comfortable and safe environment. This is supported by effective procedures so that unvetted persons are not left unsupervised with children. All the regulatory documentation is maintained well, stored appropriately and made available for inspection. The childminder has prepared written policies and accessed training, such as first aid and child protection. There is an on-going review of the childminding activities, which helps to provide an effective service for the children and further contributes to the quality of care offered.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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

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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):

- improve the range of children's resources that promote diversity and equality issues

- continue to improve knowledge of child development for children aged under three years.

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