

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY348946
Inspection date	04 September 2007
Inspector	Sue Anslow
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 2007. She lives with her husband and two children aged eight and three in Alsager. The whole house, with the exception of the conservatory, is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding two children under five, two children over five and two children over eight, all on a part time basis. The childminder takes and collects children from the local school and attends a number of local play facilities during the week. The family have a cat.

The childminder holds appropriate early years qualifications and is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy and learn about good hygiene practices through every day routines and explanations from the childminder. For example, washing the germs away after using the toilet or playing outside and wiping the table before eating. The childminder holds a first aid certificate and follows correct procedures should a child be unwell or injured. A written policy informs parents of the exclusion of infectious conditions in order to protect other children and all accidents and medications are recorded correctly.

Children thoroughly enjoy a broad range of physical activities which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They play outside whenever possible, practicing their physical skills on the swing, slide and climbing frame, the numerous wheeled toys and items of sports equipment. They move around the through lounge/dining room, climb up and down stairs to the bathroom and enjoy walks to the park to feed the ducks.

Children's individual health and dietary needs are met well because the childminder works closely with the parents, respecting their wishes and requirements. Children are nourished with regular meals and snacks and fresh fruit is always available. Drinks of water or milk are provided with all meals, although not always readily available for children to help themselves to during their play. This compromises good health care in this area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have a good sense of belonging and welcome within the setting because they are greeted warmly, can reach all the toys and equipment easily and move around freely in a home dedicated to their needs. Children's art work is displayed and they enjoy a warm and close relationship with the childminder. A wide range of toys and equipment promotes children's all round development and the toys and games are rotated to suit children's individual needs and interests. Children learn about the world around them and experience handling different textures because the childminder makes good use of natural play materials as well as manufactured ones. Children participate in baking activities, play with sand and water and collect leaves and twigs in the garden. All play equipment is kept clean and safety checked regularly, enhancing the children's health and safety. Toys are very well organised in different baskets on the low shelf unit, allowing for freedom of choice and independence.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where the risk of accidental injury is minimised. The childminder has a high level of awareness of children's safety and skilfully teaches children to keep themselves safe through explanations and reminders. When playing 'space rockets' under the dining table, children were reminded to keep their heads low and they know they must hold the banister rail when moving up and down stairs. Doors and gates are kept locked for children's security and loose bark chippings help cushion any falls from the climbing frame outside. Smoke alarms, a fire blanket and written evacuation procedures protect children in emergencies. However, fire drills have not been practised, which compromises children's understanding of necessary actions in emergencies. Children's welfare is safeguarded because the childminder has sound knowledge of child protection procedures, should she have any concerns. She is clear about her role and responsibilities as a child care provider and a written policy informs parents of this.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time spent with the childminder and benefit from the wide range of activities provided. They acquire new knowledge and skills and the childminder responds to the children's individual needs by providing appropriate ideas and suggestions to encourage their imagination and curiosity. For example, when children ask what the name of the hand puppet is, the childminder suggests they look at the pictures in the book to see if it gives the name there.

Children's needs are extremely well met. They are able to choose their own activities from the many baskets and shelves or join in the exciting and different activities suggested by the childminder. For example, creating their own characters by decorating the shapes cut out by the childminder or wearing the firemen's helmet to play with the cars in the garage. Creative development is promoted strongly and children experience different textures whilst exploring what they can do with sand, water and baking ingredients. Children develop self-esteem and self-confidence because the childminder values what each child says and does, building on their ideas and often introducing new vocabulary. For example, the 'space rocket' game led to discussions about whether the rocket might fly to the Moon, Mars, Jupiter or the Milky Way. Behaviour and achievements are praised and children are eager to help do little jobs, such as putting the toys away or getting their shoes on.

Children enjoy warm and caring relationships with the childminder as they snuggle up on the settee for a story, build sandcastles together or discuss the names of flowers and insects they find in the garden. Children play well together as the childminder encourages everyone to participate. For example, two children play on the rocker together or decide between themselves who is going to be the 'goalie'. Physical development is greatly enhanced through a wide range of activities in the garden, walks to local parks and developing their skills using different tools and materials.

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development because the childminder has good systems in place for observing the child's progress, encouraging learning in a fun way and planning the next steps in their development. Daily routines include a mixture of indoor and outdoor play, outings and active games as well as quieter pursuits, such as doing puzzles and craft activities. Monthly themes are planned and organised to add interest to each day and inspire the children's learning and curiosity. For example, reading stories about space rockets and aliens leads to making a 'space rocket' under the table and colouring in pictures of spacemen. Children are introduced to letters, numbers and shapes during their every day activities by counting the stairs as they go up and down, comparing the number of toes the 'space alien' has with the number they have and deciding whether the football net is heavy or light as they put it away after playing. Having early years' qualifications enables the childminder to provide appropriate challenging activities to promote the children's progress in all areas of development. Examples of the children's art work and photographs of them participating in different activities are mounted in a 'milestone book'. These, along with appropriate written explanations, act as records of the children's achievements during their time with the childminder.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with equal concern and their individual needs are met very well. This helps them feel a sense of belonging and develops a trusting relationship with the childminder.

Children develop a positive attitude to others and gain a good understanding of the world around them through different play experiences and resources reflecting other cultures. Their welfare is promoted because the childminder consults closely with parents on particular requirements or issues of concern. Written policies inform parents of the equal and individual treatment of all children and the childminder responds to each child's character, needs and preferences with care and attention.

Children behave well and the childminder promotes positive behaviour and self-esteem by praising achievements, helpfulness and kindness to others. Children respond well to the childminder's handling of particular situations and readily apologise if they hurt someone or ignore a request from the childminder. Effective working relationships with parents results in good understanding of children's needs. Information is exchanged every day and parent's wishes and requirements are respected. The care of children is well supported through written contracts and consent forms and new families are given ample time to settle in and get used to the childminder's friendly household. A file of relevant information and written policies outlining the service provided, reassures parents that children's health, care and learning will be promoted at all times.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children feel at ease and at home in this well organised and friendly, learning environment. The organisation of toys and play equipment allows children to make choices and become independent. The ease of movement around the welcoming home, with good access to outdoor play, provides children with a good balance of activities.

The children's quality of care is enhanced by a childminder who holds appropriate child care qualifications and is committed to keeping her knowledge and skills up to date. Continuity of care is assured through regular information sharing with parents and the provision of written policies and procedures. Children's health, safety and welfare are protected and promoted extremely well through good routines and keeping written records as required.

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

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):

- ensure fresh drinking water is available throughout the day
- practise emergency evacuation procedures with the minded 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