



Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 303362 |
| Inspection date | 31 July 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 1999. She lives with her husband and their two children aged 14 and 11 years in Widnes. The childminder is registered to provide care for a maximum of five children under eight years. There are currently six children on roll, all of whom attend part time.

Minded children are cared for on the ground floor of the house. There is a safe and enclosed outdoor play area for minded children to enjoy. The home is within walking distance to local shops, park and library.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene by following daily routines, such as washing hands after visiting the toilet and before eating. Younger children are provided with individual face cloths and hand towels which they use with some support from the childminder. Children begin to learn how to keep themselves healthy through gentle reminders, such as covering their mouth when coughing and disposing of used tissues appropriately. An effective sick child policy ensures the children's medical needs are well met and they are cared for appropriately if they are ill.

Children benefit from a wide variety of outdoor activities, such as trips to local animal parks and nature walks. The fully enclosed rear garden provides opportunities for children of all ages and abilities to develop their large and fine motor control as they ride bikes, use the slide and swings and play ball games. Regular visits to nearby playgrounds allows children to use larger equipment and to further encourage physical development.

Children enjoy a healthy diet. The childminder discusses children's individual dietary needs with parents and is aware of children's preferences, likes and dislikes. Meals and snacks provided take account of these individual preferences whilst providing a nutritious and balanced diet. For example, children enjoy bananas, crackers, cheese on toast and home cooked meals, such as cottage pie or tuna pasta bake. Children are provided with drinks from individual beakers at snack time, although they do not have independent access to drinks before this. Children begin to develop an understanding of healthy eating through discussions with the childminder and occasional visits to the farm shop where they buy fruits to enjoy later for snack.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well maintained environment where risks are identified and minimised allowing children to move around safely, freely and independently. The childminder uses appropriate safety equipment, such as safety gates, to ensure that younger children have freedom to move around the premises but ensures their safety is maintained at all times.

Children are provided with a quiet area to rest or sleep in a buggy or rocker chair. The childminder discusses children's sleep routines with parents and meets individual requirements when possible.

Most resources and toys are stored at a low level within the lounge area to allow independence when young children are selecting what to play with. Older children who attend during school holidays can freely select activities which are appropriate to their age and level of development. These resources are stored out of direct access to younger children.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe on the premises, for example, fire drills are carried out regularly so that children know what to do in the case of an emergency. While out of the house on walks the childminder talks to children about road safety and stranger danger. Children

are kept safe from harm through the childminder's understanding of child protection procedures in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met through a wide selection of varied and interesting activities. The childminder considers each child's age and level of development when planning the week's activities and outings. During their time at the house, children have the free choice of a wide selection of toys and resources to include role play, arts and crafts, sensory toys and outdoor play. Planned activities include baking, music time and extended role play activities, such as washing doll's clothes and hanging them out to dry.

The childminder provides interesting visits within the local area on a regular basis to ensure that children remain interested and motivated in their learning. Children develop their knowledge of science and nature during their outings and within daily play activities. For example, colourful windmills help children to understand about wind power and playing in puddles helps children to learn about reflections.

The childminder plans activities around a particular theme, for example, seasons of the year, numbers and colours. During the theme of 'on safari' children take part in art and craft activities to make a variety of animals which are displayed within the home. The childminder also linked this with a visit to an animal park and children are able to recognise a variety of animals from pictures displayed and have fun making matching animal noises.

Children develop confidence and self-esteem because the childminder praises them for their efforts and children show a sense of pride at their achievements. For example, they enjoy pointing out the art work they have made and show their finished crafts to other children and adults. The childminder collects photographs and examples of children's achievements which are displayed in individual folders to be shared with parents.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals and their needs are well met. Children show care and concern for each other and play together harmoniously. Older children show a great deal of patience and understanding towards younger children and encourage them to take part in interactive play, such as rolling and passing soft balls to each other.

An effective behaviour management system using praise and encouragement ensures that children behave very well. Gentle reminders from the childminder support children when learning to share resources and take turns when playing games. Children learn about appropriate behaviour because the childminder reminds them of the rules and boundaries and distracts younger children effectively if disagreements over a toy begin.

Children are supervised well, allowing them the freedom to develop independence but ensuring their safety and well-being at all times. The childminder offers appropriate support to children

depending on their age and level of development. For example, younger children are lifted up to look at work displayed at a higher level and are assisted as they develop confidence at moving around independently.

Children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others is developed through a selection of activities and resources to promote a positive view of the wider world. For example, children have access to books, dolls and other resources which reflect positive images of diversity. The childminder provides some planned activities to help children learn about a variety of cultural and religious celebrations, such as Chinese New Year, Divali and Christmas.

Effective partnerships with parents enhances the care provided to children. Daily verbal exchanges keep parents informed of their child's day. Parents of babies benefit from written information daily on all aspects of their babies day. Each child has a record of their progress which is regularly updated with photos 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 develop good relationships with the childminder and other children and younger children are provided with opportunities for hugs and snuggling in time.

Children's welfare, care and learning are promoted through effective policies and procedures and by ensuring that adult-child ratios are always met. Appropriate records are maintained accurately and confidentiality is ensured. Space is managed well and resources are suitably organised because the childminder has a sound knowledge and understanding of childcare.

By attending training and personal development courses when possible, such as a Child Protection course, the childminder ensures that children are kept safe from harm. The childminder keeps up to date with any changes within childcare through regular contact with the local childminding groups.

Parents are kept informed of their children's progress and details about the provision. They are encouraged to share comments and concerns with the childminder. This contributes to continuity in the children's care.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was recommended to obtain written parental permission for emergency medical treatment or advice. This has been obtained for all minded children.

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

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 that children have independent access to drinks at all times.

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