



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	302753
Inspection date	28 July 2006
Inspector	Karen Cockings
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 satisfactory. 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 1994. She lives with her husband, two adult daughters and son, aged nine years, in a small town near Barnsley. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding and the upstairs bathroom. One of the bedrooms is available to accommodate a sleeping child during the daytime or for older children using the computer. There is a fully enclosed area at the rear of the house for outdoor play.

The family has a dog and a cat.

The childminder is registered to care for six children at any one time and currently minds two pre-school children and five children of school age. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and comfortable environment, where the childminder maintains good standards of hygiene to help keep children healthy. She takes suitable precautions to protect children from health risks posed by contact with the family's pets and cleans toys and equipment regularly. Children develop a good awareness of the importance of personal hygiene, confidently explaining how they wash their hands after using the toilet and before handling any foods. The childminder ensures that parents understand her policy with regard to the care of sick children, in order to protect them from the risks of infection.

Children enjoy a healthy, balanced diet, which includes a varied range of fruit and vegetables. They are actively involved in food preparation, such as helping to bake cakes and cookies to take with them on a camping holiday. Children of differing ages all take part at their own level. For example, older children weigh out ingredients and grease the cake tins, while the younger ones enjoy stirring up the mixture ready for baking. They also take responsibility for washing dishes afterwards and older children sometimes like to plan and prepare a full meal for the others. These activities help children to think about healthy eating patterns and encourage independence and self-help skills.

There are many opportunities for children to have fresh air and exercise, which contributes to their good health. They walk along parts of a local nature trail and visit nearby parks where they enjoy a game of football. They spend much of their time outdoors during the holidays and currently enjoy playing in the large paddling pool set up in the childminder's garden. Indoors, younger children have space to move around freely and play active games, such as hopscotch.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder takes suitable measures to ensure that children are kept safe, but are also able to develop some independence. For example, she keeps bleaches and cleansers out of children's reach and covers exposed electricity sockets. She is aware of potential hazards, both within the home and outdoors, making sure that she supervises children carefully and adapting the environment where necessary. She restricts access to the staircase for the younger children and places boxes of toys on the low wall in the garden to prevent them trying to walk along it. When she is cooking, she ensures that babies are secured in the high chair and kept occupied with a book or a toy. Most aspects of safety are addressed satisfactorily, although some potential hazards, such as the trailing cable in the hall, have not been fully considered.

Children learn how to use the environment and resources safely. They understand that they need to take care when playing with certain games that contain small items, especially when younger children are present. The childminder puts hot drinks out of children's reach, but also reminds them that there are hot liquids nearby. During outings children learn how to cross roads safely. They understand that they need to hold hands and think about when and where

it is safe to cross. These measures raise children's awareness of how to keep themselves safe, both indoors and when out and about in the local community.

Children enjoy a varied selection of resources, which are maintained in a safe and clean condition. The childminder stores them so that there is relatively easy access and she brings out a variety each day. She is fully aware of the potential dangers of some equipment, such as the large paddling pool, and she makes sure that children are closely supervised or items are only used when younger children are not present.

Children are suitably protected because the childminder has a satisfactory understanding of her responsibilities in this area. She has child protection guidance materials available for reference and is aware of possible indicators of abuse. This helps to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very settled, happy and confident in the childminder's care. They share a warm, friendly relationship with her, which contributes to their sense of security and belonging. A number of the children have been minded by her since they were babies and some continue to visit as teenagers. They feel very much at home and almost part of the family. They relate very well to each other and to children within the childminder's family. For example, they greet a later arrival warmly, welcoming her into the household and talking with her about what they have been doing.

Children enjoy a variety of activities and experiences to support their play and the development of new skills. They learn, for example, how to bake and to prepare meals. Younger children visit local children's groups regularly, which provides them with opportunities to mix with others and to enjoy a wider range of resources and activities. There is a good range of toys and play materials available to promote their development, including musical and interactive toys and equipment to support imaginative play. Older children have fun during the holidays, both indoors and outside. They are able to relax and make choices about their day.

The childminder has a sensitive approach towards helping new children to settle in with her. She ensures that she plans daily routines to flow with children's needs and spends time talking to parents to help her to understand about children's normal sleeping and feeding patterns. She has lots of experience of caring for babies, but is not yet familiar with the Birth to three matters framework, to support and enhance existing good practice.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are respected and valued as individuals and their particular needs are met well. For example, the childminder knows how a baby likes to sleep and she makes sure that she follows his normal sleep patterns. This provides continuity for him and helps him to feel secure and comfortable. Children show care and concern for others and learn about the wider society through outings and discussion. For example, they talk with the childminder about issues raised

by television programmes. There are some resources available reflecting positive images of different cultures, but few activities are specifically planned to raise children's awareness of diversity and this is an area for further development. However, the childminder makes efforts to include all children and to show them that they are valued. She and the other children learn some French words, for example, when she minds a child who speaks French at home.

The childminder has some experience of caring for children with additional needs. She is alert to any signs of developmental delay or illness, encouraging parents to seek medical advice if necessary. This helps to ensure that problems are identified and addressed at an early stage.

Children respond well to the childminder's consistent boundaries and their behaviour is good. They are polite, play together well and understand about sharing and taking turns. They develop a sense of responsibility as they help to care for family pets and take part in everyday household routines. The childminder aims to build children's self-esteem by giving encouragement and showing children that their achievements are valued. She explains to children when their behaviour is unacceptable or hurtful. As a result, children learn to consider the consequences of their actions and show care and concern for others.

Children benefit from the effective partnership the childminder has developed with parents. Most information is shared verbally with them on a daily basis. New parents have access to relevant materials, such as registration and insurance documentation and to previous inspection reports. There is limited written information about the service provided and children's progress, although parents indicate their satisfaction with the verbal feedback given. The childminder provides a flexible service to meet the individual needs of families.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel comfortable and at ease with the childminder and her family. She organises the environment so as to provide a child-centred space, both indoors and outside. The childminder plans her day to ensure that children enjoy varied play opportunities and are able to rest and sleep as necessary. For example, outings are usually planned for the morning so that younger children can have their sleep in the afternoon.

The childminder has limited time now to attend additional training, but she ensures that required training, such as first aid, is routinely updated. Required documentation, including attendance and medication records, are maintained appropriately.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to ensure that the staircase was made safe for use by minded children. She now uses a safety gate at the foot of the stairs when younger children are present. She also covers the lower area of the banister to prevent children climbing. She explains to children that they must take care when walking up and down the stairs and she

supervises younger children. These measures help to keep children safe when using the staircase, although the gaps between spindles remain a potential hazard.

The childminder was also asked to ensure that written parental consents were obtained for outings. She has now introduced a document which details a number of parental consents, including permission for children to be taken on outings. Parents are asked to sign the relevant statements and the document is then kept in children's individual folders. This ensures that the childminder has clear parental agreement to outings and to other aspects of the service provided.

In addition, the childminder agreed to make available to parents a written statement providing details of the procedures to be followed if they have a complaint. She has not yet devised a written procedure as such, but she has talked through with parents the steps they can follow if they have a concern. She encourages them to share any concerns with her so that she can take any necessary action to address them. The childminder has also provided them with details of how they can contact Ofsted if necessary and parents have signed a statement to this effect. These measures help to ensure that parents are aware of the role of Ofsted in dealing with any unresolved concerns.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 2004.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- consider ways of improving children's safety in the hall and staircase areas of the house
- continue to develop the provision for younger children, in line with the Birth to three matters framework
- continue to develop the planning and provision of resources and activities to raise children's awareness of diversity.

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