

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	401271
Inspection date	16 April 2007
Inspector	Elizabeth Patricia Edmond
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 has been registered since 1992. She lives with her husband and three children aged nine, 15 and 19 years. They live in a semi detached house on the outskirts of Scarborough. All local amenities are within walking distance of the property. The whole of the ground floor of the house is used for childminding; children only use the first floor to access the bathroom. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care up to six children under eight years. Currently there are nine children under eight years on roll who attend a variety of part time and full time sessions. Older children are also cared for. There are links with local schools and pre-school groups where children are taken and collected. Children are transported by car with parents' permission. The childminder is an active member of the local childminding group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a warm, very clean environment where they learn about the importance of personal hygiene. The children learn to wash their hands before eating and measures to prevent cross contamination in the bathroom are particularly good. However, the childminder sometimes steps in a little too soon to wipe the little ones hands before lunch. Whilst this maintains a good level of hygiene it does not fully promote their developing independence. The children develop a positive approach to being active in the outdoors. They have great fun digging on the beach and they develop their physical skills on the good range of equipment in the garden or on the various outings to parks and leisure amenities. This promotes a healthy lifestyle.

The childminder works well with parents on the meals provided. Although most parents prefer to provide meals the childminder's sample menus show how she can offer a good quality, healthy diet should this service be needed. Drinks are available at all times which means that the children do not become dehydrated as they play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children can play freely and safely in the homely childminding accommodation. This is due to the childminder's very professional approach to identifying and minimising risk to the children. Her clear risk assessment shows that she sees safety as a high priority. Due to the clear explanations offered by the childminder, the children learn to keep themselves safe. For example, they have a clear understanding about how to use the screwdriver carefully to mend the toy car and they confidently confirm that they always hold the childminder's hand when they are out. This approach means that they are kept safe without their play and learning being inhibited.

The children choose freely from a very good range of play equipment, indoors and out, which is in very good, safe condition. They also use the good quality domestic furniture freely for their rest and play. The children are protected and their well-being safeguarded. This is because the childminder is vigilant in keeping her child protection training up to date and she files all information carefully for advice should she need it. There is a clear child protection policy in place which is shared with parents at the outset of the care arrangements.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are happy and settled and they enjoy their time in the childminder's care; they develop positive relationships with her and her family. The younger ones snuggle in with the childminder for a cuddle as they become tired and they rush to play with her husband as he comes in from work. The arrangement of the indoor and outdoor accommodation means that children of all age-groups can find their own space to play or rest according to their individual needs and wishes. For example, the older children enjoy chilling out in the conservatory after school and the younger ones find a quieter space in the lounge. The easy access to the garden provides further choices for the children.

The accessible arrangement of the resources and the interesting pictures at child height provide a stimulating environment where children are motivated to explore. The young children happily help themselves from the play equipment in the low level storage units and the childminder makes a point of arranging a good variety in the lounge on the floor so that even the youngest can reach. They busy themselves searching through the boxes looking for their favourite toys. In addition to the range of toys, the childminder has a very good understanding of how children can be very creative with household items. The older children enjoy making dens with the patio furniture and she is putting together treasure basket items to stimulate the new babies' intellectual development.

The children develop their communication skills to a good level. This is because the childminder actively engages the children in conversation, offers additional vocabulary so that they can talk about their play and she gives the young children time to respond. The children enjoy books and stories and the younger ones snuggle in for a story with the childminder when they have found their favourite book. The childminder skilfully uses the impromptu delivery of a leaflet to interest the young children in printed material; regular visits to the library further encourage the children's interest.

The childminder uses conversational questioning techniques very well to help the young children to think about what the characters might be saying or to speculate how a particular toy will open. This is very effective in supporting their intellectual capabilities. She uses this approach successfully to aid the young children's mathematical development. For example, she casually enquires how many sandwiches are left or how many wheels are needed for the cars. Consequently the children count very well. Her developing understanding of how young children learn through working things out for themselves also enhances their development.

The children learn about their immediate surroundings and wider environment through the regular outings to the beach, local parks and farms. They have great fun on the beach with the childminding group and they enjoy looking at the photographs of themselves and their friends with the goats at the farm or feeding the ducks and geese at the park.

The children express their ideas as they draw and colour their own pictures; the younger children enjoy collage work. In good weather the garden is well used so that the children can initiate and extend their own play and learning. They enjoy the additional role-play space and they like to play with water or plant seeds and flowers.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder gets to know the children very well. She talks very confidently about their individual medical needs and the new babies' care routines and she talks fondly about their individual personalities. This helps them to feel valued and respected as individuals and has positive impact on their behaviour. The children are relaxed, confident and behave very well. Methods to manage unwanted yet expected behaviour are appropriate and are set out clearly for parents in the behaviour management policy.

The children demonstrate their acceptance of diversity in the wider community by happily choosing from a good range of equipment showing positive images of others; fun activities based around cultural or religious festivals, such as Christmas, Divali or the Chinese New Year ensure that children positively enjoy diversity.

The childminder works very well with parents. All necessary registration information is clearly displayed, a range of written policies inform parents of all aspects of the care and all contractual agreements are comprehensive and adhered to. Detailed liaison with parents about their wishes and preferences and about the children's care routines further promotes the positive relationships and the settled environment. A daily diary for the youngest children provides a clear picture of how the children have spent their day and gives details about their personal care routines. The childminder surveys parents about the service provided so that any matters can be addressed in a friendly yet professional way. The parents express their overwhelming support for the childminder, mentioning her exceptionally professional approach and the range of outings as being particularly good.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The children benefit from the childminder's excellent approach to her professional development. She attends a broad range of training and talks enthusiastically about how she uses it to benefit the children's care and development. Her most recent training on developing a professional approach means that she is exceptionally well organised in all aspects of her work. Similarly, she correctly identifies when particular training could be useful and arranges this accordingly. Strong links with the local childminding group further enhance all aspects of the children's care and development. For example, joint outings with other childminders means that the children confidently develop social skills with a wider circle of peers, they take part in an additional range of outings and activities and they develop trusting relationships with other childminders with whom the childminder has emergency cover arrangements.

The childminder organises her daily routines and outings very effectively around the needs of all the children. She makes a point of arranging taster days for new babies on quieter days and makes older children feel welcome into their teenage years. This provides the children with a high level of continuity; this in turn helps all the children to develop a strong sense of trust and feel secure.

All aspects of the childminder's documentation are exceptionally well organised. Written information for parents is clear, comprehensive and attractively presented. Records, for example, of attendance, accidents and medication are very clear and signed by parents where appropriate. Similarly, a range of advice, guidance and training materials on all aspects of childcare and development is effectively organised and stored should she or parents need help with issues, such as behaviour management, child health, or how children learn. 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, four recommendations were raised. The childminder was asked to continue to develop knowledge and understanding of caring for children with special needs and to further develop resources to promote cultural, religious, ethnic and disability awareness. The childminder now provides a good range of resources and activities which promote equality of opportunity which the children access freely and she has attended several training courses on caring for children's individual needs.

It was also suggested that she improve medicine procedure to include parents' signature to acknowledge administration of medicine and practice and record the emergency evacuation procedures. The childminder's records are now exceptionally clear and signed by parents.

Records also show clearly that the emergency evacuation procedures are now practised regularly with all children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 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):

- further develop the young children's independence in relation to their personal hygiene

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