



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY258097
Inspection date	16 November 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 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 2003. She lives with her husband and three children, aged 14, 10 and four years in a village near Barnsley, South Yorkshire. The house is close to local schools, shops and other amenities. The ground floor rooms of the house are used for childminding and the bathroom on the first floor. There is an enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The family has tropical fish which are kept in an aquarium in the sitting room.

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

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and has completed their quality assurance scheme, Quality First.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment, where the childminder promotes good standards of hygiene. She encourages children to follow safe hygiene practice and teaches them about the importance of hand washing. Older children know that they need to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating, in order to get rid of any germs. Notices about this are posted above the sink as a reminder and a step is provided to help younger children to manage this independently. Wipes are also readily available. The childminder protects children from the spread of infection by ensuring that parents fully understand her policy with regard to the care of sick children.

There are regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise, which contribute to children's overall good health. They often visit a local centre where there is a safe and interesting outdoor play area. They also go for walks and outings to nearby parks. During the school holidays, the childminder plans visits further afield. At the childminder's home, there is suitable equipment available, such as see-saw, trampoline and wheeled toys to encourage children to be active and extend their physical skills.

The childminder promotes healthy eating patterns by providing a well balanced snack menu, which includes fresh and dried fruit, toast and yoghurt. She plans food-related topics, such as a vegetable week when children have opportunities to see and taste different chopped vegetables. Parents send packed lunches for their children but the childminder is willing to provide a cooked tea for children who are present at that time of the day. She offers support to mothers who are still breastfeeding their children by letting them know how she can assist them to continue with this as long as they wish. Children are involved in baking and food preparation activities, which develop independence and self-help skills.

The childminder ensures that relevant training, such as first aid and food hygiene, is routinely updated. She maintains all required records in relation to children's health, but has overlooked the need for written permission to seek emergency treatment. However, she has other parental consents in place, to ensure that there are clear agreements about children's care.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder gives high priority to children's safety, taking effective measures to minimise potential hazards. For example, she has safety gates in place to restrict unsupervised access to the kitchen and stairs. An alarm has been fitted to the conservatory doors so that she can easily hear if the door is being opened. Hazardous substances are stored out of children's reach. Children are able to move around the ground floor rooms safely because the childminder identifies potential dangers and takes appropriate action. She is able to oversee children's activity quite easily and recognises the importance of careful supervision.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe and to use resources properly to avoid injury. For example, the childminder explains that it would be better for children to play with the toy cars on the floor rather than at the table, in case they fall off their stools. During outings, children learn that they have to walk sensibly and hold hands, especially near busy roads. She has reins and wrist straps if needed and ensures that children are suitably restrained and use appropriate seating when travelling by car. She is careful also to teach children about stranger danger, so that they learn how to protect themselves. Fire drills are practised regularly with children and a record is kept. Children help to test the batteries on the smoke alarms so they begin to develop an awareness of fire safety and the procedures to be followed.

Children enjoy a varied range of toys and play materials, which are stored in boxes and on shelving in the conservatory. Many resources can be accessed independently as they are at child height. The childminder also makes good use of local loan schemes in order to extend the variety she is able to offer and to support planned topics.

Children are well protected because the childminder has a good understanding of her responsibilities in this area. She ensures that she has guidance materials readily available for reference should she have any concerns. She checks the identity of any unexpected visitors to the household and is vigilant about the arrangements for the collection of children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the childminder's care. She talks and listens to them as they play, which helps them to feel secure and builds their confidence. She gets to know children well and is sensitive to their feelings. For example, she knows which children may be a little wary if visitors are present and she gives reassurance. She uses her observations of children's play and discussions with parents to find out about children's particular interests so she can plan suitable outings and events.

Children enjoy a varied range of activities to support their play and learning. They like to draw and paint, do jigsaws and play imaginatively with small world toys. The childminder shares books and stories with them and she takes them to story sessions at a nearby centre. As the children particularly enjoy creative play she has enrolled for a 'Messy monkeys' course, where both she and the children will be able to do creative activities together. She tries to find out as much as possible about events that are happening locally so that she can broaden children's experiences.

Children show interest in what they do, learning new skills as they play. For example, they begin to identify colours and shapes and learn to count as they play with building bricks and cars. Children's early communication skills are well supported as they talk to the childminder on a toy telephone and look at books with her, talking about what they see. The childminder is becoming familiar with guidance materials about the Foundation Stage and with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. She is developing planning and observation systems linked with them in order to help children to make progress.

Children build positive relationships with each other as they play. They begin to understand about sharing as they take turns to use resources and to take part in activities. They have fun together and enjoy each other's company.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel a sense of belonging at the setting, where they see their work on display and know that they are valued. They enjoy looking through a small book, 'My friends', which the childminder has made with photographs of all the children attending. This helps them to feel that they are an important part of a friendship network. The childminder finds out about their individual needs and interests and plans activities accordingly. Children have access to some resources reflecting positive images of diversity and the childminder knows where to borrow others. She has more limited experience of caring for children who have learning difficulties and identifies this as an area for further development.

Children behave well, in response to the childminder's positive approach. She agrees house rules with children but phrases them positively and reminds children of them if there are difficulties. For example, children know that they should be kind to each other and take care of toys. They are taught to share and to take turns as they play. The childminder uses effective strategies to encourage children to behave well and to consider the feelings of others. They develop a sense of responsibility as they are involved in activities, such as helping to tidy away toys and to feed the tropical fish. Their confidence grows because the childminder gives lots of encouragement and acknowledges their achievements.

The childminder works successfully with parents in order to meet children's needs. She shares information effectively with them, both verbally and in writing. There is a helpful, well presented welcome file for new parents and a comprehensive collection of written policies is shared with them. Daily care sheets are given to the parents of younger children attending so that they are kept well informed about significant events. Children have their own books with photographs, notes and examples of their work. These provide a personal record of children's involvement and achievements during their time with the childminder.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children feel comfortable and at home in the well organised setting. Space and resources are used effectively to ensure that children can have some independence and can make choices about their play. The childminder ensures that the day's activities include time for rest as well as more active play. She plans a good variety of experiences for children to support their learning and to help them to make progress.

The childminder is strongly committed to her own professional development and to the continuous improvement of her service. She has attended a wide range of additional training and is working towards a National Vocational Qualification to Level 3. She has successfully

completed a quality assurance scheme. This ensures that she keeps up to date with current childcare issues and is constantly evaluating and developing her practice.

Record keeping is maintained well. There are written policies and procedures to cover most areas of practice. These are shared with parents so that they are well informed about the service offered. She presents information effectively and manages her service to promote children's safety and well-being.

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 agreed to develop her knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and local guidance. She has completed a wide range of additional training, some of which has included child protection issues and responsibilities. She has developed a clear statement which is shared with parents. She has copies of local guidance about child protection procedures as well as other reference materials. This helps to safeguard children's welfare by ensuring that she fully understands her responsibilities and knows what steps to take if she has concerns.

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):

- review parental consents to ensure that they include written permission for seeking emergency treatment
- continue to develop knowledge and awareness of equal opportunities issues, with particular regard to special educational needs.

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