



Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY262846 |
| Inspection date | 01 December 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 their two sons, aged 13 and seven years, in the Chapeltown area of Sheffield. The house is within walking distance of local schools, shops and other amenities. The ground floor rooms of the house are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The family has a dog and two guinea pigs.

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

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and of a local childminder group.

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 effective measures are taken to promote their good health and minimise the risks of infection. For example, the childminder ensures that she uses gloves when changing nappies and wipes the changing mat with anti-bacterial spray after use. She cleans toys and equipment regularly. Children learn about the importance of good hygiene practice. They have their own toiletry bags in the bathroom and are reminded about hand washing before meals and after using the toilet. The childminder shares her written policy about the care of sick children with parents, so that they understand about the need to make alternative arrangements if children are ill.

Healthy eating patterns are promoted. The childminder provides a good variety of fresh foods, including a range of fresh fruit and vegetables. She uses the internet to research new ideas for healthy recipes and for special diets. Children are involved in food preparation activities, which encourages them to try new foods and develops their independence. For example, they help to make pizzas and have fun choosing their favourite toppings.

There are many opportunities for children to enjoy physical activity, which contribute to their overall good health. They often go out for walks and only tend to travel by car to school if it is raining heavily. Regular visits are planned to indoor play centres and children have access to a wide range of equipment in the garden, including a climbing frame, trampoline, wheeled toys and skipping ropes. Babies gain confidence in themselves as they practise new skills, such as rolling over and reaching out to grasp and explore the toys around them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder places high priority on children's safety and takes steps to minimise risks. For example, she makes sure that hazardous substances are kept out of children's reach and uses safety gates to restrict access to potentially dangerous areas, such as the kitchen and stair case. Fire safety is addressed well. The written and pictorial emergency evacuation procedures are clearly displayed and are practised with children. A system for recording these and for noting the checking of first aid equipment has been developed, to ensure that routines are consistently followed.

Children learn how to use the environment and equipment safely. The childminder gathers together pictures for them to colour and paint, related to different safety issues around the home and outside. These provide an enjoyable creative activity while also prompting discussion about what they need to do to keep themselves safe. During outings they learn about crossing roads safely and the childminder is careful to ensure that they are properly restrained when travelling by car.

Children have access to a varied range of toys and play materials, which are stored in low-level boxes and shelving so that they can make their own choices, within safe limits. Resources and equipment are regularly checked to ensure that they are safe and suitable for children's use.

The childminder has attended child protection training to improve her knowledge and awareness of this aspect of her work. She attaches great importance to protecting children and has telephone numbers and guidance materials available should she have any concerns. She feels that more training in this area would make her more confident to deal with any issues if they were to arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the childminder's care. She is very warm and responsive to them, giving them cuddles and chatting to them as they play. She is sensitive to children's individual needs, recognising when children need to sleep or if they are a little wary of strangers. She reassures them by staying close, speaking gently and by physical contact. This helps them to feel secure and builds their confidence.

Babies and toddlers enjoy exploring their environment. The childminder provides them with lots of interesting resources and household items, such as shells, wooden spoons and brushes. They use all their senses as they handle and investigate them. They carefully stir a large container full of pasta and spoon it into dishes, developing their hand-eye coordination. Children like to play imaginatively with large boxes, which become boats and dens. The childminder plans a varied range of activities for children each week, which includes regular outings into the local community. They visit the library and the market and attend childminder groups with her, where they are able to meet other children and their carers. Visits to indoor play centres have helped shyer children to gain confidence as they have the freedom to try out new experiences at their own pace.

The childminder has attended 'Birth to three matters' and Foundation Stage training, which she uses effectively to enhance the play experiences she offers to children. They build positive relationships with her and with each other. The childminder talks and listens to children, showing them that they are valued and developing their language skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder works closely with parents to ensure that she meets children's individual needs and provides care in accordance with parents' wishes. For example, she finds out about any health needs and ensures that she carefully implements the special requirements of particular children. Information about the provision is shared effectively with new parents. The welcome pack includes information about the childminder and copies of her policies, so that parents have a good understanding of what she offers. She provides a flexible, supportive service and references from parents suggest that they have been very satisfied and appreciative of the care

she gives. There is a system in place for dealing with and recording any concerns they may have.

Children become aware of the diversity in society through access to a varied range of books and toys and through regular outings into the local community. The childminder aims to give children a broad outlook and she makes good use of opportunities to encourage positive attitudes. For example, she encourages boys and girls to join in with activities, such as skipping, by presenting it in a way that is appealing to all. She seeks out relevant guidance to help her to provide an inclusive service and identifies the promotion of equal opportunities as an area for further development.

Children behave well and begin to understand the needs and feelings of others. They learn to share and to take turns as they play and house rules are positively worded. Children develop confidence and self-esteem because the childminder gives meaningful praise and acknowledges their achievements. For example, they have a 'champions chart' with stickers for being kind to others and for helping. They develop a sense of responsibility as they help to tidy toys away and show understanding of the needs of younger children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder is strongly committed to the continuous improvement of her service and to her own professional development. She attends additional relevant training, using what she learns to enhance her practice. For example, she is providing more exploratory play for babies and toddlers, partly as a result of attending the 'Birth to three matters' training and becoming familiar with the framework. She also develops good links with other local childminders so that expertise can be shared. She constantly evaluates her practice to identify areas for improvement and makes good use of guidance and advice from the local authority.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and well organised environment, where they have space to play freely and easy access to a good range of interesting resources. The childminder keeps her numbers of pre-school children low so that she is able to give them the attention and support they need. Children's happiness and welfare are her priorities.

The childminder has well maintained record keeping systems and ensures that all documentation is locked away securely. There are written policies and procedures in place to support practice and promote children's health, 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 conduct routine risk assessments in the home and develop a fire safety evacuation plan to practise with children. She also agreed to consider ways of extending the range of resources and activities to promote children's awareness of diversity. In addition it was recommended that she ensure full details are included in medication records.

The childminder has taken positive steps to address each of these recommendations, in order to improve the outcomes for children. She sought out information about risk assessments and considered potential hazards particularly in relation to the use of rooms on the first floor. She now uses the ground floor rooms only and has installed a downstairs toilet so that there is no necessity for minded children to access the upper areas of the house. This means that she is better able to supervise children and maintain their safety. Fire safety has also been carefully considered. Written and pictorial evacuation plans are displayed and procedures are routinely practised with children. A recording system has been introduced to ensure that drills are not overlooked.

The childminder has extended the range of resources to promote children's awareness of diversity. She now has books, dolls, dressing up clothes and small world toys reflecting positive images of different cultures and needs. She knows where to access relevant guidance materials and resources, such as books and calendars about different faiths and festivals. She uses these materials to help her to plan suitable activities to develop children's understanding of differences.

Records of any medication administered are now clearly maintained using National Childminding Association record books. These are shared with parents and their signatures obtained to acknowledge the entry. This helps to safeguard children's welfare by ensuring that an accurate record is kept of medicines given to 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):

- continue to develop knowledge and awareness of how to promote equal opportunities within the setting.

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