



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	311016
Inspection date	19 January 2007
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 1997. She lives with her two sons in a village near Holmfirth, West Yorkshire. The ground floor rooms are used for childminding and the bathroom on the first floor. There is a garden for outdoor play.

The family has a cat and guinea pig.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding 10 children on a regular basis, some of whom are over eight years. Children attend for a variety of sessions and all are of school age.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and she also works at a local playgroup. She has a level 3 early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and comfortable home, where the childminder follows good hygiene practice to protect them from the risk of infection. For example, she wears disposable gloves when preparing children's snacks and ensures that work surfaces are clean. She encourages children with hand washing routines before they eat and after using the toilet. Paper towels are now provided for them, so that several children are not sharing the same hand towel. The childminder also protects children from the spread of infection by ensuring that her policy with regard to the care of sick children is shared with parents. They then understand that alternative arrangements must be made if their child has an infectious illness.

Children's individual dietary needs are met because the childminder discusses requirements with parents and keeps a record for reference. She provides a selection of healthy snacks, which include sandwiches and fresh fruit. A more substantial snack may be offered if children need to stay later in the evening. Children eat at their own pace and food is covered in case they wish to return to it later. They sit together sociably at meal times.

Children have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They always walk to and from school, taking a route through the woods. They play football and other games outside in the garden and have sufficient space to move around freely indoors. As children only attend for a relatively short time after school and are collected by their parents at different times, it is not possible to plan outings for them away from the premises.

The childminder ensures that first aid training is kept up to date and has a first aid kit readily available. Any accidents are recorded and a copy of the record given to parents. This ensures that parents are kept informed of significant incidents affecting their child's welfare.

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 effective measures to maintain a safe environment for them. For example, she ensures that the fire is guarded, electricity sockets covered and that medicines and tablets are out of children's reach. She has a good awareness of the potential hazards when escorting children home from school and organises this well to minimise risks. She avoids taking children along the narrow roads near her home and uses the woodland path instead, which is well used by other adults. Children are familiar with routines and know that they have to follow agreed rules during the walk. They stay together on the path with the eldest child in front and the childminder at the rear.

Children's safety in the event of a fire or other emergency is addressed well. Suitable fire appliances are in place and emergency evacuation procedures are discussed and practised with children. The childminder considers welfare issues when planning drills, such as what to do in winter time as children do not wear their shoes indoors. She gives reassurances to younger children who may be a little anxious.

Children have access to a varied range of age-appropriate toys and play materials. They are stored in the under stairs cupboard and the childminder brings out a selection for them each day. She rotates them to ensure variety although children are confident to ask for their particular favourites. She regularly checks toys for safety and cleanliness, discarding any that are damaged.

The childminder has a good understanding of her responsibilities with regard to child protection. She has attended some additional training and has guidance materials readily available should she have any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the childminder's care. Many have been attending for a number of years, so are relaxed and comfortable in the setting. They make their own choices about their play although the childminder knows that creative activities are a general favourite and she sets out a varied selection of craft materials for them. They like to draw and to make collage pictures and masks. Activities are planned around seasonal events, such as making pumpkin lanterns at Halloween and home-made decorations at Christmas. The childminder keeps an occasional diary in which she notes activities and resources children have particularly enjoyed. She also brings home ideas from other settings and from training she has attended.

Children like to choose from the selection of board games and happily engage the childminder in their play. She makes sure activities are fun but uses opportunities as they arise to reinforce and extend learning, such as helping a younger child to count the number of skittles in their game and to match patterns. Children enjoy playing imaginatively together with resources, such as the doctor's set, while others feel sufficiently comfortable just to watch the television if they wish. Some children like to have books and stories read to them.

Children develop warm relationships with the childminder and with each other. There is friendly conversation with other adults in the household. Some children choose to visit even when they are not officially being minded, in order to play with friends and join in activities. They behave well and show consideration for the needs and feelings of others.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children receive support and encouragement as they play, which builds confidence and self-esteem. The childminder shows interest in what they do and warmly acknowledges their achievements when they show her their work. Children play cooperatively together and are encouraged to think about the needs of others. For example, they accept that younger children may want a short time watching their own television programmes. Children learn to share and to take turns in their games. They develop a sense of responsibility for each other, for example, as older children watch out for the safety of younger ones during the walk from school.

There are some resources available which help to raise children's awareness of other cultures and different needs. The childminder sometimes plans activities to extend topics children have been covering at school and craft projects are often linked to traditional celebrations.

The childminder builds friendly relationships with parents and works with them to understand children's needs and interests. She ensures that agreements are clearly recorded and has some written policies, which are made available to parents. They are encouraged to share any concerns with her and feel comfortable to do so. However, the procedures for dealing with complaints are not fully up to date and some significant policies, such as behaviour management, are shared only verbally.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder recognises the value of training and takes advantage of opportunities to develop her skills and knowledge. For example, she has completed a level 3 early years qualification and has attended a range of additional training courses. She works during the day at a local playgroup, which keeps her up to date with childcare issues and new ideas.

Children feel at home at the setting, where space and resources are organised well to provide a variety of play experiences for them. The childminder takes care to ensure that the numbers of children she cares for are manageable. She gives careful thought to how she can escort groups of children from school safely.

All required documentation is in place and stored accessibly. The childminder has developed a number of written policies to support her practice, although in some instances, they are in need of review and updating.

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, it was recommended that the childminder further develop resources to incorporate positive images of disability and to portray non-stereotypical roles. The range of books and toys has since been extended to reflect diversity within society. For example, there are books, dolls and card games which show children from different cultures and with disabilities. Access to such resources helps to raise children's awareness of diversity.

The childminder also agreed to review paperwork related to parental consents, particularly for permission to seek emergency treatment. Parents are now asked to add their signature to the registration form to indicate that they are willing for the childminder to seek medical help in an emergency situation. This ensures that clear agreements are made regarding action to be taken to safeguard children's welfare.

It was also recommended that the childminder review the use of the communal towel in the bathroom. She now provides paper towels in both the bathroom and the kitchen for children to use after hand washing. This helps to prevent the spread of infection.

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 the information about complaints procedures to ensure that it reflects current regulations and correct details about the regulator
- continue to develop the information available for parents about the service.

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