

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	300161
Inspection date	05 June 2007
Inspector	Joanne Susan Boon
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 outstanding. 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 1996. She lives with husband and two children aged 10 and 12 years in a house in the Crookes area of Sheffield. Local schools, parks and transport systems are all within walking distance. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding. The bathroom and a bedroom are located upstairs. She is registered to care for six children and is currently caring for three. An enclosed garden is available to the rear of the property. Only term time care is available. The childminder has many early years qualifications and is currently in the final year of her BA Early Childhood Studies. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children relish activities and outings in the fresh air everyday. The childminder places great emphasis on daily physical exercise, such as walking with the children to and from the park and local shops, to promote a healthy and enriching lifestyle. Children have constant access to an imaginative and stimulating range of play equipment in the childminder's home and garden.

The childminder plans extensive activities to develop children's curiosity and encourages them to try out new skills.

Children are protected from infection by the childminder's clear awareness of health and hygiene guidelines. Parents are clearly informed by detailed policies that sick children cannot be cared for in most situations. Additional information leaflets are available to parents on a wide range of childhood ailments. Children's understanding of the importance of good hygiene is promoted in their everyday routines, for example, they chat about why they must have clean hands before they eat. To encourage self-care the children are provided with bowls of soapy water and clean towels when playing both indoors and out. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate which enables her to deal with any accidents or emergencies. This helps her to protect children effectively. She has comprehensive written agreements with parents regarding administration of medication and all accidents are recorded appropriately.

The childminder is very well-informed about children's individual dietary needs and can cater for special requirements. She is committed to offering nutritious and home cooked meals and ensures that children can choose from a range of healthy snacks during the day, for example, fruit and milk are always available. The childminder actively promotes healthy eating. She regularly includes the children in menu planning and selecting fruit and vegetables from the local greengrocers. Children are involved in growing their own vegetables and often help to prepare meals. All children have opportunities to bake regularly and enjoy making foods, such as soup and rice pudding. She talks with children about healthy choices and encourages children to try new foods by offering vegetables, salad and fruit with each meal. Drinks are always available for children to access independently or on request, for example, on the day of inspection, a stainless steel tea pot was filled with cold drinking water and set on a tray in the garden with several different styles of drinking vessel, for children to help themselves.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a safe, welcoming and nurturing home where their needs are put first. The childminder organises space and resources extremely well to reduce potential hazards. She places the highest priority on safe supervision and assesses risks effectively to promote children's safety and enjoyment. For example, she has recently developed a 'fire practice bag' that hangs in the kitchen. It contains instructions, contact details for all children and a knotted rope. On suspecting a fire the children are collected together by the childminder, the older ones make a 'crocodile' with the rope and everyone makes their way to the muster point in a neighbour's garden. Children are all familiar with the emergency evacuation procedure as they practise it regularly. The childminder carefully considers the age range present when planning different activities. Children use a broad range of exceptionally high quality resources and equipment, which meet safety standards, helping them to enjoy a wide variety of stimulating experiences safely.

The entire environment is rich with natural resources that spark the imaginations of young children. They use the whole environment freely and older children can visit the toilet independently. Their awareness of risk and safety is raised in everyday activities. They learn to stay beside the childminder when they are out walking and to concentrate and hold onto the buggy when crossing the road together. The childminder alerts children to risks, for example, they know not to use the door out of the playroom as the step down is difficult to negotiate when engrossed in play. Their risk of accidents is minimised by consistently reinforced safety rules.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by the childminder's in depth understanding of her responsibilities within child protection procedures. She has attended extensive training as part of her Early Years degree course. This has improved her existing knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, increasing her confidence in her own ability to protect children and keep them safe. The childminder has developed extremely comprehensive written policies and procedures to support her practice and inform parents of her role. The policies include a guide for parents to the legislative framework and internet links to local and national Safeguarding information, including contact numbers for support and advice. Her willingness to share this information with parents ensures that the welfare of children in her care is given highest priority. The childminder clearly explains the requirements to keep a record of all accidents and existing injuries.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder offers a rich and stimulating environment where children are nurtured and cherished. Their wellbeing and sense of belonging to the setting are at the heart of the childminder's ethos. For example, photographs of all minded children are available throughout the house to provide a connection for children between their home and family and the setting. Children continuously develop confidence as the childminder talks to them and is extremely interested in what they say and do. The childminder sees her role as 'scaffolding' children's learning and strongly believes that children learn through their play experiences.

Children play a dynamic role within the setting. The childminder actively encourages children to instigate play and follow their own natural curiosity. For example, children find seeds scattered around the garden, having fallen from a variety of plants. These seeds are planted by the children in a range of differently sized containers and plant pots, using compost and garden tools stored in a large jam pan with lid, found in a corner of the garden. Children then wait, filled with anticipation to see if the seed grows and if so, what it grows into. The childminder has a keen interest in language development and aims to offer children many opportunities to practise their communication. Their language skills develop rapidly as they ask questions and describe what they are doing. The children love listening to stories, singing songs and making music. Children are able to choose from a diverse range of interesting books.

Children develop a strong sense of self-esteem. They are very happy and extremely settled in the childminder's care. Their behaviour is very good and is sensitively supported by the childminders calm manner. They begin to understand right from wrong, as they learn to share toys and take turns. The childminder has an excellent knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and uses this to inform her observations and share with parents.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's relationships with the childminder are extremely warm and affectionate. Daily routines are very relaxed and completely child-led. Children make their own decisions about activities they would like to do. They are able to access a vast range of interesting resources independently and plan and develop their own play. For example, children explore lots of different containers, filled with magical contents, such as knobbly fir cones, old wooden pegs and smooth pebbles. They are encouraged to make their own decisions and learn to manage their own needs. For example, a child leads us into the playhouse and shows us how to look after the 'babies'. She

picks up a doll, 'bebai, bebai', cuddles it, feeds it, lets us have a cuddle and puts it to bed to sleep, 'nigh, nigh'. Children confidently let the childminder know what they are going to do next and she responds warmly to their plans, 'you know how to look after that baby really well'.

Children learn to share and cooperate as they play. They are helped to feel good about themselves, as the childminder praises them and gives lots of warm encouragement. This reinforces caring behaviour, so that children learn to be kind and helpful to one another. They know that they must be gentle with each other and learn to say sorry if they have upset someone. The childminder aims to provide a rich and plentiful range of materials to maximise interest and imagination, and minimise conflict over specific objects by ensuring that there are always plenty of resources. She plans activities to enable everyone to be involved. The children are encouraged to help to keep the play area tidy by putting toys away when they have finished with them.

Children's awareness of their local community is raised well by daily outings. Children walk to the local shops, library, playgroups and visit the park. The childminder has many resources which reflect other cultures and abilities. She is aware of the importance of such experiences and is committed to raising children's awareness of difference and diversity. The childminder is interested in supporting families with additional needs and has done so in the past.

The childminder works in very close partnership with parents. All parents receive a wealth of detailed information within clearly written policies individual to the setting. Additional information available to parents includes a wide range of childcare and parenting reference books, leaflets regarding childhood ailments and internet links to useful websites. The childminder firmly believes that a close relationship between carer and parents fosters a nurturing environment for all children. Parents of children currently attending have completed questionnaires. All highly praise the care given to their children and consistently comment on the warmth and affection they receive. Each child has a written daily diary completed by the childminder; this is further supported by developmental observations, photographs and other representations of children's achievements. The childminder actively encourages parents to share any concerns and introduces them to her clearly written policy regarding complaints.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are very at home in the relaxed and inspiring environment. Their confidence and sense of belonging enables them to initiate their own play and relish their time in the childminder's care. Children's care is significantly enhanced by the childminder's exceptional organisation. Meticulous systems support her working practice and significantly enrich the children's care and wellbeing. The childminder pursues extensive training and development opportunities and is currently in the final year of her BA in Early Childhood Studies. She evaluates her own practice extremely well and is vastly generous in sharing her expertise.

Children are kept safe and their welfare is effectively safeguarded by the childminder's understanding and implementation of all the required procedures. She understands requirements with regard to reaching agreements with parents, so that their wishes are clearly understood. The childminder shares information daily with parents about children's activities and care needs, enabling consistency and continuity of care. The registration certificate is suitably displayed and parents are able to discuss their child's needs and individual care with the childminder at any time.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the childminder has updated and improved all of her written policies and documentation. These are now very comprehensive and contain all the required information and necessary written consents from parents.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

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