

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	300269
Inspection date	28 February 2008
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 satisfactory. 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 1994. She lives with her husband and 15 year old daughter in a suburb of Sheffield. The house is within walking distance of local schools, parks and other amenities. The ground floor rooms of the house are used for childminding and the bathroom and one bedroom on the first floor. There is an enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The family has a dog, rabbit, hamster and fish.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time. She currently minds three pre-school children and two children of school age.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a well balanced diet, which includes plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. They have a selection of fruit at snack time and there is lots of conversation about what they had for breakfast, their likes and dislikes. The childminder uses resources effectively to promote discussion about healthy foods. For example, the children play a shopping game with her, which prompts conversation about foods that are good for them and will help them to grow big and strong. They are also involved in food preparation and baking activities, such as making Christmas biscuits and kofta kebabs. The childminder uses a juicer to make fruit smoothies for them and they have regular drinks during the day. Where there are allergies or special dietary requirements, the childminder makes sure that she is well equipped to deal with them. For example, she attends training about the use of the epipen, in order to support children with nut allergies.

Daily outings are planned so that children are often out in the fresh air and having plenty of exercise. They tend to walk everywhere locally and enjoy visiting local parks where they develop physical skills and confidence as they play on climbing frames and slides. They also like to perform the actions to favourite songs and rhymes that they have learned at a local singing group. There is a decked area at the rear of the house where children play in fine weather.

Children's health needs are met well and they are suitably protected from the spread of infection. They are encouraged to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. The childminder follows safe hygiene practice herself, especially when preparing foods. She has a current first aid certificate and a written first aid procedure, which emphasises the importance of dealing appropriately with accidents. Records are kept of any injuries or medication administered. Children are able to sleep or enjoy quieter activity during the day. A travel cot is available for younger children, while older children like to snuggle up on the sofa with a blanket or comforter as they listen to favourite stories.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure and welcoming home, where the childminder takes appropriate measures to maintain a safe environment for them. For example, she keeps bleaches and cleansers out of children's reach and has safety gates in place on the stairs. The childminder adapts the use of rooms to meet children's needs and to suit weather conditions. The comfortable furniture in the living room is put into the conservatory in the summer months and the childminder arranges it so that children can move freely between the indoor and outdoor spaces. However, the portable heater in the conservatory is currently accessible to children, with the potential for children to burn themselves. Suitable fire safety appliances, including a fire blanket and smoke detectors, are in place to protect children from fire hazards.

Children enjoy a varied range of toys, books and play materials, many of which are stored at their height so that they can access them independently. The childminder ensures that toys are safe, clean and age appropriate. Children learn how to use their environment safely as they climb the stairs to the bathroom and carry toys in from the conservatory. During outings they learn about road safety and know that they hold hands and carefully look and listen for traffic.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as the childminder understands her responsibilities with regard to child protection. She has guidance materials readily available and has attended recent training to update her knowledge about the procedures to follow.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled in the childminder's care. They make positive relationships, relate well to her and to each other and have opportunities to further develop social skills when they attend local children's groups. The childminder plans daily activities for them, including visits to a song and rhyme session, to the library and to activities at the children's centre. Special outings are planned to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. For example, they visit the mail sorting office when they have written their letters to Santa, to find out what happens next. They also go to the recycling centre and are amazed by all that is thrown away. They help the childminder to prepare items for recycling.

Children engage well with the activities provided and become deeply absorbed in their play. They love dressing up and sharing favourite books and stories with the childminder. She makes good use of resources to extend children's learning and develop language skills. For example, during a shopping game they count the number of items they have in their trolley and talk together about what toppings they like on pizzas and about the texture and taste of their favourite cereals. She skilfully encourages them to recall previous experiences as they play, such as what songs they have been learning at the singing group.

Children develop a strong sense of self esteem within warm and trusting relationships. They begin to understand about the need to share and to consider the feelings of others. The childminder deals calmly with any minor disagreements, setting a good example for the children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children respond well to the childminder's calm and gentle manner. They learn to share and to consider the needs and feelings of others, because she explains why this is important and gives clear guidance. She uses games successfully to help them to understand about turn taking. The childminder acknowledges their achievements and gives praise and encouragement, which builds children's confidence.

Children's individual needs are met well. The childminder has a good understanding of how to promote an inclusive environment for all. She has attended sign language training and children enjoy using signing to accompany songs and rhymes. She considers children's needs when planning activities, such as using food labels to help children to identify items when out shopping, assisting those who may not be able to read or have English as an additional language. Regular outings in the surrounding area help children to become familiar with their local community. They also have opportunities to learn about the wider society as they take part in activities in celebration of different festivals. For example, they taste spring rolls and noodles at Chinese New Year and make tealight candles for Divali.

The childminder builds positive relationships with parents, which enhances children's care. She draws up written agreements with them and ensures that regular verbal feedback is given about daily events and children's progress. She encourages them to share any concerns they may

have about the service she provides, but her complaints procedure has not been updated to reflect current regulations and accurate details of how they may contact Ofsted if necessary.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are well settled in a comfortable and welcoming environment, where there are suitable procedures in place to safeguard their welfare. Space and resources are organised so that children can move around freely and make choices about their play. The childminder prefers to keep numbers low so that she can give children the attention they need. She plans events each day so that children have a variety of play experiences, both inside and outside the setting.

The childminder is committed to the continuous improvement of her service and to her own professional development. She attends additional training and acknowledges how this has helped her to reflect on her practice and identify areas for further improvement. Record keeping is satisfactory and mostly meets requirements, although the childminder has not ensured that records of information for all children are consistently maintained. This is a breach in the requirements for registration and has the potential to impact on children's safety and well-being. The childminder has developed written policies and procedures to support her practice.

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 continue to access relevant training in order to keep abreast of changes in childcare practice. She has completed both the Developing and Extending Childminding Practice courses and is currently attending training with a view to becoming an accredited member of a childminder network. If successful, this will enable her to provide care for children funded through the nursery education funding scheme. Children's care is enhanced because the childminder values training and uses this successfully to develop new skills and broaden her knowledge of childcare issues.

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 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 satisfactory. 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):

- assess risks in relation to the use of the free standing heater in the conservatory and make appropriate arrangements to keep children safe when playing there
- review and amend complaints procedures to reflect current regulations and to provide accurate information for parents about how they may contact Ofsted if necessary
- review the systems for ensuring that records of information about individual children are completed and readily accessible.

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