

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	300693
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Karen Cockings

<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 2001. She lives with her husband and their three children, aged 14, 13 and 10 years in a village to the north west of Sheffield. The house is within walking distance of local schools, parks and other amenities. The ground floor rooms, a bedroom and bathrooms on the first floor are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The family has a dog and a chinchilla, which is kept in a cage upstairs.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years. She currently minds 13 children, of whom 11 children are under eight. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The childminder is a qualified primary school teacher. She is also a member of an approved childminding network and is currently in receipt of funding for early education for three and four-year-olds.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy many opportunities for outdoor activity, which contributes to their overall good health. The childminder gives high priority to this and is strongly committed to providing resources and activities to challenge and inspire children. She was runner up in a national outdoor play competition and works very hard to create an exciting outdoor environment. Children use the climbing frame with confidence and balance on logs and benches around the garden. They learn to skip with ropes and hoops, practise throwing and catching and play parachute games together. There is easy access from the garden to the village park where older children like to organise football games or ride on scooters along the paths. Exciting outings are planned to parks and places of interest further afield, providing more opportunities for children to run, climb and to explore the natural world around them. The childminder effectively supports younger children's growing independence as they learn the skills for walking and climbing.

Children enjoy a healthy, well-balanced diet, which includes a varied range of fresh fruit and vegetables. Parents are given the option of supplying foods themselves if they wish. Meal times are pleasant, social occasions where children sit and chat together and younger ones develop independence in feeding themselves. The childminder ensures that she is informed of any special dietary requirements and finds out about children's likes and dislikes. They are often involved in baking and food preparation activities. For example, they make jam tarts when they learn the rhyme about the 'Queen of Hearts' and they bake French bread for their own boulangerie. They help to grow vegetables in the garden, learning how to plant and care for them until they are ready for harvesting.

The childminder follows effective procedures in order to meet children's health needs. She shares her written policy with parents regarding the care of sick children and gathers together useful information for reference, such as articles about the administration of medicines to children. She is very aware of individual health needs and actively supports parents and children in a variety of ways. For example, she takes special care to protect sensitive skin and helps with exercises to improve mobility. She is aware of the health risks posed by family pets and ensures that suitable measures are taken to protect children. Children have some contact with the family's dog, but learn about hygiene issues, such as not letting her lick their faces. They are encouraged and reminded about hand washing routines before eating and after using the toilet. The childminder is keen to protect children from the harmful effects of the sun and ensures that parents supply sun creams for her to use. Older children have made a poster on the computer about the importance of protecting their skin and this is on display for parents and children to see.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The childminder places great importance on raising children's awareness and understanding of safety issues. There are lots of conversations about the safe use of the environment so that children become aware of hazards and learn how to protect themselves and others. For example, the childminder shows younger children the leaves and thorns on brambles and explains that they should not fetch their ball from the undergrowth because they may be pricked. They learn that they should keep certain toys with small pieces out of the reach of babies and toddlers. Older children devise their own rules about safety when playing dodge ball, such as making sure the ball does not go over the fence and cause a hazard to motorists. Frequent outings and walks provide opportunities for discussion about road safety and stranger danger.

The childminder actively seeks advice and guidance in order to maintain children's safety. For example, she has consulted the fire service about recommended fire safety and evacuation procedures and attended a session with relevant authorities about safe seating for children when travelling by car. Before children played on the trampoline she gathered information about its safe use, installed safety netting and agreed ground rules with the children. Within the home, she takes appropriate measures to maintain a safe environment, including the use of fireguards, socket covers and safety gates. The garden is fully enclosed. However, there is the potential for children's safety to be compromised because of the direct access to the public areas beyond the garden.

The childminder has a good understanding of her responsibilities with regard to child protection, attending relevant training to ensure that she has up-to-date information about the procedures to follow. Through conversations, activities and stories, children develop an awareness of how to protect themselves. For example, she makes good use of an opportunity to let children know that secrets are best shared with their parents. She shares her written policy so that parents are kept informed about the action she would need to take if she were to have any concerns about the children in her care.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children settle very well and quickly make themselves at home. They are confident to make choices about their play and to find toys for themselves. They engage extremely well with a wide range of stimulating activities, both indoors and outside the setting. For example, they become totally absorbed in connecting foam tubes together in the garden to make a water chute. They work out how to make the water flow faster by fitting the tubes at an angle and are delighted when the plastic insects are swept along in the water. The childminder makes excellent use of her outdoor space to create an exciting environment to support children's play and learning. Many interesting outings are organised, such as a visit to the museum to see an exhibition about bees. Younger children have lots of opportunity to learn and practise new skills and to enjoy exploratory play. The childminder supports them effectively as they learn to climb and to investigate their environment.

Children build trusting relationships with the childminder who encourages language skills and confidence by maintaining a friendly dialogue with them. She gets to know them very well and takes careful note of what captures their interest and how they like to play. She builds on this successfully to extend children's learning. They enjoy each other's company but also have opportunities for solitary play. Older children work together on exciting projects, such as helping to make and decorate a hot air balloon. They are strongly encouraged to use their initiative and problem solving abilities as they play. For example, they devise a pulley system to hoist a plate of biscuits up to their den in the climbing frame. Children develop a good understanding of the needs and feelings of others because the childminder works very supportively with them and encourages them to consider situations from different perspectives.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The childminder has an excellent understanding of how children learn and uses her knowledge very effectively to help them to make progress. Children are excited and motivated to learn because the childminder plans and provides rich and varied experiences for them. They show high levels of concentration as they persevere with activities they enjoy, such as mixing lots of colours together to make a house for 'Mrs Rainbow', a character in a favourite story. Many interesting experiences help to build children's links with their home and local community and children are confident to share their news about themselves and their families.

The childminder makes excellent use of resources, such as story sacks, to nurture children's love of books and stories. They become totally absorbed in her lively presentation, as she uses items from the sack to focus and stimulate children's interest. They excitedly recall the next events in familiar tales and gather together items to present their own stories in the same way. Children engage in many activities to develop their hand-eye coordination and manipulative skills for early writing, as they use small tools with clay and dough, paintbrushes, pens and construction toys.

Children develop good counting skills and use number frequently in their play. They sing number rhymes together and some are able to count confidently to twenty as they play a hide and seek game. The childminder skilfully helps them begin to make simple calculations and to identify and form numbers. For example, she brings out a clipboard for a child to record the number of points he has achieved in a ball game and helps him to work out how many more points he has than others. Children's awareness of shape and size is developed extremely well, through activities, such as taking photographs of different shapes in their environment, using large wooden blocks to match with shape posters and using collections of dandelions and shells to make circular patterns in the garden.

Children love to spend time outdoors and participate in many activities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They help to grow vegetables, watch chicks hatching, go on mini-beast hunts and make bird feeders. They gather sheep's wool during an outing and the childminder teaches them how to spin it to make woollen thread. They are fascinated by the weather and seasonal changes as they slide on patches of ice in the park and talk together about how it forms and melts. Children have access to technological equipment, such as the computer, tape recorder and cameras and they develop their design

skills as they build models. The childminder shares collections of old photographs of their village with them and during outings they try to identify buildings, developing a good sense of time and place.

Exploratory and creative play with paints, clay, sand and water are part of children's regular experiences. They are able to express themselves creatively through different media and explore their own ideas. Children use boxes, cartons, tubes and construction toys to make models. The environment is rich in art work and posters to stimulate children's imaginations. They become deeply involved in role play activities as they play in the den in the garden and handle small world toys.

Overall, children are involved in a broad range of developmentally appropriate and stimulating activities which help them to make excellent progress towards the early learning goals. The childminder extends activities extremely well, using effective questioning to develop children's thinking and language. Resources and the external environment are used very imaginatively. The childminder has effective systems in place for observing and recording children's progress, making good use of her observations and assessments to identify the next steps in children's learning.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed and develop a strong sense of belonging at the setting. The environment is very child-centred with lots of pictures, posters and resources at child height so that they can access them independently. Children are encouraged to make their own choices about their play. The childminder respects their individuality and finds out as much as possible about their needs and interests. She values their achievements, making sure that they have the time and space to complete activities they are interested in. For example, she moves furniture around so that there is sufficient space for older children to build their own model of Stonehenge and can return to it later. Clay models and small world scenes that the children have made are on display.

Children engage in many activities that raise their awareness of their local community. They regularly visit the library and choose new story books or information to help them with projects. They go to the museum and enjoy walks and outings in the surrounding countryside. Resources and planned activities increase children's understanding of different cultures and lifestyles. For example, they chalk dragons on the paths outside and look for dragon shapes as they learn about the Chinese New Year. They bake and taste French bread and set up their own baker's shop using role play resources. Children have opportunities to listen to different musical styles and times for quiet and reflection. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The childminder's partnership with parents and carers is good. She warmly welcomes new parents to her home and provides them with helpful introductory materials, including information about herself, her family and about the policies which underpin her service. The childminder takes the time to get to know families and to find out about children's needs. She is very supportive where there are difficulties, such as helping with the collection of children in some

circumstances and working with parents to support children with additional needs. Clear written agreements are drawn up with parents and are reviewed and updated regularly. The childminder is aware of requirements regarding the investigation and recording of complaints and has made relevant information available to parents.

Effective informal channels of communication are established with parents. The childminder talks to them about their children's interests and abilities and uses this information, together with her own observations, to guide her planning of suitable activities for them. She communicates daily with them about children's progress and involvement. She has developed extensive collections of photographs and notes to share with parents about the range of activities offered and what children are learning. Children's individual records include examples of their work, photographs and the childminder's notes, which help her to identify the next steps in children's learning. These are shared with parents, although there is potential for them to have more input formally into this process in order to develop further involvement in their children's learning.

Children's behaviour is good. They respond well to the childminder's gentle and consistent approach, which helps them to develop an understanding of boundaries and expectations. She uses effective strategies, such as explaining gently to children that a toddler may not want to be picked up and distracted from what he is doing. She asks them to consider how they would feel if she often disturbed them while they were busy playing. Children's achievements are warmly acknowledged, which helps to build confidence and self-esteem.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a well organised environment where the childminder actively promotes their safety and welfare. She has an excellent understanding of children's needs and is skilled in supporting their learning. Space and resources are used very well to engage children and to enable them to make independent choices. The childminder is strongly committed to her own professional development and accesses a varied range of training to enhance her skills. She welcomes the support of the network coordinator in the review of her practice. The childminder also effectively supports and mentors students who are sometimes placed with her.

Record keeping is maintained well and comprehensive, personal policies and procedures are implemented effectively to safeguard children's welfare. Paperwork is stored accessibly and linked to the outcomes for children.

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 obtain prior written permission from parents before any medication is administered. She now ensures that appropriate parental consents are in place so that agreements with parents are clearly noted and children's welfare safeguarded.

### **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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **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 risks in relation to the security of the garden area.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- consider further ways of sharing information with parents about their children's achievements and involving them in their learning.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)