

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	300019
Inspection date	21 August 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 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 1992. She lives with her husband and two adult children in a village to the north west of Sheffield. The ground floor rooms of the house and the bathroom on the first floor are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The house is within walking distance of local schools, parks and other amenities.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children under eight years at any one time. She currently minds three children who are all 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 satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and comfortable family home, where the childminder maintains good standards of hygiene to protect them from the risk of infection. They are given gentle reminders about washing their hands after they have been to the toilet or if they have been

playing outside. Suitable arrangements are made with regard to the care of sick children and the childminder's policy is shared with parents so that they understand that they should not bring children who have an infectious illness. The childminder makes sure that she is equipped to deal with accidents or emergencies. She keeps her first aid certificate up to date, has a first aid kit to hand and makes appropriate arrangements for emergency cover with other local childminders. The required parental consents are obtained and records kept of accidents and medication administered.

Children have regular access to the outdoors, which helps to keep them fit and well. They play in the garden, where they use equipment, such as the basketball net, sand tray and space hoppers. Most children walk to and from school, although some are brought by their parents if they are not attending the local school. Outings are also planned to nearby parks and surrounding countryside.

Children's snacks and meals are currently provided by their parents. The childminder makes sure that they have regular drinks and that they can make choices about when they eat. She has completed food hygiene training and she finds out about any allergies or special dietary requirements. However, she has not fully considered ways in which she can further promote healthy eating patterns as part of her day to day practice.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder gives priority to children's safety and to providing good levels of supervision. She gets to know children well and assesses risk in relation to their age and understanding of danger. There are safety appliances, such as a fireguard and safety gate available if needed. The childminder discusses these issues with parents before children are placed. Their safety in the event of a fire or other emergency is considered and appliances, such as a smoke detector and fire blanket are in place. Evacuation plans are talked through with children but not formally practised. The childminder has developed clear procedures for dealing with the possibility of children being lost or not collected by their parents and she has made effective arrangements with other local childminders for emergency cover. This ensures that unforeseen circumstances can be dealt with appropriately and maintains continuity for children.

There is a suitable range of toys and play materials to support children's play and learning. Boxes of toys are brought down so that children can explore them and make choices. Craft and drawing materials are kept in low level cupboards. The childminder checks and cleans toys regularly to ensure that they are safe and suitable for children's use. They learn how to use the environment and equipment safely because the childminder gives gentle reminders. Regular walks and outings provide opportunities to raise children's awareness of how to keep safe near roads and in public areas.

The childminder is aware of her responsibilities with regard to child protection and has some guidance materials readily available if she has any concerns. However, information about local procedures has not been updated to reflect changes and to ensure that telephone numbers for relevant organisations are correct. The childminder identifies child protection as an area for further training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the childminder's care. They talk confidently about what they are doing and know they can call on the childminder for help and support if needed. She sits near them as they play, making suggestions to stimulate their thinking and problem solving as they build their models. They show sustained interest in this activity and spend time working things out, such as how to make their model stand up or how to make a bridge. They are sufficiently confident and at ease with the childminder to reject her suggestions at times and to use their own ideas.

Children are involved in a varied range of activities, both indoors and outside. They enjoy outings to visit local parks and like to play in the garden. She takes them to the local shop where they buy small model aeroplane kits to fit together and see how they fly. She also provides boxes, tubes and cartons for model making at home. They are able to choose from a selection of toys and play materials, which are rotated to ensure there is variety. Sometimes children like to sit quietly with a favourite book or to watch a special television programme. The childminder is guided by children's interests, although she does not formally plan. She has attended additional training, such as 'Birth to three matters' and would use ideas from this if she were to care for younger children in the future.

Relationships are warm and positive. Children play well together, interacting confidently with each other and with the childminder. They learn about sharing and taking turns with favourite toys as they play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children respond well to the childminder's positive approach. She shows them that they are valued by acknowledging their achievements and giving praise. For example, she displays the models they have been building and makes positive comments about how well they are sharing. Children are helped to negotiate difficulties and disagreements for themselves. The childminder suggests, for example, that children have ten minutes each with a favourite toy and that she will watch the clock and let them know when it is time to swap. She explains to children when their behaviour is not acceptable so that they begin to understand the boundaries and what may be hurtful to others.

The childminder gets to know children well and responds sensitively to their individual needs and personalities. They have regular opportunities for meetings with other childminders and their children, from a variety of different cultural backgrounds. This helps children begin to appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences. There are some resources available that reflect positive images of different cultures and varying needs, although at times the range is not always sufficiently varied to ensure that there is no gender stereotyping.

Positive relationships are established with parents who express their appreciation of the service offered by means of thank you letters and cards. The childminder ensures that clear written agreements are made with them about their child's care. She has a welcome file to share with new parents, which includes a number of written policies. The childminder also makes sure they know how to raise any concerns with her, although she is not fully aware of requirements with regard to the investigation and recording of complaints.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are secure and comfortable at the setting, where the childminder organises space and resources appropriately to support their play, welfare and learning. She ensures that she is able to give them the attention they need and makes effective arrangements with other childminders for emergency cover if required. She recognises the value of additional training to develop and enhance her practice. There are good links with other childminders and advisory workers, which help the childminder to keep in touch with current child care issues.

Record keeping systems are in place and maintained appropriately. There are written policies and procedures to support important areas of childminding 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 the childminder agreed to ensure that children have access to an appropriate range of resources to promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. She now has some books and small world figures that help to raise children's awareness of different cultures. It was also recommended that the childminder review her procedures for recording the administration of medicines to children. She now uses the National Childminding Association accident and medication book and she ensures that medicines administered are clearly agreed and recorded. This helps to safeguard children's welfare and keeps parents fully informed.

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):

- consider further ways of promoting healthy eating and raising children's awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle
- review child protection guidance documents to ensure that they are up-to-date and reflect Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures

- develop knowledge and understanding of requirements with regard to the investigation and recording of complaints.

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