

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	300063
Inspection date	31 July 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 1997. She has an 11 year old daughter and lives in a suburb of North Sheffield, within walking distance of local schools, parks and other amenities. The ground floor rooms of the house are used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The family has a dog.

The childminder is registered for the care of six children at any one time. She currently minds two 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 are cared for in a clean and comfortable environment, where the childminder actively promotes good hygiene to prevent the spread of infection and to keep children healthy. She ensures that all areas used by children are kept clean and tidy and encourages them to become independent in managing their own personal care. A step is available to help them to reach the sink and a hand washing notice is displayed in the bathroom as a reminder. The childminder takes advantage of opportunities as they arise to talk to children about the importance of good hygiene practice. For example, while sharing a relevant picture book with younger children she talks to them about cleaning their teeth. Suitable arrangements are made for the family's dog to ensure that there is no health risk to children. The childminder shares her policy about the care of sick children with parents in order to prevent the spread of infections.

Children have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise, which helps to keep them fit and well. They have access to suitable resources in the garden, such as the sand pit and wheeled toys. The childminder also takes them on outings to local parks and children's centres, where they like to play on the swings and use larger equipment. Younger children develop good hand-eye coordination and manipulative skills as they make jigsaws and use drawing materials and scissors.

The childminder promotes healthy eating by providing fresh fruit for snacks and encouraging children to try new tastes. She has attended a 'Food, fitness and fun' workshop and plans activities to raise children's awareness of foods that are good for them. For example, children are involved in drawing pictures and making collages of their favourite fruits. They sometimes take part in simple baking and food preparation activities, such as making and decorating buns. The childminder ensures that individual dietary requirements are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder gives high priority to children's safety, taking effective measures to maintain a secure environment for them. She has conducted risk assessments and has clear procedures in place for outings and escorting children to and from school. Outer doors are kept locked when children are present and gates to the premises are secured. The childminder enables children to move around and play safely by having suitable equipment in place, such as fireguard, safety gate and socket covers. She also provides good levels of supervision. Fire safety is addressed well as the childminder has attended relevant training, has suitable appliances in place, and has devised evacuation procedures which she ensures that older children are familiar with.

Children have access to a varied range of suitable resources stored in boxes at child-height so that they can make independent choices about their play. They learn how to use them safely because the childminder gives gentle reminders and encourages them to tidy toys away so that they do not fall over them. During outings children learn how to keep safe near the roads and in public areas. They also take part in role play activities, such as using 'zebra crossings' and 'stop signs' to develop their understanding of how to use pedestrian crossings.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because the childminder has a secure understanding of her responsibilities with regard to child protection. She has recently attended update training and has guidance materials and information about local procedures readily available should she have any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the childminder's care. They are confident to explore their environment and to select toys for themselves. For example, they bring out different musical instruments from the box and have fun finding out how they can make lots of sounds. The childminder interacts warmly with them, which helps to develop confidence and language skills. She sits nearby as children play so that she can offer support if needed.

Children enjoy a variety of play experiences, both indoors and outside the home. Regular visits to toddler groups and children's centres provide opportunities for children to socialise and to access a wider range of toys and activities. The childminder has a basic weekly plan which includes outings and opportunities for different types of play. She has attended 'Birth to three matters' training to support her practice with the younger children in her care but does not yet use plans and observations extensively to promote children's learning. However, she ensures that younger children have opportunities to explore and tries to follow their lead as much as possible.

Children show interest in what they do and learn new skills as they play. For example, younger children learn, with the support of the childminder, how to use scissors to cut out pictures for their collage. They identify shapes and colours as they use shape sorters and matching games. Older children have been able to explore volume when playing with water and different sized containers. They learn how chicks hatch because they have played with toy eggs and watched 'creatures' gradually emerging.

Children build positive relationships with the childminder and with each other. They like to look through photographs and identify themselves and their friends. They begin to learn about sharing and taking turns as they play together.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder works with parents in order to meet children's needs and to ensure appropriate links with home. She has an information file about her service to share with new parents and she makes time each day to give verbal feedback about children's experiences. Contracts are drawn up and parental consents sought to ensure that all arrangements are clearly agreed. The childminder has devised complaints procedures and provides some information about how parents may contact Ofsted if necessary. However, she is not yet fully conversant with recent regulations regarding the investigation and recording of complaints.

Children receive support and encouragement as they play, which builds their confidence and self-esteem. The childminder uses appropriate strategies, such as distraction, to deal with challenging behaviour. She recognises that children sometimes do not behave well if they are tired or upset and she makes boundaries clear. For example, she ensures that children understand the rules about how to cross roads with her so that this does not create difficulties and dangers for all.

Regular outings in the surrounding area help children to find out about their local community. Children also have access to some resources, such as books, dolls and dressing up clothes, which reflect families from a range of cultures. They take part in the celebration of different festivals, such as the Chinese New Year. This helps them begin to learn about and appreciate similarities and differences. The childminder has limited experience of working with children who have disabilities, but she has knowledge of relevant legislation and an understanding of how she can provide an environment that includes and welcomes all children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The safe environment is organised appropriately to meet children's needs. Children have space to move around freely and resources are set out so that children can make choices about their play. The childminder manages her time effectively, which enables her to give children the attention they need. She ensures that she attends additional training to support the further development of her practice. There are good links with local groups and emergency cover is organised with another childminder who is known to the children. This provides continuity for them and their families.

Record keeping is maintained appropriately and there are some written policies to support the childminder's practice. Some procedures, such as complaints, do not fully reflect recent changes.

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 consider ways of extending the range of toys reflecting positive images of culture, gender and disability. She has since then attended relevant workshops and regularly takes children to local children's centres where they have access to a wider range of resources. She also visits the library to vary the selection of books available for children.

It was also recommended that the childminder keep records of significant issues and incidents. She indicates that she would keep such a record if needed, but there have been no significant incidents to note. The childminder understands the requirement for this in order to safeguard children's welfare and ensure that parents are kept fully informed.

In addition, the childminder agreed to provide more information for parents about the range of activities offered to children. She now includes a sample weekly plan in her file and has also assembled a collection of photographs of minded children involved in a variety of play experiences. She shares these with parents to keep them informed about daily events.

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):

- review and develop planning and observations of children to further support their play and learning
- develop knowledge and awareness of complaints regulations and update procedures accordingly.

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