

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	303508
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Annette Stanger
<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 outstanding. 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 1997. She lives with her husband in Halifax and works with two other childminders. The playroom and a first floor bedroom are used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time when working alone and a maximum of 10 children at any one time when working with additional childminders from her home. She is currently minding 14 children, who attend for various sessions, and three children before and after school. Of these, four receive funding for early education. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children.

She is 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 outstanding.

The childminder is highly effective in promoting all aspects of children's health and takes a range of positive actions. The children thrive because they are cared for in an exceptionally clean and hygienically maintained environment. Outdoor shoes are removed when playing indoors and this helps to maintain excellent standards of hygiene for young children who are crawling and participating in carpet activities. Excellent practice is followed for the hygienic change of nappies and all precautions are taken to minimise cross-contamination. All individual care items are only used for that named child and these are stored in clearly labelled baskets to avoid any confusion. Children's awareness of personal hygiene is excellent and the childminder encourages this awareness from an early age. This helps the children to become independent in such practices and manage their own hygiene as part of the daily routine. For example, children independently visit the toilet and remember to wash their hands afterwards. They select their own toothbrush and brush their teeth after meals, looking in the mirror to ensure they do so thoroughly. The childminder has detailed procedures in place for sick children and shares information with parents on how to manage infections with regards to incubation periods. This ensures the children's welfare remains her first priority. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate and all documentation relating to health is extremely detailed and shared effectively with parents. This means that the children's daily well-being is properly managed and ensures continuity of care.

Children are offered extensive opportunities to develop well physically and gain a positive attitude to a healthy lifestyle. The childminder has attended additional training on how to support children's physical development. High priority is given to children's health, physical and emotional well-being, in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Young children take part in regular physical play to support them to grow and develop, make healthy choices and acquire new skills. Toys and resources are skilfully positioned to encourage children to stretch, reach, crawl and be physically active. There is also a wealth of opportunities for children to develop their coordination by manipulating a range of objects, involving children pulling, squeezing, pressing and pushing. The childminder has an in-depth knowledge of the children's capabilities and has taken the time to look, listen and note children's development. This means she is able to provide excellent levels of support for children to actively explore their immediate environment and gradually develop their physical strength, skill and confidence. Older children enjoy playing on tricycles and skilfully pedal both forwards and backwards, safely manoeuvring around the garden and each other. Children show excellent control of their bodies and move in a range of ways; they hop and jump with two feet together onto carpet spots positioned at varying distances and use the mini trampoline. They enjoy dancing and moving their bodies to music as they play various musical instruments. Children also develop excellent fine physical skills and coordination. For example, they carefully thread shoe fastenings on large dolls, manipulate malleable materials and skilfully pour water and sand with minimal spillage. The childminder ensures children have daily opportunities to play outdoors, ensuring they get plenty of fresh air. As well as providing opportunities for active play, children are also able to rest and relax according to their individual needs and routines and there is very good provision to allow them to do so.

Children are extremely well nourished and enjoy healthy and nutritionally balanced meals and snacks. These are freshly prepared and include fresh fruit and vegetables, such as chopped banana, kiwi and strawberries. The childminder has attended both basic and intermediate training in food handling and is extremely knowledgeable. Regular drinks are given throughout the day, with very good arrangements in place for children who cannot ask. Mealtimes are used effectively to maximise opportunities for children's healthy independence. Children are encouraged to eat at their own pace and young children are allowed to explore their food, which makes mealtimes relaxed, enjoyable social occasions. Planned activities raise the children's awareness of healthy eating; recently during a two week period children explored the various ways of living a healthy lifestyle. They grew their own carrots and beetroot, made fruit smoothies and identified food items that they considered to be healthy and those they did not. This was followed up with a visit to a local children's activity museum where they were able to explore the workings of the heart and learn more about healthy bones and the digestive system. The childminder works very closely with parents to gain a clear understanding of the children's dietary requirements and individual routines. All meals, drinks and nappy changes are recorded on a daily basis to keep parents well informed of their food intake and output. The childminder's committed approach contributes to children's well-being, healthy growth and development.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an extremely well-organised home where all risks are clearly identified and minimised effectively. The childminder gives utmost priority to ensuring the children are kept safe and free from harm. She is extremely vigilant and achieves an excellent balance between freedom and safe limits, following the children's lead whilst setting safe boundaries. Meticulous risk assessments and well-implemented policies and procedures demonstrate the childminder's commitment to safeguarding the children in her care. She assesses risks to children from the child's perspective and uses her in-depth knowledge of their increasing capabilities to continuously improve safety and minimise risk. All aspects of children's safety have been considered, from actions to follow if a child was to go missing or was not collected, to her fire evacuation procedure.

The childminder has a dedicated playroom that is completely child-centred. It includes a range of exceptionally good quality toys and resources which meet safety standards. These are attractively presented, easily accessible for the children to select from and offer children a truly broad and balanced range of play experiences. The playroom also includes wall displays and mirrors for the children and these are displayed at their height for them to refer to and explore their own image. Children gain a strong awareness of keeping themselves safe. For example, they know not to run indoors and older children know to shut the safety gate after visiting the toilet to prevent younger children leaving the main play area. Children also practise regular fire procedures with the childminding and this ensures they understand what to do in an emergency situation.

The childminder is extremely aware of her responsibility towards safeguarding children and that this is her first priority. She has attended a number of associated training courses and this ensures her practice is underpinned by current and in-depth knowledge. She has an excellent

awareness of the possible signs and symptoms of children at risk and the procedures to follow should she have any concerns about a child. All the relevant contact numbers for reporting concerns are held on file and this ensures she can act promptly to protect children. She has a written statement on safeguarding and documentation in place to record any existing injuries. Her willingness to document and discuss these with parents ensures that the safety of the children remains a priority.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder has a superb commitment to providing outstanding care, learning and play for the children in her care. She has an excellent understanding of the children's capabilities and interaction is highly effective and successful in helping children enjoy and achieve. The childminder makes excellent use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to meet the unique needs of each child and to enrich experiences for younger children. The children access an extensive range of interesting and purposeful activities, within an environment that is enriched with many opportunities for children of all ages to explore. Treasure baskets encourage children to exercise their curiosity and they use their senses to explore a range of different materials and textures. Children particularly enjoy playing with their peers in the home area. They regularly imitate adults and enjoy 'conversations' on the telephone. As a result, children are becoming skilful communicators. Their creative development is well supported; the childminder maximises opportunities for sensory and exploratory play that also includes the use of natural materials. For example, children have regular access to sand, water and malleable materials. The childminder is highly skilled in supporting children's play and allows children time to develop their ideas and explain their thinking, enabling them to expand their knowledge and understanding. The children's files and photographic evidence show that they enjoy a variety of stimulating play experiences both within the childminder's home and beyond. These include outings to local parks, nature walks, visits to farm parks and a local children's museum.

Children are extremely happy and settled in the childminder's care. They receive lots of warmth, care and attention to support their emotional well-being, and this gives them the confidence to try new experiences and acquire new skills. The childminder has a very calm, caring manner and is highly attentive to the children's individual needs. Individual routines are followed to ensure they are consistent with experiences at home. Excellent relationships are evident and the childminder responds extremely well to children's non-verbal communication by being animated and using her voice and facial expression. For example, the childminder interacts with children in an excellent way whilst changing their nappies. She responds to their smiles using positive language and sings to them to encourage them to vocalise. In this way the childminder is taking part in early 'conversations' with children and encouraging them to become skilful communicators.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals because the childminder has a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. This ensures that children are offered a broad and balanced curriculum, including focused planned activities as well as opportunities for informal learning. She knows the children well

and ensures that appropriate challenges are incorporated into the curriculum, based on observations of what the children know and can do. Effective questioning techniques are used and this successfully stimulates thinking, extends knowledge and encourages children's language skills. The written plans cover the six areas of learning and show the learning intentions for activities and children's next steps. There is a system in place to ensure that all stepping stones will be covered sufficiently over time. However, it is not always clear in the planning documents which stepping stones are being covered and how activities will be adapted for children's varying abilities. Each child has their own assessment file. These include written observations, photographs and examples of the activities and experiences children are involved in. Children's individual progress is then recorded on a separate stepping stones log sheet, although the two are not cross referenced to show the link and identify how the child achieved the stepping stones.

Children are very confident and settle quickly into the familiar and trusted routine, highly motivated and eager to participate in activities of their own choosing, such as physical, imaginative and creative activities. They show an early appreciation of books. They handle them well, turning the pages correctly and talk about the pictures and what they think is going to happen. Writing materials are included as part of the continuous provision and children make good use of these during their play situations, both indoors and outdoors. For example, they use chalks, charcoal, pens and paintbrushes and make meaningful marks. This maximises opportunities for children to write for a variety of purposes in everyday play situations and develops their confidence. Children's communication skills are developing well. They are confident in their interactions, asking questions, recalling recent events and talking with enthusiasm about what they are doing and what they are going to do.

Children regularly count and use mathematical language in their play. They recognise and correctly identify numbers around the room, for example, when studying a clock face. They talk about size, space and measure and use positional language in their descriptions. In group situations children enjoy singing number rhymes and use their fingers to help them subtract as they sing 'Five Current Buns'. During construction activities children use their knowledge of shape and set themselves the challenge of joining materials together to make triangles and circles. Larger materials are also used to construct and build, which furthers children's physical development. Children enjoy using their imaginations and work cooperatively to make dens from sheets and cushions. They enjoy imitating adults in their role play and tell one another, 'It's time for tea', and point to the clock.

Natural materials are included as part of the continuous provision. Children have regular opportunities to build with wooden logs, explore sand and water and observe change. For example, children enjoyed filling ice cube trays with small items, before pouring in water and freezing them overnight. The following day children began problem solving how to get the small items out. They tried blowing on the ice cubes, rubbing them in their hands, before placing them in the sun to melt, observing and talking about the changes as they were happening. Children enjoy learning more about the natural world and use resources to measure rainfall and wind. Planned outings also allow them the opportunity to explore features of their local environment as they go on nature and woodland walks.

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

The provision is outstanding.

All children are made extremely welcome and their individuality is highly valued because the childminder promotes an inclusive environment, where all children access activities appropriate to their age and stage of development. They develop a strong sense of belonging, as they each have their own named coat pegs and pigeon holes. They enjoy looking at the many photographs of themselves in albums and around the room, which are accessible to them, and their own creativity that is displayed around the room. The childminder and the co-minders all know the children very well and cater for their individual routines, so they are settled and secure. There are currently no children who attend who have learning difficulties or disabilities. However, strong support is offered when they attend, as the childminder has until recently been actively involved in caring for children with disabilities and learning difficulties. For example, she has attended additional training, such as a British sign language course, and has been part of an inclusion group. She demonstrates a very good understanding of the importance of working in partnership with professionals and parents, vital to ensuring excellent levels of support are provided for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. She has also received letters of thanks and praise from both parents and professionals, valuing her efforts and her excellent practice.

Children develop an excellent awareness of our diverse society as they celebrate various festivals throughout the year. They learn about different countries around the world as 'Holiday Bear' is taken by the children on their holidays. A display made up of photographs and a map show where the children have visited and what they did during their stay. Recent activities also include children making worry dolls originating from Central America and learning how to say goodbye in a number of different languages. The childminder also ensures they take part in community activities, such as the local scarecrow trail, and has strong links with the local school, which helps them to positively contribute to their local area. An extensive range of resources also encourage the children's awareness of diversity, including posters, pictures, puzzles, small world figures, home area cookware items and musical instruments from around the world.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Their behaviour is exemplary. They enjoy a calm atmosphere because they are so engrossed in the stimulating range of activities available and are kept busy and contented. Behaviour is managed in a positive and sensitive way that is developmentally appropriate. Distraction techniques are used extremely well to manage younger children's behaviour and this is successful in redirecting any unwanted behaviour. Her approach to managing behaviour is consistent with the other childminders she works with and this ensures that children develop a very good awareness of right and wrong. A statement on behaviour management is in place and this is effectively shared with parents. Children cooperate well with one another and offer support to younger children and praise their efforts following the childminder's lead. Children are continually praised and offered opportunities to be independent, as they help to tidy up and take the registration before lunchtime. This positive approach contributes to good levels of confidence and self-esteem.

Children benefit from the highly positive partnership that the childminder has with parents. They are confident and settle quickly because the childminder takes heed of the information provided. The childminder understands the children's emotional needs well and this helps them

to settle as they move between the home and the childminding environment. Parents receive detailed information about the childminding service and procedures are in place to ensure that parental views are actively sought regarding their child's needs and interests. This is done both before they start and on a regular basis throughout their time in the childminder's care, through completion of an initial child profile and effective two-way communication. This is then used successfully to plan activities around the children's interests to ensure they are enjoyable and maintain the children's interest. This highly effective partnership promotes the children's well-being, care and development.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents have free access to their child's assessment files and are able to take them home, which many parents do. This allows them to look at them in more depth, make additional comments and add their own photographs. Regular verbal feedback, accompanied by a daily diary and assessment file, details all aspects of the child's care and development. Assessment records are regularly shared with parents and include observational notes and an array of photographs and samples of their creativity. However, the children's progress through the stepping stones is recorded on a separate log sheet and it is not easily identifiable how these cross reference to the observational notes and examples. Planning is displayed and 'activity at home' sheets are used to keep parents informed of the areas being covered and how they can extend children's learning at home, such as suggested activities, songs and rhymes. This ensures that parents are fully involved in their child's learning and values them as an important educator in the child's life.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder is extremely enthusiastic in her approach and is highly committed to keeping abreast of the latest childcare developments, in order to continuously improve her practice. It is extremely evident from the childminder's enthusiastic and positive attitude that she thoroughly enjoys working with children and values all that they say and do.

Space and resources are extremely well organised to meet children's needs and excellent use is made of outdoors. Indoors the rooms are dedicated to the children's play space, so they freely access a wide range of activities safely. They are able to free-flow indoors and out, extending further their choice of opportunities.

All records, policies and procedures are rigorously maintained and held in a highly organised and professional manner. The childminder works very closely with the local authority, accessing regular training and advice, to ensure that the provision of education is delivered well and continues to improve. Children benefit greatly from the childminder's abilities to make the most of all opportunities offered to enhance their learning. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.



### **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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

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.

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**

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

#### **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):

- extend the planning to show clear links to the stepping stones and differentiation for children's abilities
- extend children's assessment records to clearly show how the child approaches learning and how this information cross references to the stepping stones.

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)