

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	302771
Inspection date	16 November 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 2000. She lives with her two daughters, aged nine and 12 years, on the outskirts of Barnsley. The ground floor rooms of the house are used for childminding and the bathroom on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The family has a cat.

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

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a level, enclosed garden, where there is lots of equipment to promote active play. There are toys to suit different age groups, such as a trampoline and basket ball net for the older children, and small sit and ride toys, slides and swings for the younger children.

They also make the journey to and from school on foot each day. Indoors, children like to be active as they dance and sing along to music tapes. They show how they can spin around and do 'twirls'. These activities contribute to their overall good health, by keeping them fit and promoting an enjoyment of active play.

Children are cared for in a clean environment, where the childminder takes appropriate measures to minimise the risk of infection. For example, she provides paper towels for children in the bathroom so that they do not share the same hand towel. Children learn about the importance of hand washing because they are given gentle reminders. Suitable arrangements are made for the family's cat so as not to expose children to associated health risks. For example, feeding bowls are kept out of children's reach and the garden is checked before children use it. The childminder provides information for parents about infectious illnesses and exclusion periods. Written parental consents are obtained for most of the children but due to the use of different types of contract the childminder has not obtained required consents for all, such as permission to seek emergency treatment and for outings. This is a breach in regulations, which affects children's safety and welfare. The childminder keeps appropriate records of all accidents, and of any medication administered to children.

Children enjoy a healthy diet, which includes fresh fruit and vegetables. Children like to help to prepare snacks, such as helping to pour drinks and cut up fruit, under the watchful eye of the childminder. This helps to encourage their growing independence. The childminder finds out about children's likes and dislikes and about any allergies or special dietary requirements. She keeps a list of these in the kitchen to refer to when planning meals.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder gives high priority to providing a secure environment for children and takes effective measures to keep them safe. For example, she ensures that outer doors are kept locked when children are present and gates to the garden are securely fastened. Safety gates restrict children's unsupervised access to areas of the house where there may be hazards, such as the kitchen. Exposed electricity sockets are mostly kept covered. Fire safety is addressed well. Advice has been sought from the fire service, and fire appliances, including smoke detectors and fire blanket, are in place. The emergency evacuation plan is practised with children to ensure that they are familiar with the procedures to be followed.

Children enjoy a wide range of resources, many of which are stored on shelves in the living room so that children can make their own choices. This area of the house is inviting and child-centred with colourful displays of children's work. The childminder checks and cleans toys regularly, to ensure that they are suitable for children's use. Children learn how to use the environment and equipment safely. For example, the childminder explains that they should hold her hands if they are dancing in their high heeled play shoes and children learn that sharp knives can be dangerous if not used properly. During outings she teaches them about road safety and she gathers together relevant information about safety issues, such as leaflets about transporting children in cars.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as the childminder has a good understanding of her responsibilities with regard to child protection. She has attended some relevant training and has guidance materials available so that she would be able to act promptly if she had any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the childminder's care. Warm and lively interaction with her helps children to feel secure and develops language skills. They engage well with activities because the childminder presents them in an interesting way which captures their imagination. For example, she uses different voices as she and the children play with small world figures together. Good use is made of opportunities to encourage conversation about things that are important to children, such as what they do at nursery and about the friends they have there. She extends children's learning by encouraging children to use number and to identify colours as they play.

Children play in a bright and stimulating environment, where lots of their work is on display. They take part in many craft and creative activities, such as making a collage rainbow and spider mobiles. They love to dance and sing along with songs and rhymes. Children use their imaginations as they empty a large basket and pretend that it is their boat as they sing 'Row the boat' with the childminder. They are eager to help with tidying up and the preparation of snacks.

The childminder makes some written observations of children as they play and is beginning to consider how she can use them to identify the next steps in their learning and development. However, she is not yet fully confident about this sort of record keeping.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel a sense of belonging at the setting, where their work is valued and they are familiar with daily routines. The childminder finds out about individual children's needs, likes and dislikes so that she can provide appropriate care and maintain consistency. Through regular outings children learn about their local community. They use resources, such as books and dressing up clothes, that reflect positive images of different cultures and help to increase their awareness of diversity. The childminder also finds out about a range of festivals so that she can plan related activities.

Children's behaviour is good and they respond well to the childminder's positive approach. She makes sure that children are engaged in enjoyable activities so that they do not become bored. They are given support and encouragement, which helps to build self-esteem. Appropriate strategies are used to help children to understand that their behaviour may be hurtful to others.

The childminder works closely with parents and builds positive relationships with them. In most cases agreements are clearly recorded and a varied range of information is available for parents at the setting. This includes leaflets about safety when transporting children by car and about the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The childminder has devised a written complaints procedure, which reflects current regulations and which is shared with parents. She understands that a record of complaints must be kept. The childminder is willing to work in partnership with parents and other professionals, in order to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities, although she has no experience in this area.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a stimulating environment, where toys and play materials are easily accessible to them. The childminder uses available space effectively to provide a variety of play experiences for children within safe surroundings. She recognises the benefits of training to further develop her skills and knowledge. There is a satisfactory understanding of roles and responsibilities although the need to keep Ofsted informed of all significant changes has been overlooked. This is a breach in regulations, which compromises children's safety and welfare.

Most record keeping is maintained satisfactorily and there are some written policies and procedures, which help the setting to run smoothly.

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 a number of recommendations were made. Children's safety has been improved by the removal of items of furniture with low level glass and items in the garden that were a hazard. The fire blanket is now also suitably located in the kitchen.

Aspects of record keeping have been improved, including the recording of times of arrival and departure in the attendance register and obtaining prior written parental consent for the administration of medicines. Written parental permission to seek emergency treatment is also secured in most instances, but not for all children, so a further recommendation has been made. These measures help to ensure that clear agreements are made with parents in order to safeguard children's welfare.

In addition, the childminder agreed to ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources to promote equality of opportunity. There are now some resources, such as dressing up clothes, books and small world figures, that reflect positive images of different cultures and varying needs. The childminder also plans activities to increase children's understanding of diversity.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted has received one complaint relating to National Standard 1: Suitable person. A visit was made by a childcare inspector, the concerns were discussed and two actions were raised. Following the provider's completion of these actions, Ofsted was satisfied that the provider remained qualified for registration.

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 record keeping to ensure that written parental consents are secured for all minded children
- ensure that all significant changes or events are notified to Ofsted.
- further develop systems for observing and recording children's development.

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