

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	401308
Inspection date	10 January 2008
Inspector	Christine Anne Rice

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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since June 2000. She lives with her husband and three children aged eight, 13 and 17 years in a house in Harrogate, where there are schools, shops, toddler groups and parks within walking distance.

She is registered to care for six children and currently has nine children on roll aged from one to nine years. The whole of the ground floor and outside play area are used for childminding.

The childminder regularly attends mums and tots groups. She takes and collects children from school and is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminder promotes hygiene routines well. Consequently, the spread of infection is reduced, for example, through good hand washing procedures which include the cleaning of babies' hands at appropriate times, such as before snacks. In addition, older children dry their

hands with paper towels, whilst younger children have individual towels and have their nappies changed regularly.

The childminder implements good policies and procedures to minimise further the risk of infection and to ensure that the children are safe and well cared for if they are ill or need medication. For example, she maintains a sickness policy, which includes an exclusion policy for infectious illnesses and she obtains all relevant written parental permissions, such as with regard to the administration of medication. If the children were to suffer any minor injuries, the childminder is well prepared with her current first aid certificate and first aid box in the kitchen.

Children benefit from the childminder's good understanding of healthy eating and the hygienic preparation of food as the childminder has obtained a food hygiene certificate. Snacks usually consist of a selection of fruit, such as sliced banana and grapes. Main meals are currently largely provided by the parents, though the childminder is happy to cook for the children and her menus include a good range of nutritious food, such as chicken stir fry and tuna pasta. All the children's medical and dietary needs are complied with as the childminder is mindful of any allergies and able to cater for vegetarian preferences. Children stay refreshed as their drinks of water or fruit juice are freely available. The children sleep comfortably, according to their own needs, in a travel cot and develop physical skills through regular trips to toddler groups and the park.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment where they are able to explore and select activities safely. They spend much of their time in the playroom, which is child-friendly with examples of the children's work displayed, such as glitter pictures. A comfortable settee enables children to relax. Children develop independence as they choose from a suitable range of toys and books, which are easily accessible as they are stored at child height around the edges of the room. Children's all-round development is fostered by appropriate equipment, such as a travel cot and a highchair.

The childminder takes some positive steps to promote the children's safety. For instance, all sockets are covered, there are safety locks on the kitchen cupboards where cleaning materials are stored, the bookcase in the playroom is fixed to the wall and there is a safety gate at the foot of the stairs. In addition, the childminder does not allow children to be collected by anyone other than the parents without their specific instructions. However, the front door is not always locked and the garden is not fully enclosed as there is no fence down one side. Although the childminder carefully supervises the children and is not allowing them to go outside until the fence is replaced, this detracts from the overall level of security as there is the opportunity for children to leave the premises unattended and strangers to enter unannounced.

Children are protected due to the childminder having a sound understanding of issues relating to child protection, following the completion of a relevant training course. Parents are fully aware of the childminder's responsibilities towards the children in her care as she shares her written child protection policy with them. This policy details the procedures to follow in the event of a concern arising.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled, beaming with pleasure when they arrive and soon finding favourite toys to play with. They become skilful communicators as the childminder spends a lot of time with them and encourages them to find their voice, talking to them, using repetition to promote speech and understanding. She explains what she is doing so that the children start to link words with actions.

The childminder provides choices for the children, which helps them to develop independence and self-esteem. For instance, the children choose between drawing and painting, they develop their creativity as they make a spotty picture. Children benefit from the childminder's helpful encouragement as she reminds them about the various colours that are available and praises them for their beautiful pictures. Achievements and progress are shared with parents as the children take home a selection of their art work. In addition, records are maintained for the children, which record observations, next steps in learning and links to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

The children have good relationships with the childminder, who responds positively when they confidently approach her, asking her to read a story. They choose a book and sit cosily on her lap whilst she reads to them. Children enjoy social interaction as they regularly go to toddler groups and meet with their peers and other childminders at a childminder drop-in group. They learn about the wider world as they frequently go on outings to various places of interest, including a steam railway, a butterfly farm, local farms and different parks. The children explore the natural world as they grow sunflowers and pick strawberries.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and treated as individuals in accordance with the childminder's equal opportunities policy. They learn about and respect diversity through the use of a range of resources, such as books and pictures depicting people from other cultures as well as dressing up clothes, which encourage children to develop positive attitudes towards others. These resources are supplemented with equipment from a toy library, such as dolls with crutches and wheelchair toys. In addition, the childminder celebrates various festivals, such as Christmas and Chinese New Year. The childminder has a positive attitude towards caring for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and is prepared, having done some relevant short courses and having had some experience. She recognises the importance of working with parents and other professionals in meeting the children's particular needs.

Children learn appropriate boundaries and constructive behaviour through the childminder's consistent and positive strategies. The childminder acts as a good role model, encouraging the children as she thanks them for helping to tidy up. There are child-friendly explanations as to why certain behaviour is not acceptable and the emphasis is on praise, appreciation and attention as outlined in the behaviour management policy. Parents have strong and trusting relationships with the childminder, who seeks as much information as possible from them to inform her practice with the children in order to facilitate settling, and maximise their care and learning. The day before children join the provision, parents are asked to keep a diary detailing the children's care and activities, so that the childminder can adopt the same practices. Subsequently, parents are kept informed through regular verbal feedback and the children's diary, which the

childminder completes daily. Parents are fully informed about the childminder's practice, as they may read the prospectus and they all receive a copy of her policies.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder, who has completed the level 3 certificate in childminding practice, has several years experience. She keeps her knowledge up to date through the attendance of various short courses, including behaviour management and creative play. She is well-organised and plans ahead effectively, for example, she has already renewed her first aid certificate even though it does not expire until the summer. Her commitment to childminding is evident by her successful completion of the National Childminding Association quality assurance scheme and the comprehensive policies and procedures, which she has devised.

All the necessary background checks have been completed by the relevant adults and the childminder has set up appropriate recording systems for accidents, visitors and complaints in the interests of protecting the children. Relevant information is accessible to parents, for instance, the registration certificate is prominently displayed on the playroom door for everyone to see.

The childminder organises her time well to make sure that children have access to a good range of interesting and stimulating activities, which meet their needs. Space is used effectively to promote the learning of all the children, who are relaxed and at home in the setting. Required adult-child ratios are generously met and children enjoy the time they spend with the childminder, benefiting from her gentle and supportive care.

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 was asked to practise the emergency evacuation plan with the children and develop an awareness of current legislation relating to learning difficulties and disabilities.

Since the last inspection, the childminder has ensured that the emergency evacuation plan is practised regularly and has developed her knowledge of the current legislation relating to disability and its implications for childminders. These changes mean that the children are better able to stay safe in the event of a fire and the childminder is better prepared for working with children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

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 good. 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):

- ensure the premises, including the outside play area, are secure.

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