

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	321279
Inspection date	07 April 2008
Inspector	Jacqueline Patricia Walter
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 was registered in 1996. She lives with her husband and children aged nine and 12 years in Bishopthorpe, near to the city of York in North Yorkshire. The lounge, playroom, kitchen and two bedrooms on the first floor of the childminder's house are used for childminding. Toilet facilities are available on both floors. There is an enclosed garden at the rear for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children over the age of four years at any one time and is currently minding 11 children between five and 15 years on a part-time basis. The childminder walks to the local school to take and collect children.

The family have a pet dog.

The childminder supports children with learning difficulties.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because the childminder follows current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, she ensures her dog is fully inoculated every year and she has created the dog's own toileting area in garden which is fenced off so children cannot access it. The childminder has a first aid kit, which is appropriately stocked and stored out of the reach of children, and she regularly checks this to ensure the equipment is not out of date. A written sickness policy is in place, which ensures good arrangements are in place if children become ill in her setting. This helps to prevent the spread of infection. Children are also able to receive medication safely as a result of the childminder meeting most requirements and by giving parents written records of what has been actually administered. However, as some children only rarely attend the setting she has not yet obtained written permission for them to self-administer medication should they require it.

Children have good opportunities to enjoy and develop their physical skills. The garden is available to them in all weathers and children are able to enjoy activities such as swing ball, space hoppers, a slide and a trampoline. They have regular opportunities to visit the local park and play hide and seek and they also enjoy wide open spaces, such as the local cricket ground on occasions. Inside the setting they have opportunities to play physical games, such as those that encourage them to move about and find things and they enjoy activities, such as threading beads and buttons, which help to refine their small motor skills.

Children are developing a good awareness and understanding of simple good health and hygiene practices. Most are familiar with routines and the childminder verbally reminds the younger children when they need to wash their hands and why. As a result, they know they must wash their hands after touching the dog, after using toilet and before their meals. They are also aware that they need to remove germs. Children learn about healthy eating through the childminder talking about what healthy food is and introduction of new foods, such as different types of fruit. As a result, they know what is healthy food. For example, they are able to give examples of vegetables and fruit and know these help them become strong and healthy. Children are well nourished through childminder and parents working together well and providing appropriate healthy and nutritious food. Their dietary needs are successfully met and they know they can ask for drinks at any time. However, the childminder does not currently promote further understanding and the children's own responsibility in drinking plenty, by encouraging their independence in accessing them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are able to develop a very good sense of belonging in this warm and welcoming child-friendly accommodation. Space is used effectively and creatively with rooms that have posters, paintings and photos of children's work displayed and activities set out to promote different types of play. For example, children use the front room for quieter activities and in the dining room both large and small tables, which are placed against the wall, allow opportunities for art and craft experiences as well as space for floor activities in the dining room. Toys and activities are kept organised and safe for children to use, which allows them to safely develop good independence.

Overall children are cared for well in a very clean, well maintained and safe environment. The childminder takes some good positive steps both outside and inside her home, such as fitting safety gates on doors to stop the dog from being with children unsupervised. She also checks the identification of visitors before they enter the setting and has written risk assessments that minimise risks to children for most areas of the provision. In addition to this, she has devised and written up policies regarding children becoming lost and has safe systems in place should parents be unable to personally collect their children. However, although the front external door is locked most of the time, when parents begin to collect children it is occasionally left unlocked, which means children could exit the premises unsupervised or unwelcome visitors could enter, without the childminder knowing.

The childminder has good knowledge of signs and symptoms of child abuse. She has updated her knowledge through training since changes in legislation have occurred and is confident in knowing procedures to follow if concerns are raised, both with children and should a person in her setting be accused. For example, she knows to make records and to contact social services for advice and to refer any concerns. She also has appropriate written guidance for her and the parents and has contact numbers easily available for the emergency services. As a result, children's welfare is safeguarded well.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are relaxed and settle quickly in this friendly setting. They are happy, enjoy coming to the setting and use their initiative well. For example, they know where their outdoor clothes are kept and place them there independently. They are confident in approaching the childminder for help or to ask her questions and they select activities independently and confidently from range of low-level draws and shelves, which in turn gives them opportunities to develop choice and decision-making skills.

The childminder interacts and supports children well. She gives them lots of choices during activities. For example, when engaging in threading beads and buttons, she asks if they want to use string or wool and how long they want the string to be. She also extends their learning through their play well. For example, mathematical understanding is promoted by asking if the string needs to be half or a quarter of the length and she asks open-ended questions that make children think, such as asking what they need to do to the string to make beads stay on. As a result, children are stimulated and interested; they focus on their activities and respond to challenge well.

There are positive, relaxed and friendly relationships in place between the childminder and the children. The childminder talks to children about their interests, which encourages their confidence and communication skills. As children only attend before and after school and during school holidays, she allows them to freely choose most of their activities. She does, however, plan some activities to provide a stimulating day during school holidays. For example, art and craft activities and trips and outings. Children are able to acquire new knowledge and skills from a very good range of toys and activities that cover all areas of play and are appropriate for their ages and abilities. For example, they have access to a wealth of board games and are able to enjoy stimulating trips to local a museum and places such as the seaside.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder respects and values all children. She spends time equally with them all, making sure they are actively involved in constructive activities of their choice. For example, when they begin to lose interest and start to use equipment inappropriately she encourages them to put this away and choose a more constructive activity. She successfully supports children with learning difficulties. For example, she completes additional training courses to develop her knowledge and understanding of the children's condition and works effectively with parents, keeping up to date on their progress. Children have good opportunities to learn about the diversity of the wider world through a good selection of resources and activities that promote positive images of diversity. For example, they are able to use Japanese and German card games.

Clear expectations are in place regarding children's behaviour and these are appropriately shared with children and effectively shared with parents through a written behaviour policy. Children over the age of eight years are encouraged to help and care for younger ones. For example, they are encouraged to serve their snacks and help them with computer programs. This in turn, helps those under eight years to observe and learn to care for and respect others. The childminder has sound understanding of age-appropriate methods to use with inappropriate behaviour. As a result, children behave well, respect each other and play well together.

There are professional, friendly relationships in place between the childminder and children. The childminder works well with parents to meet individual children's needs. For example, addition consent in writing is obtained for photographs of children doing activities, any sun creams to be administered and use of outdoor equipment and outings. Information on the children's development and learning is shared appropriately through daily conversations both before and after their care, and the information on the setting is shared well. For example, parents receive a parents' pack, which includes written policies, and there is a noticeboard available in the setting where certificates are displayed regarding the registration and insurance held. Additional information is also on view promoting children's safety when using the internet. This helps to promote consistency, clarity and continuity in the children's overall care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Robust vetting procedures ensure children are well cared for and protected. For example, the childminder makes sure children are not left alone with any other adults and ensures all checks are completed on all adults in home, including regular visitors to the setting. The adult to child ratio supports children's care, learning and play appropriately and space and resources are effectively, creatively and safely organised. Time is used well. For example, the childminder actively plays with children and also invites them to participate in routines, such as preparing and serving snacks.

Knowledge and understanding of child development is good and the childminder has a good regard for the well-being of all children, which supports children's overall care and learning well. For example, in addition to the childminder obtaining the required qualifications to work as a childminder, she completes additional courses, such as developing knowledge on Dyspraxia and attending Early Years Foundation Stage forums to develop her knowledge and understanding. She also works for other childcare provisions and, as a result, she completes further training courses that promote the children's overall well-being. For example, child protection.

Almost all policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution, although there is an occasional lapse in the security of the premises. Almost all required documentation is fully maintained, stored appropriately and easily available. However, the record of children's attendance does not clearly show if children arrive at different times.

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 take action to improve children's safety by ensuring all persons living or regularly present in the household, over the age of 16 years, are notified to Ofsted and undergo checks including a criminal records check. As a result of this, she has developed her knowledge and understanding of this requirement and improved children's safety by informing Ofsted of all persons living or regularly present and has ensured they have completed an appropriate criminal records checks. She also ensures children are never left alone with persons living or regularly present in the household.

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 complaint 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):

- improve children's safety by ensuring children cannot leave the premises at all times
- extend the record of children's attendance to include all anomalies regarding individual arrival and departure times.

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