



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	303666
Inspection date	08 June 2005
Inspector	Annette Stanger

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.
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WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 1995. She lives with her husband and two children in an stone cottage in Southowram, Halifax. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there are two fully enclosed garden areas for outside play. Toilet facilities are located upstairs and older children have access to her sons bedroom which is also on the first floor.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time when working alone and 12 children when working with her assistants. She is currently caring for older children before and after school and children under 5 years

of age during the day. The childminder does not work Bank Holidays or Fridays. The family have a cat.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA) and belongs to a quality assurance scheme 'Children Come First'.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because the childminder follows highly effective procedures and practices, which meet the children's physical, nutritional, and health needs. They are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment where they learn the importance of effective hygiene practice. The exceptional adult support and guidance helps children gain an excellent understanding of hygiene practices that actively increases their independence in their personal care. Arrangements for first aid and administering medication meet all requirements and protect children. The childminder takes effective action when children are ill and acts in the child's best interest to protect their welfare. Arrangements for pets are effective in ensuring they do not pose a health risk to children.

Mealtimes are a social time and are used successfully to maximise opportunities for social development and to promote children's growing independence. The childminder provides a choice of nutritious meals and snacks that appeal to the children and is successful in meeting their individual dietary requirements. She encourages the children to make healthy choices to contribute to their well-being, healthy growth and development. They have access to frequent drinks throughout the day and the childminder provides further drinks in hot weather. The childminder is innovative in her approach to raising children's awareness and understanding of healthy eating. She involves children through activities such as growing their own vegetables for casseroles, and visits to the local farm. In response, this models children's appreciation and enjoyment of food. She is clearly committed to ensuring she is aware of current food hygiene practices and is proactive in her approach in keeping abreast of the latest guidance.

Children enjoy a stimulating range of activities, which contribute to them being healthy and physically active. The childminder and her assistants have an excellent understanding of each child's stage of development resulting in well-pitched physical challenges for the children. Children have very good co-ordination and balance and a very good awareness of space. For example, pedalling bikes and steering successfully to manoeuvre around obstacles, and throwing to a target with developing skill.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder takes positive steps to safeguard and promote children's welfare and

has relevant procedures and documentation in place to support this, such as risk assessments. Most potential risks are minimised successfully and this means that children are able to move around freely and safely indoors and in most of the areas outdoors.

Levels of supervision and support are good and protect children whilst allowing them the freedom to make choices, explore and access opportunities independently. Children are included in the making of rules when using the trampoline and this helps to raise their awareness of how to protect themselves from harm and keep themselves safe, contributing to their own well-being.

Furniture and equipment are safe and well maintained to meet the varying needs of the children. Children independently select activities from a range of good quality toys and resources, which meet safety standards and are in good repair.

The childminder fully understands her role in child protection and is able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary to protect children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children achieve well and make rapid progress because the childminder and her assistants are highly skilled. They successfully use their extensive understanding of early years to provide high quality, enjoyable experiences for children. Adult-child interactions are extremely supportive and enable children to be inquisitive and express their ideas through a stimulating range of exploratory and sensory experiences. For example, playing with the sand, using chalks to make meaningful marks and pictures on the flagstones, and then washing off with water, effecting and observing change.

The children clearly enjoy their time at the childminder's and are happy, enthusiastic and extremely eager to participate in a range of activities. The childminder is highly successful in achieving an excellent balance between adult and child-led experiences. Children are given time to fully absorb themselves in their chosen activities and explore resources at their own pace. The childminder and her assistants spend time listening to children and truly value their contribution, which in turn increases children's levels of self-esteem. These highly effective interactions enhanced by very good questioning techniques encourage the children to learn actively through play and acquire new skills.

The childminder knows the children extremely well and is very sensitive towards their individual needs. Close and caring relationships are evident, which increases the children's sense of trust, and help them to develop a strong sense of self and well-being.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder is highly effective in meeting individual needs and treats all children with equal concern. She encourages them all to play a full part in the provision because she values and respects their individuality and the uniqueness of each child. She ensures all children can take part in activities appropriate to their needs and abilities, and is extremely successful in promoting an inclusive provision for all.

Children's behaviour is exemplary in response to the childminder's positive and consistent approach. Clear and realistic boundaries are effective and help children to learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. This helps to increase children's understanding of right and wrong and establish very good social skills. Children respond well to the childminder's excellent use of praise and encouragement, which builds their self-esteem. Such strategies encourage children to play together harmoniously and show high levels of care and concern for one another.

The excellent partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being and development. This two-way sharing of information and expertise allows the childminder to continually meet the children's ever-changing needs and keeps both parties well informed. The childminder communicates effectively with them and shares information about the children on a daily basis. Children clearly benefit from this highly effective partnership and settle well in response, which enhances their experience and makes it a positive one.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder has an excellent knowledge and understanding of child development and a high regard for the well-being of children. Required adult: child ratios are met and provide very good levels of care and supervision to ensure children are well supported.

She is highly successful in providing a true participative environment that enables children to make choices and decisions and contribute to their own learning experiences. She organises the space and resources extremely effectively to enable children and follows individual routines to promote their welfare, care and development. In response, children are secure and confident in their surroundings and are successful in initiating and extending their own play and learning.

All of the required documentation is in place to promote the care and welfare of children. Overall, the provision effectively meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last Children Act inspection recommended that the childminder should; improve risk assessments for outdoor play in the back garden, build upon existing soft furnishings to make the playroom more welcoming and improve the existing registration record to obtain additional information about children.

The childminder has made good progress in addressing these issues to create a welcoming and child-centred environment. The main playroom includes welcoming and comfortable areas for both rest and play purposes. Children's records have been further developed to request additional information from parents, to meet all individual needs and preferences. Safety procedures have also been improved upon and a risk assessment for outdoor play in the back garden has been carried out. The childminder only allows children from six years of age to use this area and younger children use a separate play area. Most potential risks have been successfully minimised but there remains some areas for improvement, such as safety rules for using the trampoline and access to the water feature.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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 safety in the back garden by ensuring all potential hazards are effectively minimised.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk