



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	310790
Inspection date	24 February 2006
Inspector	Cathleen Howarth
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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder registered in 1993. She lives with her husband, who is a co childminder, and two adult children in Meltham, Holmfirth. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there are fully enclosed gardens for outside play.

When working alone the childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time, and when working with a co childminder the maximum is 10 children. There are currently 17 children on roll, 6 of these are under 8 years. Transport is provided for school runs and outings.

The family has two pet cats and a dog which have access to the house.

The childminder is a member of Kirklees Childminding Association and the National Childminding Association. She has obtained the Kirklees Quality Award, Quality For Young Children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are exceedingly well protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill. The childminder rigorously follows current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines. Comprehensive policies are in place including medication, accident, and existing injury records. These are countersigned by parents to promote continuity of care. Educational posters, listing signs and symptoms of infectious diseases, are displayed. Children have exceptionally good knowledge and understanding of these as they were included in the recent health promotion which covered all aspects of staying healthy. All children contributed to the 'Healthy Me' collage and took part in relevant activities promoting their good health. An example of one of the innovative activities, organised to reinforce children's learning, includes children making a skeleton out of straws to show how their body moves. All washing and safe cleaning products are available for children to use. They know to use colour coded cleaning cloths such as blue for loo to avoid spreading germs. The cute visual reminder on the back of the toilet door attracts children's attention and says, 'if you sprinkle when you tinkle please be neat and wipe the seat.'

Children enthusiastically take part and enjoy regular physical activity both indoors and outdoors. They have learnt how to play cricket, croquet and other ball games on the lawn which enables children to develop muscle tone and co ordination. They have their own garden shed full of quality resources to support their fitness regime such as ride-on equipment, football and basket ball, skipping ropes and a host of other items used by individual children and as part of a team. Children systematically help to clean and maintain their equipment, including repair work during supervised access to the childminder's shed and tools.

Children rest and sleep according to their needs, for example, in summer they relax in the hammock in the back garden. They use the front room as a quiet room to sit and read quietly.

Arrangements for pets successfully promote high levels of hygiene and ensure they do not pose a health risk to children. The dog and cats are regularly wormed and vaccinated at the vets and are clearly well looked after. The childminder employs a cleaner. Very high standards of hygiene and cleanliness are maintained in the well ventilated home, and sets a very good example to children to promote their good health.

Children have learnt the importance of eating healthily. The childminder continually reinforces this by regularly providing a balanced range of nutritional food and drinks. For example, children grow their own fruit and vegetables in a designated plot in the garden. They have learnt the versatility of potatoes and can wash, peel, cut, boil, mash, bake and cream their potatoes which they eat mainly at tea time. Children collate their favourite recipes to take home and share with friends. They actively contribute to meal planning and preparation including five a day portions of fruit and vegetables, and are given choices such as whether they drink milk, water or unsweetened juice. As a result their daily nutritional requirements are extremely well met. In addition, food preparation procedures are consistently high.

There is a visual reminder, displayed on the dining room wall at child's height, to show how food can be used in activities like making necklaces out of dried pasta shells. It also successfully encourages children to plan relevant menus and to include food from around the world. There is a highly comprehensive sample menu available for children to glean ideas if they have special dietary requirements such as vegetarian or allergies. Children have made a pictorial food pyramid by cutting pictures out of magazines to promote healthy eating. At the top of the pyramid, in small quantities, are treats such as chocolate and sweets.

Breakfast and mealtimes are treated as social occasions. Self-help skills have been significantly developed like setting the table, serving, selecting and clearing away. Children take it in turns to ring the gong to gather other children to the table or breakfast bar. In summer children thoroughly enjoy eating outside under the pergola. This inspires children to respond well to mealtime routines. Consequently their physical and emotional well-being is significantly enhanced. As a result of the above robust routines, children arrive at school fortified, alert, clean and smart.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder has very high expectations of what children can achieve with regard to personal safety. Children have learnt boundaries and limits exceedingly well in order to keep safe, such as leaving the house in an orderly fashion for the school run. They line up to get seated properly in the people carrier and without prompting use age appropriate seat restraints. The setting is a detached house in the corner of a residential cul de sac. The childminder promotes very effective working relationships with neighbours and parents who work together to keep children safe. Robust road safety precautions, which are actively reinforced by children on the school run, are exemplary. During trips and outings children wear the setting's Busy Bees caps so that they are easily recognised in crowds.

The childminder has exceptional understanding of the need for a balance between freedom and safe limits. For example, children have restricted and supervised access to the fish pond which has been cordoned off. Children have developed high levels of awareness regarding personal safety and therefore minimal physical barriers are in place, such as child safety gates, although all safety equipment has been obtained.

Children have very safe and independent access to a wealth of age-appropriate toys, books, furniture and resources which are frequently rotated to provide variety. Without prompting children tidy up their toys and equipment as they have learnt to take responsibility for themselves and the safety of others. They play with top quality resources and equipment that are of good design and condition, which they help to check regularly for repair and replacement.

All fire safety precautions are in place. In addition, the childminder obtains a fire safety certificate to show fire checks have been completed annually by the fire service. Children have enthusiastic links with the local fire station and officers. They have visited the station as part of an educational outing to reinforce fire safety. They have learnt, and continue to practise, emergency evacuation procedures to take responsibility for their own safety. The fire plan is displayed and detailed records of drills maintained to show which children have taken part. This enables the

childminder to plan the next drill when other children are present. Children have transferred their in depth knowledge and understanding of these procedures to home, where they practice with their parents. This demonstrates the childminder's systematic commitment to working in partnership with parents and other agencies to effectively promote children's overall safety.

Children are fully protected because the childminder has an excellent understanding of her role in child protection. She is well able to recognise signs of abuse and neglect. If necessary she can put appropriate procedures into practice, such as recording existing injuries, concerns and reporting these to the relevant agencies. She regularly attends relevant in service training in order to keep up to date with developments, and is aware of the move towards Local Safeguarding Children's Boards in April 2006.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly motivated to develop meaningful social relationships, which is an integral part of the settings ethos, and is evident in the exemplary outcomes for children. The childminder continually plans new and different activities with children who then assist to evaluate what has been achieved. The child-led provision is therefore a vibrant and dynamic place for children to learn through play.

Children are extremely confident and self-assured. They take part in theatrical performances with appropriate props and costumes which they make themselves. They hand out tickets which they make for the shows, and organise themselves to ensure there is a director and musician. Children are inspired to use their imagination and prepare well for special events such as Halloween, when they made their own costumes and pumpkins. Supervised unobtrusively by the childminders, they went round the local neighbourhood playing 'trick or treat'. Children use their initiative consistently when they use the computer to research homework projects. There is a multitude of different board games and magazines which reflect their varied interests.

Children achieve new knowledge and skills through the in-house library which is carefully categorised and labelled. It is well stocked and maintained in different sections for children to choose books and activity sheets for their self-chosen topic. Children respond very positively to challenge. Science is included in supervised play in the workshop. They experiment and build on their ideas to make gadgets in addition to helping to construct sets for their theatre.

There are clearly defined areas and continuous provision including facilities for quiet, relaxing activities. The front room, which the children call the Cinema, has a television and video which is used in a measured way and as a novelty. This is where children eat home-made popcorn. As children are pre occupied with the extremely wide range of hands-on activities in other rooms, children accept the room is mostly used in term time as a quiet area, where children read, look at picture books or complete their written homework. During school holidays they mainly use the room for rest and sleep, as some children attend for long periods.

First class trips and outings are organised for school holidays and children sometimes join others from a different setting. They dressed up in scary costumes for the Ghost Train at Clayton West, and demonstrated courage when they learnt how to ice skate on the outdoor skating-rink at

Leeds. Children thoroughly enjoyed interactive experiences at The Royal Armouries in Leeds and Eureka in Halifax. They have been to the Thackeray Medieval Museum in Leeds where they watched a slide show, and to Butterfly World at Roundhey Park where they learnt about rare and exotic breeds. Live theatre, such as the musical performance of the Magic Tree at the Lawrence Batley Theatre, inspires children to create their own productions like their Murder Mystery drama. They went to watch The People Circus and were mesmerized by the event. During the school holidays the childminder provides free healthy packed lunches for day trips, and children enjoy an occasional treat eating out.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are treated as unique individuals with equal concern. Their individual needs are well met as rigorous assessment procedures are in place to enable the childminder to develop full knowledge and understanding of each child's background, stage of development and additional requirements. She very effectively liaises with parents and maintains meticulously detailed records. All children are fully integrated at the setting as the childminder demonstrates a high level of awareness of inclusion, giving many examples of how this is achieved. For example, Macaton signing is taught and used consistently. Children understand its purpose and are aware some children have different needs and levels of ability.

Children mainly behave impeccably. They have written and displayed house rules to which they adhere most of the time. The childminder uses age appropriate strategies such as distraction to effectively manage children's differing behaviour. Children have developed a strong sense of belonging at the childminder's home because they are treated as part of the extended family, and are nurtured in a welcoming, stable environment. Most children have attended for many years and do not want to leave. There is an ongoing 'buddy' system where newcomers are befriended by a compatible child, and children take it in turns to meet and greet children, parents and visitors. Each child has a personalised coat hook and space on a shoe stand that is used without prompting.

Children's good behaviour is actively encouraged through positive role modelling, meaningful praise, and valuing good behaviour through the 'special mentions book'. Children are inspired to contribute to meetings organised round the kitchen table. They enthusiastically discuss childminding arrangements to promote the smooth running of the service. Children belong to specific groups distinguished by colour. Groups compete for coloured marbles which are placed in a pot. The group with the most marbles win a prize. There is a well stocked prize box containing quality rewards such as CD's, grow charts, and items for art work.

Children demonstrate their real commitment to good citizenship and raise money for charity like Children In Need, Red Nose Day, and the Fireman's Benevolent Fund. There is a skilful balance of adult led and child initiated activities which allow children to make choices and decisions promoting confidence and self-esteem. Children are encouraged to use the 'Worry Box' if there is anything that upsets them which they are not ready to talk about. This came about as a result of reinforcing Anti Bullying Week at school.

Children and parents actively contribute to various house parties which are an opportune time for adults and children to relax in a supportive, social environment. Occasionally parents are invited to

stay for an evening meal with their children. They are familiar with the setting's policy and procedure file and receive a professionally presented welcome pack when their child is registered. Parents praise and commend the excellent standards of care.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder has an exceptionally clear vision and sense of purpose for the first class service she provides. She demonstrates real commitment to continual improvement through the many qualifications she has obtained, including the Kirklees Quality Award. She has attended numerous workshops this year, outside of childminding hours, to keep fully up to date with current child care practice. The childminder's natural ability to transfer knowledge into positive action is clearly evident in the excellent outcomes for children. She continually strives to enhance the quality of care by evaluating the service in partnership with children, parents and the Local Authority (LA). The childminder has interpreted the National Standards in a dynamic way and in the best interests of children. Exemplary child care practices have recently been promoted and disseminated through the LA's training video.

Good adult - child ratios are consistently maintained to provide exceedingly good quality care for children. The organisation of space is varied and imaginative. There are clearly defined areas supporting an excellent range of activities including quality provision for meals, rest, indoor and outdoor play.

The childminder makes best use of her time by planning the day in consultation with children whose needs and wishes are paramount. The husband and wife team work extremely well together and their individual child care skills compliment each other. They deploy themselves superbly well remaining focused on children's needs.

Daily and weekly routines are established, such as school runs and meal times, to provide a secure and predictable environment where children flourish.

All the required documentation is in place and meticulously maintained to promote children's care, welfare and learning. Important notices are displayed in prominent positions. Records are stored securely and maintained in an orderly fashion for easy access. Clearly written policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and countersigned by parents to keep them fully informed about the setting.

The childminder places strong emphasis on confidentiality and shares relevant information with parents and school. Overall, the provision meets the needs of children attending.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was required to include outings and visits in risk assessments. Detailed risk assessments of areas used by children, including trips and outings, are available for parents to view. This has improved children's overall safety and keeps parents informed about their children's welfare.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaint by the 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 outstanding. 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

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

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