

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	310890
Inspection date	18 February 2008
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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder registered in 1984. She lives with her husband and children aged 13, 17 and two adult children in Quarmby, Huddersfield. Most of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding, and there are fully enclosed grounds and gardens for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding 11 children. Of these, three are over eight years. The provision includes before and after school care. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. Transport can also be arranged. The childminder attends the local parent and toddler group and playgroup. The family has two dogs which have access to the house.

There is provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association. She has obtained the local authority golden award for healthy eating. An independent award has been obtained for providing a smoke free environment.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well protected from infection and promptly taken care of if they have an accident or become ill. The childminder consistently follows current environmental health and hygiene guidelines. Medication, accident, and existing injury records are systematically maintained and countersigned by parents to promote children's continuing care.

Older children understand the importance of good personal care routines, like washing their hands after using the toilet. They spontaneously use pump soap and individual clean towels to wash and dry their hands. The childminder ensures towels are changed daily to minimise cross contamination. There are effective nappy changing and toilet training facilities and procedures in place to clearly support early stage children's personal care routines.

The childminder positively promotes healthy lifestyles. Children enthusiastically take part in regular physical activity. They use the local park and take part in various ball games, such as football, which helps them to develop muscle tone and coordination. They have great fun at the play gym where they are learning to climb, swing, crawl and balance in a safe environment. They enjoy walks in the wood and feeding the ducks. There are well organised routines in place for the family's pet dogs to ensure they do not pose a health risk to children.

Children have learnt the importance of eating healthily. The childminder continually reinforces this by regularly providing a balanced range of nutritional food and drinks. As a result, children's daily nutritional requirements are well met and food preparation procedures are sound.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe environment, which is routinely risk assessed before they arrive. At the inspection the childminder changed the conditions of registration to include provision for outside play in the grounds and gardens. However, arrangements for this had not been included in the existing written risk assessment.

The childminder has a good understanding of the need for a balance between freedom and safe limits. For example, she successfully promotes personal safety. As a result, children have ample choice in where they play because they understand boundaries and limits. They know not to take drinks out of the kitchen in order to avoid spills. Children are kept safe on outings when they travel in the car. The childminder systematically uses age appropriate child safety seats and booster seats to actively promote their safety, and to comply with current legislation. Road safety is continuously reinforced.

Children play with quality resources and equipment that are of good design and condition. The childminder checks them regularly for repair and replacement. Children have learnt to tidy up to minimise the risk of accidental injury.

All fire safety precautions are in place. Children practise the emergency evacuation procedure to encourage them to act responsibly in an emergency. The current public liability insurance certificate is available for parents to view.

Children are professionally safeguarded because the childminder has secure knowledge and understanding of her role in child protection. She knows the appropriate procedures to follow should a concern arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children access an excellent range of resources and equipment, which are used imaginatively to support their overall care, learning and development. The childminder gives high priority to developing children's social skills and independence through interactive play. She knows children learn best from first hand experiences and effectively plans and evaluates activities with children and their parents. Children go on first rate educational trips and outings. They buy day rover tickets for use on public transport and go to see rare and exotic animals and birds. They self-select picture books from the library and listen carefully to relevant stories, recalling what they have seen and learnt.

Children proficiently build on their natural curiosity as learners, effectively developing listening and speaking skills. They dress up in realistic costumes and pretend to be a waiter in a café, a chef and a doctor using appropriate props and accessories to act out imaginary scenarios.

An exemplary feature is children's full participation in the outstanding range of activities, as seen in their records of achievement, which are meticulously maintained. They are clearly using what they know and learning more in a caring and supportive child centred environment. Children concentrate superbly well and show great interest in what they do when they use a wide range of quality musical instruments to make different sounds. Children accomplish new knowledge and skills when they learn how to bake and decorate buns. They are forming strong social relationships when they organise sleepovers at each other's houses and when they attend birthday parties.

The childminder professionally teaches children colours, numbers, letters and shapes. A good example is the creative way in which she reinforces mathematical thinking through fun activities, such as using the height chart and rain gauge.

Children relate exceedingly well to their carer. Babies spontaneously hold out their hands for a cuddle. There is a happy, relaxed atmosphere at the childminder's house.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with equal concern, and are fully included and involved. They are developing an awareness of diversity in the wider community, such as gender, ethnicity and disability through relevant activities and resources. The childminder effectively promotes anti-discriminatory practice. There are good systems in place to provide for children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Children are courteous and behave well. Minor differences are effectively managed and older children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. Their good behaviour is consistently encouraged through positive role modelling, meaningful praise and by valuing cooperative behaviour. As a result, children are learning to share, take turns and to be kind during their play. This helps children to develop their self-esteem and respect for others.

Good citizenship is actively promoted when children fill shoeboxes with toys to send to children in other countries. They effectively demonstrate concern for others and a willingness to share.

Children are well looked after according to parents' wishes. Written parental consent is obtained for various childcare practices, like transport and outings. The childminder respects confidentiality and shares relevant information with parents. Parents know how to raise complaints through the appropriate procedure. The childminder has received many written testimonies from parents complimenting her on the quality service she provides.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder has been registered for 24 years. She is clearly a very competent child carer who has developed an exceptionally clear vision and sense of purpose for the first class service she provides. She demonstrates a real commitment to continual improvement through the many workshops attended since the last inspection. As a result, she has effectively demonstrated she keeps up to date with current childcare practice, which is evident in the consistently good outcomes for children.

Exemplary childcare practices are highlighted under enjoying and achieving. The childminder continually strives to enhance the quality of care by evaluating the service in partnership with children and parents. The childminder has interpreted the National Standards in a dynamic way and in the best interests of children.

Good adult-to-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 in the home effectively supporting a wide range of activities, including quality provision for meals, rest, indoor and outdoor play.

The childminder makes the best use of her time by planning the day in consultation with children whose needs and wishes are paramount. She deploys herself superbly well, remaining focused on the needs and wishes of children. Daily and weekly routines are well established, such as school runs and mealtimes, to provide a stable, predictable environment where children thrive in a close family environment.

All of the required documentation is in place and meticulously maintained to promote children's care, welfare and learning. Records are stored securely and in an orderly way for easy access. The childminder regularly reviews the comprehensive policy and procedure file which keeps parents fully informed about the provision and their children's welfare.

The childminder places strong emphasis on confidentiality and shares relevant information with parents and schools. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection one action was raised to improve documentation in relation to safety. The childminder has obtained clearances from Ofsted for family members to assist. This has been done to enhance adult-to-child ratios in the best interests of children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- include the grounds and gardens in the existing written risk assessment and make parents aware of the new arrangements.

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