

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	317973
Inspection date	07 January 2008
Inspector	Karen Cockings
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 satisfactory. 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 1999. She lives with her husband and two sons in a suburb of Doncaster. The dining kitchen and conservatory on the ground floor of the house are available for childminding and the upstairs bathroom. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The family has a rabbit.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time. She currently cares for three pre-school children and two of school age. She sometimes works with her husband as her assistant.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and comfortable home, where the childminder takes appropriate measures to protect them from the spread of infection. They are reminded about washing their hands after using the toilet although not always before eating. Wipes are readily available to minimise the risk of infections spreading through the sharing of toys. For example, the childminder encourages children to wipe the harmonica after they have used it. She also reminds children with coughs to put their hands in front of their mouths. She advises parents that she is not able to provide care for children with infectious illnesses but does not have this in writing to share with parents and also does not have any information available about childhood ailments and incubation periods.

Children have opportunities for fresh air and exercise, which helps to keep them fit and well. They walk to and from school, sometimes calling at the park on the way back. There is an enclosed garden with suitable equipment, such as trampoline, slide and basket ball net, for children to use in fine weather. Younger children attend local play groups where they have access to other physical play resources. Indoors, they practise physical skills as they stand, walk and crawl between rooms and reach out for toys.

At present, most parents send packed lunches for their children but the childminder has a good selection of fruit available for snacks if needed. She is willing to provide a cooked tea if children stay later in the evening. Their dietary needs are discussed with parents and any allergies or special requirements are noted. The childminder offers regular drinks of dilute juice or water throughout the day. Children are sometimes involved in baking and food preparation activities, such as helping to spread butter on their bread for sandwiches.

The childminder has an up-to-date first aid certificate to ensure that she is able to deal appropriately with accidents. She has a suitable record keeping system for the recording of accidents and medication administered. However, she does not currently keep a record of any existing injuries.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are kept secure as the childminder makes sure that the outer door is locked with the keys hanging nearby but out of their reach. The environment is comfortable, with suitable equipment available to keep younger children safe. Boxes of toys are brought out for children to choose from and set out within their reach. The childminder regularly checks and cleans equipment to ensure that it is suitable for children's use.

Appropriate measures are taken to minimise risks and hazards. For example, a safety gate is fitted at the foot of the stairs and there are locks on cupboards and drawers in the kitchen. Fire safety is addressed well as the childminder has appliances, such as fire blanket and smoke detectors, in place and has devised a written and pictorial emergency evacuation plan, which she practises with older children. During outings she teaches children about road safety; they know that they hold hands near the roads and watch for oncoming traffic. She uses reins if necessary with younger children.

The childminder has a satisfactory understanding of her responsibilities with regard to child protection. She has attended some training and has a basic written policy that she shares with parents. Guidance materials and information about local procedures are not readily available. This hinders her ability to act promptly if she has any concerns about children, although she has a reasonable understanding of signs and symptoms.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the childminder's care. They relate confidently to her and enjoy exploring the resources set out for them. She does not formally plan but she ensures that children take part in a variety of activities, both indoors and outside the home. They attend local children's groups and visit the park and the library. She asks older children what they would like to do and observes children to find out about their particular interests.

The childminder has some information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework but has not used it extensively to support her practice and to reflect on how younger children are developing. However, she enables children to explore interesting resources, such as a selection of musical instruments and a range of interactive toys. Children enjoy finding out what sounds they can make as they blow into recorders and shake the maracas. There are opportunities for children to handle different materials, as they pat and roll dough and spread glue to make a pom-pom picture. Children attending after school like to play outside, do craft activities and play with electronic toys.

The childminder interacts warmly with children and manages different ages and stages of development appropriately. For example, she understands if younger children are a little jealous, takes them on her knee and gives cuddles. She talks and listens to children, helping to develop their communication skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder finds out about children's individual needs and interests so that she can give appropriate care. She provides a variety of toys and activities for them to enable them to make some choices about their play. Regular outings in the local area help to increase their awareness of the community in which they live. There are some resources, such as videos, books and dolls, that show positive images of different cultures, although these are fairly limited at present. The childminder talks to children about issues as they arise, to help children begin to understand and appreciate similarities and differences. She is willing to work with parents and other professionals to support children who have additional needs, although she has limited experience in this area.

Children develop confidence in themselves because the childminder gives them encouragement and acknowledges their achievements. She shows them that they are valued by listening to what they have to say. Appropriate strategies, such as short periods of 'time out', are used to deal with disruptive or challenging behaviour. She teaches children about the need to share and to take turns as they play.

The childminder recognises the importance of working closely with parents in order to meet children's needs. There are suitable systems of information sharing in place, including a welcome file for new parents so that they have a broad picture of how the service operates. Contracts

are drawn up with parents but all required written parental consents are not clearly obtained, such as general permission for outings. The childminder encourages parents to share any concerns with her and has developed a written complaints procedure but she is not fully familiar with current regulations regarding the investigation and recording of complaints.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a comfortable family environment, where space and resources are suitably organised to promote their safety, welfare and learning. The childminder manages her day to ensure that children enjoy a variety of play experiences, both indoors and outside the setting. She attends some additional training and workshops to support her practice.

Record keeping is maintained satisfactorily although written parental consents for outings are not consistently obtained. Also, the registration certificate is not on display for parents to see. These are breaches in the conditions and requirements of registration, which means that children's welfare is not fully safeguarded. The childminder has devised a number of written policies and procedures although some, such as child protection and complaints, have not been updated to reflect changes.

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 agreed to consider a written policy about the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious to share with parents. She has not developed a written policy but she talks to parents about the need to find alternative care if their children have an infectious illness. She also agreed to include the address of the regulator in her complaints procedure. This has not yet been fully updated although a telephone number for Ofsted is included in case parents need to take any concerns further.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- develop the range of resources and activities to increase children's awareness of similarities and differences
- develop knowledge and understanding of regulations with regard to the investigation and recording of complaints
- review the systems for obtaining written parental consents to ensure that all are in place
- ensure that the registration certificate is on display for parents.

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