

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	400991
Inspection date	25 January 2008
Inspector	Diane Roberts
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 1986. She lives with her husband and grown up child in Ingleton, Lancashire. Two assistants are employed on an ad hoc basis. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is an enclosed rear garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding four children under five and six child over five before and after school. The childminder walks to the local school to take and collect children and attends local toddler and childminding groups.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted through the conscientious application of good hygiene practices, thereby preventing the spread of infection. The childminder gives high priority to following positive practices to help to reduce the risk of the spread of infection and children's exposure to germs, for example, by using disposable gloves when changing children's nappies and regular cleaning routines to provide a clean and hygienic environment. Children are taught from a young age how to wash and dry their hands. Through skilful role modelling by the childminder, children learn positive hygiene practices. For instance, children know to wash and dry their hands after having their nappy changed, using the toilet and before they eat. The childminder always makes sure children have ample time to finish their play before they eat. This means that children do not skimp on important routines, such as hand washing, thereby their health is protected.

Children have a good introduction to a healthy lifestyle. They talk with confidence about what constitutes healthy eating. For example, children ask whether the cheese they are having at tea-time is 'healthy cheese'. By ensuring she is fully aware of what children are eating, the childminder is able to reliably inform children of the healthy benefits of their food. Children enjoy healthy snacks of fruit and regular access to drinks. Fresh fruit is provided that all children can enjoy, such as bananas and grapes. The childminder works closely with parents to ensure that any meals provided are nutritious and healthy. This means children receive consistent and positive messages about making healthy choices.

Children learn about the importance of exercise and the benefits of being in the fresh air through the daily outings they enjoy. Regular walks to the local park or community centre and use of the equipment in the park and back garden stimulates children's interest and helps with their physical development. In the winter, children benefit from trips to the community centre where there is indoor space to run around. They have lots of fun playing team games with a parachute or playing indoor soft-ball games. Occasionally, challenging car races on a carefully constructed obstacle course give children another opportunity to develop their physical skills. When the weather is fine, children enjoy frolicking in the fresh air, racing around the field or rolling down the gently sloping hill surrounding the centre.

Accurate documentation is in place to effectively promote children's health. Clear procedures are followed for the safe administration of medication and managing any accidents that occur, to support children's welfare. The childminder holds a valid first aid certificate to enable her to attend to any minor accidents the children may have.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment where all the necessary precautions have been taken to promote children's safety. For example, the conservatory door is kept locked when not in use to prevent children accessing the external door to the front garden. The rear garden is used for play and access, and is enclosed with a high fence and sturdy lockable gate. Regular risk assessments are completed to ensure that the environment and all furniture, equipment and play provision is in a good state of repair. Visual daily checks enable the childminder to monitor ongoing suitability and use. This means

that children are able to explore freely in a safe environment with access to a suitable range of play provision with very good levels of supervision.

The childminder puts great emphasis on creating a safe child friendly environment. Good quality domestic style furniture such as chairs and settees are organised to help children in developing mobility. For instance, children can safely pull themselves up to a standing position, confident that any of the sturdy pieces of furniture will not topple on them. The childminder's knowledge and experience makes sure children's development is safely promoted. For example, when children are learning to sit up the childminder makes sure they are surrounded by cushions in case they take a tumble. Children use safe and suitable toys and equipment that safely stimulate and challenge them. The childminder is vigilant in making sure that all equipment accessible to children is safe and of good quality. For instance, equipment is changed throughout the day depending on the age and stage of development of children being cared for. A range of good quality cots and pushchairs is available for children to safely rest or sleep without being disturbed. Children who are sleeping are carefully monitored and are frequently checked, thereby keeping them safe.

Children learn safe practices to promote their own safety. For example, they learn basic house rules, such as picking things up off the floor to prevent tripping. They learn that younger children cannot have small items such as crayons as they will put them in their mouth and could choke. When outdoors, the childminder gives high priority to raising children's safety awareness. For instance, children learn about safe road crossing. In the winter when the mornings are darker, children know to stay very close to the childminder as they cannot be seen very well. Walking children under five know they must hold onto the buggy or wear a wrist strap attached to the childminder to keep them safely near by. The childminder always uses the same route when walking to school, so children walking ahead are fully informed of the recognised stops such as near the bridge before the road narrows. This means that children are learning for themselves how to stay safe whilst gaining independence.

Children are protected because the childminder fully understands her role and responsibility with regard to child protection issues. With experience and knowledge, the childminder is aware of the correct child protection procedures to follow should she have a concern about a child in her care. She ensures children's safety by making sure assistants under her employ are vetted and have relevant experience, knowledge and skills. Her appropriate knowledge of her responsibilities, in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures, means she can act quickly in a child's best interest and safeguard their welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the lovely cosy environment skilfully created by the childminder. High priority is given by the caring and conscientious childminder to developing and raising children's confidence and self-esteem. Children often snuggle up to the childminder, secure in her presence. They self-assuredly explore and investigate, relating well to others. For example, a child shows a lot of interest in a visitor with a baby. The childminder expertly models how to best care for babies as the young child sits close to her, watching and listening. The childminder is most sensitive of the child's feelings, paying the child extra attention so she feels fully included. Children acquire new knowledge and skills through the numerous opportunities to explore. For example, a child, fascinated with the baby, tries to put on the baby's coat. The child then goes on to fasten the straps on the vacant car seat. This means that children have plenty of time to explore their environment and resources independently and at

their own pace. When playing with a doll and a pram, a young child skilfully puts on the childminder's gloves. The child has patiently prepared a doll, putting it in a pushchair ready to go out on an imaginary walk. By emulating the positive care of the childminder, children are learning new skills, raising their confidence in their abilities.

Children receive high levels of interaction and stimulation to support their all-round development. The childminder has a clear understanding of each child's learning needs and provides appropriate challenges to help promote and support their progress. For example, by using the 'Birth to three matters' framework, the childminder plans for children's next steps in individual play and learning. By observing and recording what children do on a daily basis she makes sure she does not forget any significant aspect of a child's development. Through discussion the childminder demonstrates her knowledge of each child's stage of development. However, there are no records to indicate each child's starting point, where they are now or where they are working towards in their learning.

The childminder gives parents an example plan of activities for children at registration. At the start of each session the childminder verbally informs parents of the plans for the day. A wide range of play materials is laid out around the room in accessible boxes. Good quality books are available for children to easily access and look at for themselves. To extend the range of play materials the childminder makes sure she visits the local toy library on weekly basis, therefore children remain motivated and interested in what is available. The childminder's active involvement with local childminding groups ensures that children benefit from regular outings to the zoo, and other special occasions such as an Easter Bonnet Parade or Red Nose Day. The childminder's strong commitment to involving children in a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events helps to fully support their development and overall learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are very well met through the positive communication with parents and the documentation in place. At registration, parents are given extensive information about the childminding service including her last Ofsted report. A full discussion takes place between the childminder and parents about their child's highly individual needs including eating and sleeping. The childminder makes sure parents know how she spends her day, for example, visiting the local drop-in where she meets with other childminders and the children enjoy meeting up with their peers. On a daily basis, children benefit from the effective communication between the childminder and their parents as the care provided is consistent with home routine. Parents are confident of their child's care as the childminder's most pleasant manner puts them at ease. The daily updates and the information sharing enable both parties to readily share information to promote consistency and continuity of care.

The childminder is a positive role model and provides children with clear and consistent messages regarding their behaviour. She uses sensitive behaviour management strategies and is consistent in her approach. Children are encouraged to behave well by learning to consider others and what is expected of them as individuals. She makes sure she talks to children with respect and encourages them to say sorry where necessary by skilful role modelling. Children respond well to the clear expectations and are subsequently well-behaved. They learn to be kind to others, to share, care and take turns. They learn about the local environment through visits to places of interest, such as local walks to the park, toddler group and the library. They learn about the wider world in which they live through access to play provision and planned activities where they hear about other countries, such as Poland. Through discussion, children know that there

are many different languages spoken around the world. Children have looked at the different foods people eat from a range of countries. They recently enjoyed lychees, a Chinese fruit. The childminder is conscientious in making sure children feel included in all activities, but have the freedom to follow their own learning agendas. Hence, children are confident and happy and their individuality clearly valued.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming, child-orientated home. The childminder places a strong emphasis on organising space within her home to fully provide for all the children's individual needs. The childminder has a calm, pleasing approach and interacts naturally with the children, showing a genuine respect for their interests and development. She organises her time well to provide children with good levels of support and individual attention.

Children are very well cared for by the childminder with her thorough knowledge and understanding of child development. She is fully committed to improving her knowledge by attending courses and workshops, such as those looking at child protection issues. She uses this knowledge effectively to keep children safe and provide them with a wide range of learning experiences. The childminder has a high regard for the well-being of all children and has a clear sense of purpose and direction, demonstrated by her use of time and resources.

Good organisation of written records and documentation supports the childminder very well in her role. These are accessible, stored confidentially and updated regularly. The childminder has a good understanding of the records, policies and procedures to be kept in respect of the National Standards and of the need to notify Ofsted of significant events and changes. All documentation is regularly reviewed and updated. Thereby, policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution.

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 develop her knowledge and understanding of the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against her or others. The childminder has since refreshed her knowledge and understanding and is now clear about the procedure to follow, thereby further assuring children's safety and well-being.

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

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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):

- review record keeping to clearly show how each child is progressing.

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