



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY232870
Inspection date	08 January 2007
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 2003. She lives with her husband, mother, two adult daughters and son aged 11 years, in a village near Holmfirth, West Yorkshire. The house is in a rural setting but within walking distance of local schools, parks and shops. The sitting room, dining room, bathroom and one bedroom on the ground floor are used for childminding. There is no outdoor play space available for minded children.

Children may have occasional contact with the family's dog and there are other animals kept outdoors.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time. She currently minds five children under five years and two children of school age. All attend on a part-time basis.

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 keep them fit and well. She protects them from the risk of infection by ensuring that parents know they need to make alternative arrangements if their children have an infectious illness, although she has no written information about this to share with parents. Floors and kitchen surfaces are kept clean and children are encouraged to follow safe hygiene practice. The childminder keeps children's soap dispensers in the bathroom as she finds that children are then more eager to wash their hands.

There is no secure outdoor play space at the setting so the childminder regularly takes children on walks and outings in the surrounding countryside. She plans different routes to and from school to give children variety and they visit local parks with her. Inside, she has created more open floor space so that children have room to move about and stretch out on the floor as they play. Younger children like to show others how they can run and change their speed and direction.

At snack time children enjoy a variety of healthy foods, such as fresh and dried fruit, breadsticks and cheese and crackers. Low sugar drinks are also provided. Parents send packed lunches for children who are attending for the full day. Children are not routinely involved in food preparation, although the childminder sometimes plans a baking activity or the children help to make pizzas and enjoy choosing from a variety of toppings.

There are systems in place for the recording of accidents and medication and the childminder obtains written permission from parents to seek emergency treatment. Her first aid training has recently expired but she has enrolled on a refresher course which she is soon to complete. However, failure to have a current first aid certificate means that the childminder is not meeting requirements. She has a first aid kit readily available in case of accidents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder has a responsible attitude towards children's safety, taking suitable measures to maintain a secure environment for them. Access to potentially hazardous areas of the house is restricted by means of safety gates and locks and there is other safety equipment, such as a fireguard and socket covers, in place. The childminder organises resources so that children have open floor space in which to play safely. She regularly checks and cleans toys to ensure that they are safe and suitable for children's use.

Fire safety is addressed well. The childminder has sought the advice of fire safety officers and has suitable appliances, such as smoke detectors and fire blanket in place. She routinely practises evacuation procedures with the children so that they begin to develop an understanding of what to do in an emergency situation. During outings they learn about road safety and she teaches them to be observant in order to keep themselves safe. For example, she points out

where there are potential dangers and they know that they hold hands and stop, look and listen when they reach the kerb.

The childminder has an adequate understanding of her responsibilities with regard to child protection. She has read relevant guidance materials to increase her awareness of this aspect of her practice. However, she does not have information about local procedures readily available for reference if she has concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and relaxed in the childminder's care. She interacts warmly with them, talking to them as they play, which helps to develop language skills. She gets to know children well and is sensitive to individual circumstances that may affect their behaviour. Children are confident to approach her for help and to express their needs and interests. For example, they choose favourite books and cuddle up to her, asking for stories to be read to them. She is happy to read one story after another to them if they wish and she presents them in a lively way.

Children have access to a reasonable variety of activities. They like to play, for example, with cars and train sets and to make pictures for display. They go out for walks in the surrounding countryside, gathering leaves and flowers to use for collage work and to make seasonal displays. The childminder makes good use of opportunities to encourage learning as children play. For example, children count the numbers of cars they have and identify colours and letters. Alphabet and number friezes are displayed around the play room. The childminder rotates toys on a daily basis but at times the selection is limited to toys of a particular type, which restricts the range of children's play experiences.

The childminder is becoming familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and is beginning to use it to enhance the provision she makes for the younger children in her care. For example, she has begun to gather materials for a treasure basket to provide opportunities for them to explore a variety of natural and household materials.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder works with parents to understand children's needs and to ensure appropriate links with home. This helps children to feel secure and valued. She knows about children's home experiences and incorporates them into their play and conversations. For example, as children read a story with her about cats, she talks to them about their family pets. Regular outings in the local community help to develop children's awareness of the society in which they live. There are some resources available, such as dressing up clothes, posters and dolls, which show positive images of different cultures and needs.

The childminder helps children to begin to consider the needs and feelings of others. They learn that they have to share and to take turns as they play. Appropriate methods are used to deal with difficulties, such as distracting children's attention by suggesting another activity. Children receive support and encouragement as they play, which helps to build their confidence.

Relationships with parents are friendly and positive. The childminder ensures that there are clear written agreements in place and that she keeps parents informed about daily events. She shares most information verbally with them and encourages parents to share any concerns with her. She has a basic knowledge of the procedures to follow if she receives a formal complaint about her service but there is potential to develop her knowledge and understanding further.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder has worked on her record keeping systems to ensure that these are in order and stored in an organised way. She has developed individual folders for each of the children where all documents pertinent to them are stored together. This means that she is easily able to access any information needed, should an emergency arise. There is no additional written information about the service, such as a welcome booklet for new parents or written policies and procedures.

The environment is organised to keep children safe and the childminder has considered ways of storing and rotating resources to give children more safe space to play. She works on occasions with her daughter as her assistant and ensures that parents know about these arrangements, although they are not formally recorded.

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, a number of actions were raised. The childminder was required to ensure that adults in the household during childminding hours are vetted. All adults living at the premises have now completed required checks. The childminder ensures that she oversees any contact with other adults and tries to arrange for visitors to call at times when she is not minding. This helps to ensure that children are suitably protected and their welfare safeguarded.

The childminder was also required to ensure that children are not exposed to hazards through unsupervised access to kitchen, utility and garage areas. She now uses safety gates and high-level locking devices to restrict children's access to these areas of the house, which means that children are able to play safely.

In addition, the provider agreed to develop her knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. She has read relevant guidance materials to increase her awareness of issues and responsibilities. However, this is identified as an area for further development. The childminder was also required to improve her record keeping. She now has record keeping systems in place and maintains them appropriately to ensure that she has all required information about minded children clearly noted.

It was recommended that she organise resources to provide adequate floor space and to enable children to access appropriate toys and activities more easily. The childminder now makes a selection of resources available, creating more open space for children to play.

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 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):

- obtain and become familiar with local child protection procedures
- review the organisation of resources and activities to ensure that children have a varied range of play experiences
- develop knowledge and understanding of the procedures for dealing with complaints and review the general information provided for parents about the service offered
- ensure that the arrangements for use of an assistant are clearly recorded
- ensure that a current first aid certificate is maintained.

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