



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY249308
Inspection date	23 May 2006
Inspector	Christine Linda Tomaselli
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 June 2003. She lives with her partner. She co-childminds with another childminder who lives in a house in a small village outside St Neots, Cambridgeshire. The childminders use the whole house for childminding purposes. Areas include a downstairs toilet, kitchen, lounge, conservatory, playroom, three bedrooms upstairs. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under the age of eight years old at any one time and is currently minding two children under the age of two years old on part-time contracts. She also supports the co-childminder in the care of her children when appropriate. Numbers of minded children increase when both childminders are working together.

The childminder drives children to the local school when required. She regularly takes children to the local park, library sessions and a support toddler group for childminders, parents and

carers. She occasionally plans outings to Thurleigh Farm Park, Riverside Park and takes part in picnics planned by the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

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 an environment that is clean and well-maintained. Their health needs are met well by the childminder who encourages and supports their learning of good hygiene practices. For example, washing hands after using the toilet and before a meal. The childminder has a basic first aid certificate and an appropriately stocked first aid box in the home and her car. Her first response to any accident ensures the children's well-being is given priority. Information and recording on accidents and the giving of medication can be maintained appropriately and ensures parents are kept informed on matters concerning their child. However, parental consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is not obtained at the time of placement. Children enjoy and develop their physical skills through regular walks and trips to local park areas, for example, Thurleigh Park Farm and Riverside Park. The local park has suitable fixed play equipment for the children to develop their physical skills in a safe environment. Activities in the garden also provide opportunities to be out in the fresh air which contributes to the children's healthy living.

Children's healthy growth is supported by the childminder's knowledge and understanding of healthy eating. The childminder provides sample menus giving parents details of what meals she intends to offer to their child. Sample menus cover a four week period which provides a good selection of food options which contribute to a healthy balanced diet. For example; breakfast includes cereals or toast, lunchtime will be a cooked meal to include meats, vegetables, pasta or rice dishes and tea time will be sandwiches with a healthy filling. Yogurts and fruit are used regularly during the week. The children learn about foods that are good for them through discussions with the childminder and posters on show in the kitchen. Appropriate information on the dietary needs of the children is gained by the childminder to ensure their needs are met. Older children can freely access suitable drinks with younger children being supported by the childminder to ensure they drink well during the day, contributing to their good health.

Children are protected from the possible risk of infectious illnesses. The childminder informs parents through discussion and a written sick children's policy, that children with an infectious illness do not attend therefore reducing the risk of serious illness among the children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move around the childminder's home safely and independently under her constant supervision or that of her co-childminder. The risks to children's safety are minimised because the childminder uses good organisation of the space available to them. For example, stair gates are in place to prevent children from going upstairs or into the lounge area unsupervised. When

being transported in a car appropriate seating is available to ensure the safety of the children, or when out walking they are encouraged to 'stop, look and listen' at the road side and learn about the use of traffic lights. Children learn about keeping the play areas safe, for example, children picking toys up of the floor to ensure they do not slip or fall over.

Children are able to self-select play activities from a good range of age-appropriate toys, which are regularly checked by the childminder to ensure they are in good condition. Storage available allows children to select toys from low shelves and see-through storage boxes or containers helping to develop their independence. Children's comfort and ability to be independent in many tasks safely, is a high priority for the childminder. Furniture and equipment is very safe and suitable for all ages of children.

Children's overall welfare is maintained by some good procedures and documents that promote their safety and keep parents informed. Children learn and understand what they should do in the event of an emergency situation such as a fire. The childminder has a clear written emergency evacuation plan which is discussed and practised with them regularly to enforce the importance of any situation that might arise. The childminder has a suitable understanding of child protection, however she is not aware of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures to follow in the event of any concerns. This may contribute to delays in supporting children where concerns need to be investigated. Parents are kept informed of matters concerning their child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well with the childminder. They make themselves at home and relate extremely well to all the adults in the setting and the other children. Children are encouraged to form good relationships, be caring of each other and independent. Activities and space provided enable younger children to play alongside older children which helps them in their learning. Additionally space can provide older children with areas suitable for their individual learning needs when required. Most toys are easily accessible to enable children of all ages to make choices for themselves.

Children are enthusiastic, confident and involved in lots of activities which provides the opportunity to learn in all areas. Children have the opportunities to take the initiative and develop their self-esteem because of the way the childminder involves and encourages them to think for themselves and develop ideas of their own. For example, when listening to a favourite story, 'The old lady that lived in the shoe', children use props to act out the story. Older children are confident to hold conversations with the childminder and talk about things that have happened to them and eagerly become engaged in helping the younger children in their learning. The childminder spends lots of time chatting to the younger children and babies to help develop their language and communication skills. Children eagerly develop their ability to problem solve and build relationships through many of the activities provided by the childminder such as art and craftwork, using musical instruments and going to group activities. Activities at home are often freely chosen or planned by the childminder, for example, shape sorting, matching, role play or cooking providing an environment where the children gain knowledge and new skills.

Children's strengths and weaknesses are known to the childminder and her co-childminder who encourage them to build on their achievements and abilities helping them to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are made to feel happy, safe and secure. The childminder has a friendly personality and offers a welcoming environment to the children and their parents. The children's individual needs are met by the childminder who provides appropriate care. She works closely with parents to gain a good understanding about their child as an individual and generally puts into practice what is required to make children's attendance a positive one. Children have some opportunities to learn about and respect differences in our society often through discussion. Resources and activities provided by the childminder are available and these will enhance the children's learning about the world they live in.

The childminder has established some appropriate methods for managing poor behaviour. For example, she will encourage children in turn-taking and sharing of toys. The children begin to understand about the boundaries and play together without conflict most of the time. However, when this does happen the childminder supports through discussion or distracts the children, whichever is most appropriate. The childminder tries to encourage good behaviour by teaching children about respect and valuing others, by being a good role model herself and the use of regular praise for good behaviour. For example, praising the children for their help or when achieving something for themselves like repeating new words or eating their dinner up. Older children are involved in setting the house rules which are regularly reviewed by them, making them feel valued as individuals.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder has obtained an appropriate basic childcare training certificate. She continues to improve on her knowledge by attending further training and workshops associated with childcare. This contributes to the children receiving appropriate care and education. She has started to plan activities suitable for children under the age of three-years-old, however monitoring and recording of their achievements to help identify their next stages still needs to be considered as it may delay their progress.

The organisation of the children's day takes account of the ages of the children attending and their individual needs, including rest needs for the younger children. There is a successfully working partnership with the co-childminder which contributes to a positive care and learning environment for the children. Children can access a wide range of activities in the well organised space available in the home. Children are regularly taken to a local group or to the park with occasional planned outings outside the village giving them a variety of learning opportunities.

The childminder maintains appropriate documentation and information. She uses standard recording materials provided by the National Childminding Association with other self designed

forms to ensure parents are kept informed on matters associated with their child. Essential documents are organised well and stored confidentially. Most records are up to date and contribute to the health, safety and welfare of the children, however a minor improvement is required. The childminder keeps parents informed about her policies, procedures and matters concerning their child to ensure consistent care.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There has been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration. 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):

- ensure written parents consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is obtained at the time of placement
- improve your understanding and knowledge associated with child protection and that it is in line with the local Safeguarding Children Boards procedures making parents fully aware of your responsibility to protect children in your care
- continue to develop and extend your knowledge and understanding of the needs of children under three, for example through the use of the 'Birth of three matters' framework and the recording of their progress enabling you to provide for their next stage and keeping parents informed.

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