



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	256551
Inspection date	03 May 2006
Inspector	Susan Cox
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 has been registered since 1999. She lives with her husband and two children in a village near the Norfolk Broads. The ground floor of her home is registered for childminding with access to the upstairs bathroom and a bedroom for children to sleep. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time. She is currently minding seven children at various times during the week. She also cares for children over the age of eight. The childminder walks to a range of local facilities and also has the use of a car. The family has two dogs and two cats.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's medical needs are met as the childminder gathers relevant information from their parents at registration. If children become unwell she consults their parents to agree action to be taken to promote their welfare. A system is in place to record accidents and share these with parents. However, the childminder reports that there have not been any needing attention. Children are learning to manage their personal hygiene with the little ones being supervised for safety as they use the upstairs bathroom. They understand the need to wash their hands after using the toilet and use wipes downstairs to make sure their hands are clean before they eat. However, the bathroom is not sufficiently clean to minimise the risk of cross infection or to maintain children's health.

Children are learning about healthy eating. For example, they are keen to explain that their snack of grapes and banana will make them strong. They enjoy their packed lunch, supplied by their parents, and like the opportunity to help plan the menu if staying for an evening meal. Fresh meals are prepared in consultation with parents to meet individual dietary requirements. All children drink frequently as their beakers are readily available for them to help themselves. Younger children are often offered a drink as the childminder understands the benefits of drinking water frequently.

Children benefit from being active. They often walk to and from school and to a range of local facilities. They understand this helps to keep them fit and they enjoy stopping off in the park to practise such skills as climbing, sliding and using a range of large equipment. Attending local parent and toddler groups gives them chance to learn to ride, scoot and manoeuvre a range of sit and ride toys. Consequently they are learning what their bodies can do and how they work. The garden is often used for play in the fresh air. It is not currently being used as new turf has just been laid. The childminder is aware of the need to check the garden for safety before the children start to use it again. When children are tired they may rest according to their individual needs as agreed with their parents. Some sleep in their buggy in the kitchen to be easily supervised. A bedroom is also used, for children to rest comfortably in a travel cot, with a baby alarm fitted to help the childminder monitor their safety and welfare.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children receive a warm welcome into a family home where they have space to play appropriately in the lounge and dining room. Maintenance of the premises is generally satisfactory but the pets are often kept in the kitchen and this leads to the smell of dogs being noticeable on entry to the house and in the lounge. This is not conducive to an attractive environment for the children. Children have access to a suitable range of resources with the childminder ensuring that the little ones use items that are appropriate for their stage of development to promote their safety.

The childminder has taken much relevant action to minimise risks in her home and rooms that are not registered are locked to prevent children's access. When children sleep upstairs there is nothing to prevent them getting to the stairs should they get out of the cot. Fire drills are practised so the children know how to get out of the house in an emergency and they regularly talk about and check road safety as they walk to a range of local facilities. This is helping them to learn about keeping safe and preparing for future independence. Their safety is also promoted as the childminder has a clear understanding of child protection procedures. She has the relevant information to hand to make a referral if necessary and to ensure any issues are dealt with appropriately.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy, settled and play with confidence. They are making friends and learning to organise their own play effectively. For example, they set up the dolls house with a range of furniture and people and act out real life situations together then decide to play with the garage before finding the Duplo to build a house. This shows they cooperate and negotiate making their own choices from an appropriate range of resources that are readily available to them. When they feel it may nearly be time for lunch they tidy up knowing that this is part of the routine and that they have to make space for play later in the day. They enjoy a balance of activities with free play supplemented by planned craft activities, trips to school, playgroup, the park, toddler group and to local shops. Meeting up with another childminder gives them further opportunities for social play and meeting their friends. The older children are developing creative skills in a range of ways. For example, they select dough, find a box of tools and concentrate well on moulding and modelling talking about the feel of the dough, how they can shape it and exploring mixing the two colours together.

Older children are making firm relationships. They work well together and their behaviour is good. They chatter freely as they play and talk to the childminder knowing that she will listen to what they say as she has a good understanding of their stage of development. The childminder is not as secure in her work with younger children. She is caring but does not always use the best practice in helping them to become mobile or settle them to sleep according to their individual needs. This results in the younger ones being upset or frustrated at times. Although she has the 'Birth to three matters' pack she has not yet used this to consider her work with the youngest children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are valued as individuals. They play freely with a range of resources that reflect our multi-cultural society and are starting to learn to respect and value differences. The childminder has not been approached to work with children from a range of cultures or with special needs. She demonstrates an understanding of meeting specific needs and states she would try to do so in partnership with parents whilst having consideration for the other children already in her care to ensure she could continue to work with them effectively. Children generally share and take turns well with the childminder intervening quickly to ask them to apologise if

things start to get out of hand. A written behaviour management policy is shared with parents but older children have not been encouraged to help set house rules or consider what is acceptable so they learn effective strategies to manage their own behaviour. The childminder has developed a range of written policies and procedures which she shares with parents to help them understand the service that is available for their children. This includes a flexible settling-in procedure to help children and parents become settled but it is not always fully effective in meeting the needs of the younger children. Although no complaints have been received, a complaints procedure is in place to deal with any that may be received in the future. The childminder has the Ofsted poster for parents but it is not currently displayed for them to have easy access to the contact information should they wish to use it.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's safety is promoted as appropriate checks have been conducted on the childminder and her husband and she always supervises them well to protect them from persons who have not been vetted. She has attended the relevant training to be a childminder and has recently completed NVQ Level 3 to develop her understanding further. Although she has considered training for using 'Birth to three matters', she has not attended a course. Consequently, she is not using this pack to promote the outcomes for the younger children and enhance the care they may receive. Older children use the space in the home with confidence to organise their play. They know that they may play freely in the lounge, that the table in the dining room is used for craft activities and meals and that they go to the upstairs bathroom but not into the bedrooms to play. Care for children over the age of eight is often provided. The childminder displays an understanding of the importance of meeting the needs of the children under eight whilst caring for older children. The required documentation is in place to gather and exchange information with parents. This is kept on file and readily available for inspection with historic records also retained as needed. Overall the needs of all the children attending are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was recommended to develop resources to promote equality of opportunity and to develop systems for giving feedback to parents on children's activities and progress. Several resources now reflect our multi-cultural society and people with a disability and the children play with these freely helping them to learn about how we are all different. A daily informal feedback to parents is supplemented by a diary to which all may contribute to ensure they remain up to date with the children's progress and welfare.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004.

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):

- improve hygiene in the bathroom and around the care of the pets
- improve outcomes for the younger children by using 'Birth to three matters'
- continue to work with parents on settling children effectively
- make sure children sleeping upstairs cannot gain unsupervised access to the stairs.

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