



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251277
Inspection date	12 June 2006
Inspector	Moira Oliver
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 1998. She lives with her husband and children in a village close to Ipswich. The whole of the ground floor, apart from the family lounge, is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time when working alone and twelve children when she is with an assistant. She is currently minding six children under eight years, two of whom attend on a full-time basis and four who attend on a part-time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and attends a parent and toddler group. The family has goldfish in a tank as pets.

The childminder is a member of the Ipswich North Childminding Association and part of a group of childminders who run a 'breakfast club' on their own premises for school aged children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because the childminder follows effective health and hygiene guidelines and has written policies which are individual to the setting. Food is stored and prepared in accordance to health and hygiene guidelines, tables and surfaces are clean. There are effective procedures in place for nappy changing and all nappies are disposed of appropriately.

Suitable action is taken when children are ill and there are effective routines in place to contact the parents. The childminder and her assistant maintain up-to-date first aid certificates, record accidents and the administering of any medication appropriately.

Children know about hygiene and learn how to be healthy through simple routines such as hand washing. A picture displayed on the inside of the toilet door reminds older children to wash their hands and the childminder explains to the younger children why it is important. Children rest and sleep according to their home routines which the childminder finds out about through detailed discussions with the parents before the children start. Babies have individual cots with clean bedding in a quiet area, ensuring they can rest without being disturbed.

Children are nourished, the childminder provides a balanced and healthy diet with regular meals and snacks. Most parents choose to provide meals for their own children which the childminder stores in the fridge and heats when needed. Children have regular snacks of fruit or biscuits and sweet items are limited. Younger children have their own cups of squash or water at all times and older children can help themselves to a choice of sugar free squashes, water or milk to ensure they are hydrated.

Children enjoy physical activity and fresh air daily, they have open access to the garden in the warmer weather and have a wealth of activities to enjoy such as climbing frames of all sizes, a wooden 'bridge fort' with swings and a slide, a trampoline, an extensive range of bikes and ride-on toys, a playhouse with a kitchen, and a paddling pool. Children enjoy visits to the park and sometimes take trips to the beach and other places of interest.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an exceptionally safe and secure, welcoming, child friendly indoor and outdoor environment. The rooms are bright and light and set up invitingly for play. The childminder ensures her premises are safe at all times and carries out regular risk assessments. For example, assessing the risk of using a stair-gate three stairs up from the bottom of the stairs. She decided to move it to the kitchen door which has effectively ensured young children cannot climb the stairs or fall onto the radiator. The front door is secure and has a coded lock to ensure children cannot leave unattended and unauthorised people do not gain access. All cleaning products, chemicals, sharp knives and other hazardous items are locked in cupboards and out of the reach of children.

Children are able to play in an extremely safe environment because the childminder is vigilant around water play and children delight in playing in the paddling pool. They are supervised at all times and when the childminder is not with the water, children are taken out and the pool is covered. Surfaces made slippery by the spilling of soap from bubble pots are covered with mats or towels until such time as they can be washed down, ensuring children do not slip.

Children remain safe whilst on outings, they are secure in appropriate car seats and buggies. All children wear wrist bands with the childminder's mobile phone number on, ensuring they remain safe in the unlikely event that they get separated from the party. All emergency contact numbers are taken along with first aid boxes, cool bags with ice packs for storing food and drinks, and small tents to provide shade or shelter.

Children learn to keep themselves safe as they learn about the rules for using the trampoline and ensure they only go on one at a time. They know the activities that may endanger the younger children and therefore are careful when playing football in the garden and only use small items away from the babies. Fire drills are carried out regularly to ensure all children know the procedures, the drills are recorded as are the testing of the smoke detectors to ensure children remain safe if an evacuation is necessary.

Children's welfare is promoted because the childminder has an excellent understanding of her role in child protection and is able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. She has a very clear policy, individual to her setting and following the appropriate child protection guidelines, which is shared with parents before their child starts.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy, settled and absorbed in their play. They enthusiastically make choices about their activities from the wealth of good quality, accessible toys and equipment. They move confidently from indoors to out, for example, they listen, make the actions and sing along with songs playing in the conservatory before choosing to go in the paddling pool. Children enjoy in pouring water from a range of containers into the paddling pool and splashing the water out onto the patio. They delight in blowing bubbles and laugh as the childminder makes a stream of bubbles for them to pop.

The children's independence is strongly encouraged and supported through daily routines such as helping to prepare meals, snacks and accessing the toys and equipment. Children are supported by the childminder who has an excellent knowledge and understanding of child development. They are stimulated and challenged as the childminder plays with them, talking to them about what they are doing, asking relevant questions and extending their language at every opportunity.

The children benefit from the extremely well thought out resources and activities for all ages and stages of development, both indoors and out. She ensures that all children receive her full attention and valuable learning takes place as the older children are encouraged to play with the younger ones. The childminder knows the children very well and builds on what they already know and can do when planning the activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are valued and their individual needs met. The childminder consistently attends workshops and training to increase her understanding and knowledge in all areas of childcare, including children with special needs. Children show high levels of independence and make choices and decisions with confidence. For example, children confidently access the crayons and felt pens and help to prepare meals and snacks, getting plates out of the cupboard.

Children understand reasonable behaviour and the younger ones are beginning to understand the need to share the toys and resources. This is due to the childminder's increased understanding of managing behaviour. She is sensitive, always listens and tries to get an understanding of the situation in order to support the children to solve their problems. Children are valued and treated with respect, providing them with an excellent role model. The childminder ensures there are adequate resources to enable children to have their own pot of bubbles and wand.

Children settle well because of the childminder's caring, friendly and sensitive approach to both the children and the parents. Children enjoy cuddles from the childminder when they first arrive and she supports them to join in with the other children. The childminder understands the importance of working with parents and how it benefits the children. They build close trusting relationships and information is shared daily as they work together. Information is shared with the parents at the time of placement detailing the childminder's practice, this includes policies and procedures and all parental permission forms. Children's details are recorded including any special needs, diets, religious beliefs or medical issues to ensure the childminder can provide appropriate care and learning. Parents letters of recommendation reveal how delighted they are with the high quality care and education their children receive. They find the childminder caring, friendly and approachable and report that their children receive tender loving care and have lots of fun with the childminder. Parents have access to the childminder's information folder and know the procedures for making complaints, however, the childminder is not aware of current regulation to keep a complaints log.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are protected by a childminder who has an excellent knowledge and understanding of child development. She is keen to continue to attend workshops and training to increase her knowledge and skills to improve her practice further. The childminder works with an assistant to provide extra places for children, she ensures children are protected and has carried out all checks. She ensures parents are informed and all permission sheets are completed. She has developed her provision and works with other childminders in the area to offer a 'breakfast club', providing a welcome service to parents in the local area.

All relevant paperwork is organised, confidential and accessible. The well organised premises enable children to move freely and use all the areas, including the outdoors, effectively. Documents are displayed for parents to read and policies and procedures are in place and available to parents.

Overall, the needs of the children are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

The childminder has continued to extend her good practice by attending the many relevant training opportunities that have arisen.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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 good. 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):

- regularly review practice to keep up with current regulation, this refers to the keeping of a complaints log.

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