



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	256732
Inspection date	15 August 2006
Inspector	Rosalie Mary Turner
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 1990. She lives with her husband, their adult son and second son aged 16 years in a village a few miles from the city of Norwich, Norfolk. All areas of the childminder's house are 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 at any one time and is currently minding seven children on a full or a part-time basis. She also cares for children who are over the age of eight years.

The childminder holds an appropriate early years qualification. She is a member of an approved childminding network and is currently in receipt of funding for early education for three and four-year-olds. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and is

a volunteer board member of the council of management of 'Childminding Matters', the Norfolk Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health needs are rigorously promoted. They are cared for in a very warm and clean home where the childminder places a consistently high emphasis on children managing their own personal hygiene. She talks to them about the importance of keeping their hands clean and older children have designed colourful signs that are displayed over the hand basin to remind others to wash their hands after they use the toilet. As a result, children gain an excellent understanding that robust hygiene practices will prevent germs from spreading. Furthermore, the childminder has developed a valuable health and hygiene policy that she shares with parents and carers to inform them of her extremely effective practices to safeguard their children's health. For instance, that she uses disposable gloves when changing nappies and does not provide care if children are suffering from a contagious illness to protect others from the spread of infection.

Children thrive because they are provided with a well balanced range of nutritious, freshly prepared snacks that contribute significantly to their understanding of a healthy diet. Parents supply a packed lunch for their children through choice but the childminder displays excellent written guidance to help them to provide healthy options. Children have superb opportunities to learn about healthy foods by tasting the potatoes that they have sown, tended and harvested in the childminder's garden. They take great delight in cooking and particularly enjoy designing their own pizzas. Toddlers are offered regular drinks as a way to maintain their health and their drinking containers are always within reach. Older children take care of their own health needs because they are able to help themselves to a drink but when the weather is hot the childminder gives them plenty of reminders that the heat can make them thirsty.

Children join in all areas of physical play enthusiastically because the childminder plans and organises a stimulating range of activities to help them to learn that exercise has a positive effect on their health. They relish playing in the fresh air and during the summer months routine play is provided outside 'at every opportunity'. Children have great fun as they throw and kick the beach ball or play swing ball to help them use up surplus energy. The childminder ensures that older children walk to and from school, regardless of the weather, so that they have an excellent understanding of how fresh air and exercise helps them to stay healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are emotionally secure because they are warmly welcomed into a child-centred home where they are able to gain a sense of belonging. There is a playroom provided for the specific use of the children that contains an exciting range of easily accessible, high quality toys and attractive displays. This rich and stimulating environment ensures children feel secure.

Children have a very safe environment in which to play. The childminder has an excellent understanding of safety issues and she creates a commendable balance between encouraging children's freedom and setting limits to maintain their safety. She is diligent in checking her home to reduce any potential hazards so that children can play freely. For instance, all cleaning materials are safely stored out of reach and children understand how to use scissors correctly through the close supervision and support that they receive. In addition, the childminder uses a visual monitor to check that children are safe if they fetch toys from the playroom while she is in the kitchen. Children are confident in their understanding of how to keep themselves safe from a very early age especially when they are taken for walks or trips out. The childminder discusses road safety with all of the children so that they know they must 'stop, look and listen' to avoid the dangers from traffic. Children are encouraged to keep the floor tidy and, as a result, they are learning to be responsible for the safety of others. They are exceptionally confident in evacuating the house quickly and safely because they practise regular fire drills and older children know that they can only go back inside 'if it's clear!' Furthermore, children have visited the local fire station to help them to understand the importance of fire safety.

Children's welfare is superbly promoted and they are extremely well protected from the risk of possible harm. They are particularly safe from the risk of 'stranger danger' because they are neither left alone with persons who have not been vetted nor released to adults unless the childminder has permission from their parents and a password is known. The childminder regularly updates her knowledge of child protection and she has developed a robust policy which is shared with parents to ensure that they understand her responsibilities to safeguard their children. She demonstrates an excellent ability to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible child abuse and keeps up to date Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance to hand so that she can respond quickly to any concerns. Therefore, children are very effectively safeguarded from the risk of possible harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very confident and exceptionally relaxed in the setting. They have formed an extremely strong bond with the childminder who is kind, affectionate and clearly enjoys working alongside them. All areas of children's development are significantly enhanced by the superb quality of the childminder's interactions and toddlers greatly benefit from the close personal attention they receive. For example, she enthusiastically exclaims 'look what is in here!' to encourage children to help themselves to the chalks and praises them for making marks on the blackboard. Children are excited by the extensive range of bright, colourful toys that they are able to independently access and are becoming self assured from an early age.

Babies' communication skills are very well promoted because the childminder responds positively to their gestures or sounds. She shows a genuine interest in all of the children, sits with them and continually chats as they play asking 'How many?' or 'What colour?' to help them to make progress. She speaks clearly and sensitively repeats words so that toddlers learn to talk or extend their vocabulary. The childminder makes extremely effective use of 'Birth to three matters' to plan and she provides an exciting programme of new experiences that ensure children are totally absorbed in meaningful play. She keeps a record of their 'special moments'

so that she can easily identify when they reach milestones in their development or help them to build on their existing skills. Children work extremely well together and show that they are becoming aware of each other's needs. Their individual needs are very well met and they are keen to learn as the childminder carefully adapts activities to ensure that children of all ages have opportunities to play together. For instance, she quickly recognises that toddlers are curious as the older children play a fishing game and lifts them on to her lap. They watch eagerly, are excited when they try to hook the fish and laugh when they are helped to develop their hand to eye co-ordination and catch some for themselves.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals because the childminder has a strong understanding of the Foundation Stage. She knows the children well and uses her comprehensive understanding of how they learn to provide challenging activities that are extremely well matched to their needs and interests. There is a very good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities and children respond to challenges with real enthusiasm. The childminder displays an exceptional commitment to her work and, as a result, she maintains a vibrant learning environment. She selects topics to plan an exciting but flexible programme of activities, both inside and outside the home, that cover all areas of children's learning. The childminder has developed a valuable system to observe and assess children's progress. She clearly records their next steps in their 'learning stories' so that she can guide planning and introduce appropriate resources to address any identified gaps in knowledge. Consequently, children achieve exceedingly well as the experiences offered support them to do things that go just beyond their capabilities.

Children demonstrate an excellent command of language and speak very confidently to share their experiences of home and their families or any special news. They are able to maintain eye contact and show a pleasing awareness of the listener in conversations. Excellent use of labels within the childminder's home, both in words and pictures that the children have produced themselves, help them to recognise that print carries meaning. Children enjoy books and they regularly visit the local library to choose fiction or reference books for themselves. They listen attentively to stories because the childminder skilfully moderates her voice and she follows the text with her finger to develop their early reading skills. Children make marks within their routine play to represent their ideas and skilfully use chalks to mark out parking bays for the wheeled toys. They demonstrate competent pencil control and form recognisable letters to write their names.

Children make rapid progress in their mathematical development. They have great fun with numbers because the childminder encourages them to count items within everyday situations such as the plates or pieces of fruit at snack time. The low-level number line is effectively used to help children to recognise the numerals from one to ten and they greatly enjoy measuring their sunflowers to see which is the tallest. Cooking is another popular activity that is commendably used to develop children's learning. They weigh out the ingredients, observe the changes as they are mixed and develop their sensory skills by experiencing the aroma and flavour of the freshly cooked food.

Children approach all areas of their play with great enthusiasm and interest. They seize opportunities to use art and craft materials to demonstrate their increasing skills. Children are encouraged to be responsible for their work from beginning to end and beam with delight when the childminder praises their achievements. They celebrate a variety of different festivals such as Christmas or the Chinese New Year and discuss other customs to increase their awareness of diversity. Children begin to understand how life evolves as they watch tadpoles change into frogs and particularly enjoy observing their potatoes developing within the clear containers.

Children move with impressive control and co-ordination. They pedal the wheel toys around the garden capably negotiating obstacles and crawl through the tunnel or squeeze into the play tent to show off their suppleness. They use a valuable range of tools and small equipment to great effect. For example, children are adept in cutting out or making intricate models from the construction sets.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are exceptionally quick to learn to value and respect each other because the childminder treats them all fairly and equally. She warmly welcomes families from all walks of life and skilfully divides her time so that all children benefit from individual attention. Each child is included in every aspect of the daily routine and they feel a true sense of belonging.

Although the childminder is not currently providing care for children having learning difficulties or disabilities, she has completed relevant training and has a superb awareness of the stages of child development. She is quickly able to recognise any delays in reaching milestones and she works together with parents or carers if a child causes concern. Consequently, children of all abilities receive appropriate support and they are able to make rapid progress towards their full potential.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They make friends easily, are independent in their personal care and have excellent opportunities to show respect for others through the stimulating range of positive resources that reflect our multicultural society. Children behave very well because they are able to model their reactions on the childminder's superb example. For instance, she is polite and thanks children or praises their positive actions so that they are repeated. The childminder provides commendable guidance to the younger children. She gets down to their level to make sure that they can see her face and quietly talks about their actions. As a result, children learn to distinguish between right and wrong from a very early age and they play harmoniously together. The childminder works with the older children to develop positive house rules and she agrees her policy with parents and carers. She uses techniques that are consistent with home so that children know what is expected of them, therefore, their behaviour is exemplary.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. They are exceptionally satisfied with the childminder's 'professionalism, patience and kindness' and the strong lines of communication that she has established to support their children's welfare and learning. For instance, the 'Little Tinkers' policies and terms of business ensure that parents have comprehensive information about the six areas of learning and the education that is provided for their children. The

childminder continues to keep parents up to date with topics and events via a regular newsletter. Furthermore, the comprehensive developmental records that detail children's progress are supported by a wealth of photographic evidence that provide a vivid account of how they spend their time. Daily conversations as children are delivered or collected help to keep parents abreast of their progress. However, there are no formal opportunities for them to contribute to the educational plans or discuss their children's 'learning stories' to ensure that they are fully involved in all areas of their development.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's well-being is exceptionally well supported through the skilful management of the premises and the pleasing organisation of the resources. They benefit from a happy atmosphere and the company of an enthusiastic childminder who plans her time around the minded children to ensure that they are safe and well stimulated. Older children can initiate their own play and extend their learning because the toys are presented at their level whilst babies have plenty of free floor space to explore and gain control over their bodies. The wipe clean kitchen flooring enables children to experience messy play, such as paint or cooking whilst the comfortable playroom provides opportunities for children to play quietly.

All legally required documentation is superbly maintained and parents sign the register as soon as children arrive and depart to ensure that their welfare is fully safeguarded. The childminder has developed an extensive set of policies that help her to negotiate arrangements for children's care to promote their well-being. Children's personal details and contracts with parents are reviewed every six months, or sooner if details change, to ensure that the care provided is appropriate to their current requirements.

The childminder has defined clear aims and objectives that guide her to provide a stable, happy and stimulating learning environment as evidenced by the rapid progress that children are making. Children's well-being is effectively supported by the childminder's excellent knowledge of how young children learn. She holds a recognised early years qualification but she is committed to continual improvement and has participated in numerous workshops or short courses over the past year to ensure that her knowledge and skills remain up to date. The childminder is highly motivated and continually evaluates her practice. She has already identified there is a lack of formal opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning and is working closely with a link teacher from the local authority. She attends the local network cluster meetings for further support to enhance the high quality care and education that children receive.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the childminder was asked to continue to develop the range of resources which reflect culture, ethnicity, gender and disability.

The childminder encompasses beliefs and festivals of the world within topics and a range of books have been specially chosen from the local library that show positive images of other cultures. The childminder has provided a set of play figures to raise children's awareness of disability and she chats to them about differences in lifestyles. Therefore, children are able to learn about and respect diversity.

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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further develop the partnership with parents to ensure that they have formal opportunities to contribute to the progress that children are making in all areas of their learning.

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