



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	258054
Inspection date	28 November 2006
Inspector	Caroline Wright
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 1995. She lives with her husband and two children aged 8 and 11 years in Stretham, Cambridgeshire. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding: a fully enclosed garden, in the bungalow next door, is used by the childminder to provide outside play until her own garden is safe.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding three children under five and three children over five-years-old on a part time basis. She also cares for three children over eight years of age. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children, and she attends the local parent and toddler groups. The family have no pets.

The childminder supports children with disabilities and those with English as an additional language. She is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA) and attends the local childminding group. The childminder holds a level three early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the childminder's good knowledge and understanding of childhood nutrition and their dietary needs are well met. The childminder provides children with freshly cooked meals, with plenty of vegetables from the garden, and they enjoy snacks of fresh fruit or other healthy options. Children have free access to drinks so that they remain well-hydrated and can think effectively. Children learn about healthy eating through meaningful experiences, such as helping to pick vegetables from the neighbour's garden or growing tomatoes. In addition, children learn to lead a healthy lifestyle: whilst the childminder's own garden is not safe to use, due to ongoing building work, children use the neighbour's garden for outdoor play. They play football and ride bicycles in the neighbour's garden or walk to the park with the childminder to get plenty of fresh air and develop new physical skills. They talk about dental hygiene when they play with the Barbie dentist small world toys and clean their own teeth after meals to help them to learn through practical experiences.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through regular daily routines. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating; each child has their own hand towel, which is changed each day, to prevent cross-infection. If the children need to take any medicines or become unwell whilst they are in the care of the childminder, suitable records are in place to make sure that they are properly cared for.

The childminder has a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of children under three-years-old. Children develop new physical skills according to their stage of development using the wide range of interesting toys and resources she provides. They have plenty of space to move around safely and babies can pull themselves to standing using the sturdy sitting room furniture. The childminder forms firm relationships with toddlers so that their emotional well-being is well promoted, enabling them to settle easily and to feel secure.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children move around independently under the childminder's supervision. Children select activities and resources from a good range of suitable toys and equipment. Children learn about keeping themselves safe when the childminder reminds them to pick up toys so that they do not fall over them. Children learn to keep themselves safe outdoors. They learn about road safety on their walks to and from school when they 'look left and right' before they cross the road with the childminder.

The childminder makes sure that the indoor environment is safe for children to use by carrying out a risk assessment before they arrive each day. She supervises children when they play outside in the garden to ensure they do not come to any harm. However, the garden has hazards presented by discarded and broken toys and household items, such as a glass fish-tank and wicker chair. This affects children's safety.

The childminder has a good understanding of child protection procedures, which are in line with those set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. She has attended recent training to help her deal effectively with any concerns for children's welfare and has easy access to all of the necessary information to enable her to promote children's well-being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the childminder's house and form good relationships with the childminder. Their language and mathematical thinking is encouraged in meaningful ways. For example, children play with small world zoo animals and with the childminder's sensitive support, they become confident users of mathematical language. They count and talk about 'how many' tigers and alligators they have got and ask for 'more' dough to make a dog or a unicorn. The childminder provides a good selection of interesting books, and a comfortable book corner with cushions, to encourage children to develop a love of stories and to learn that writing carries meaning. Children enjoy sharing stories and looking at books with the childminder and she encourages them to make comments to develop their language skills. She asks questions that encourage children to think, such as 'who do you think these people are?', and sensitively encourages them to extend their ideas as they tell their own stories in imaginative play. Her enthusiastic engagement in children's role play encourages them to explore their imagination and become confident communicators.

Children of all ages pursue their own interests and make decisions. The childminder provides children with free access to a superb range of toys and activities, which are displayed attractively, so that they are easily accessible and the children can choose what they want to play with.

The childminder has a very good understanding of how young children learn through practical experiences. She devises written plans for activities and uses the 'Birth to three matters' framework to provide a broad and balanced range of play opportunities that help children under three-years-old to make good progress. In addition, the childminder records observations of what children do and what they learn through their play so that she can monitor their progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children have equal opportunities to play with the interesting resources that the childminder provides. They are very confident and show a strong sense of belonging. The childminder has a gradual settling in procedure and children bring comforters from home: as a result young children leave their parents and carers easily and feel secure. Children play with toys and resources that help them to learn about all members of society and the world they live in. They display high levels of self-esteem and they form very good relationships with the childminder and each-other.

Children behave very well and understand what is expected of them. They learn to share resources and co-operate with each other under the childminder's guidance. The childminder

listens enthusiastically to their ideas and responds with encouraging comments so that children feel valued and respected. They pursue their own interests and learn to make decisions.

Children benefit from good relationships between the childminder and their parents and carers. Children's individual progress is discussed daily with their parents and a daily diary, with details of what children do everyday, enables parents and carers to be well informed and involved in their children's learning, so that they can support their children at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The organisation of the childminding promotes positive outcomes for children. Children benefit from the childminder's vast experience of caring for children and her very good knowledge and understanding of child development. The organisation of the play space and resources contributes to children's independence and enables them to pursue their own interests. There is enough space for them to play indoors and the childminder has made suitable provision for outdoor play. Toys and equipment for babies and children under three, support their overall development and encourage them to become confident.

The childminder is committed to her own professional development. She attends a wide range of training courses to update her knowledge and skills. In addition, she attends childminding network meetings, reads professional journals and uses the internet to share ideas and improve the way she cares for children.

All of the essential records are in place and they are stored confidentially. However, children's information documents are not well organised; this affects their welfare in the event of an emergency.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to obtain parents' written permission to seek emergency medical treatment or advice; record children's names and hours of attendance in the register each day; ensure the garden is maintained; make the premises secure and obtain a copy of the Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

The childminder has improved documents and procedures that promote children's health and safety. Parents written permission to seek medical treatment is in place in the event of an accident or emergency; she records children's name and the time of arrival and departure in a daily diary so that it is clear which children attend each day; the toys in the garden are checked for safety and the garden gate and pond are maintained in a safe condition. In addition, the childminder ensures that the back door is locked when children are present so that they can not leave the house unsupervised. She has a written procedure for an emergency evacuation of the premises and has obtained a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures to help her maintain children's welfare. However, the garden still contains some hazards to children's safety. This will be carried forward for further improvement following this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 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

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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):

- make sure that the garden of the bungalow next door, which is used for outdoor play, is safe: ensure that broken toys and discarded household items, such as the broken chair and glass fish-tank, are inaccessible to children
- improve the organisation of documents so that each child's records are kept all together and all up-to-date information about the children is easy to access in the event of an emergency.

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