



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	222663
Inspection date	10 October 2006
Inspector	Denise May Smith

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 good. 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 1996. She lives with her husband, who is also a registered childminder, and their four children aged two, six, nine and ten, in a Fenland village. The childminder has overall responsibility for the childminding practice. Her co-childminder works in a supportive role. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time, or ten when minding with her husband. They are currently minding five children under five and five children over five before and after school, on a part-time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and attends local parent toddler groups. The family has a dog, three cats, hamsters a fish.

The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. 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 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, child focused home where their health, nutritional needs and physical development is considered well. She provides opportunities for babies to develop their mobility skills as they play with a range of toys, encouraging them to reach and stretch. Sturdy furniture supports children as they learn to walk. As children's skills develop and they become independent, she encourages them to access a range of indoor and outdoor equipment. They confidently ride trundle trucks and wheeled toys around the garden, they kick balls, and swing and slide, developing their physical skills in the fresh air. The range of equipment also provides challenge for the more able children.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment where the childminder maintains good standards of hygiene throughout. Children are reminded to wash their hands before they cook and after they have been to the toilet. Young children who are potty training are also reminded to wash their hands. Children independently use soap and dry their hands on paper towels, which they are encouraged to place in an appropriate bin. This helps to prevent cross-infection and teaches the children the importance of good personal hygiene. Toys and resources are clean and in good condition, they are washed as required with particular regard paid to toys used by the younger children.

The childminder has a good understanding of healthy eating and provides an interesting range of home cooked meals for the children, such as Butternut squash soup for lunch. Children are involved in some of the food preparation, such as making the brown bread rolls to have with their soup. Older children are involved in making suggestions as to what food they like, which is then planned into the menus. The childminder ensures she has the schools weekly lunch-time menus to hand so that meals are not duplicated. Snacks of fruit are available for children every day and children have appropriate access to drinks to ensure they remain hydrated. Parental guidance is followed in providing and preparing babies' food and drinks.

The childminder shares the sickness policy with parents and explains that, in order to protect children from illness and infection, she does not care for children who are poorly. The childminder has attended first aid training and ensures the first aid kit is accessible and maintained, supporting the welfare of children if an accident was to occur.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a welcoming and safe environment. Their art work is displayed in the conservatory and they enjoy using a broad assortment of clean and safe toys and resources. Equipment such as high chairs are kept clean and children each use their own bedding when

they sleep in appropriate beds or travel cots. Resources are all readily accessible and children help themselves, changing toys as they wish. Children are encouraged to tidy the toys away when they have finished so they do not trip over them. The childminder carefully selects toys that are suitable, interesting and challenging. They are in good condition and conform to the required safety standards.

The home is safe and equipment, such as a fire guard and electrical socket covers help to ensure that the children are able to move around the premises freely. The childminder's home remains secure at all times and any medicines, chemicals or other hazardous items are stored out of the reach of the children. Effective fire safety measures are in place and the childminder ensures that the children know how to deal with emergency situations by regularly practising the fire escape procedures with them, using different escape routes each time.

The children are successfully helped by the childminder and her co-childminder, to learn how to keep themselves safe on outings, or when walking to and from school. For example, the children learn to walk sensibly on the way home from school, older children having agreed stopping places. Similarly, when the children travel in a vehicle appropriate safety restraints are used. The children's understanding is further enhanced by the childminder as she uses road safety books to help the children learn to keep themselves safe.

The childminder has a good understanding of the signs and possible indicators of child abuse and neglect. She has attended child protection training and has a good range of written information including emergency telephone numbers, which enable her to report any concerns quickly to the appropriate agency. As a result, children are safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are involved in a very good range of activities that promote their development in all areas of learning. For example, they are involved in physical activity both indoors as they dance, sing and match actions to songs and outdoors as they play in the fresh air. They participate in a very good range of creative activities such as creating a full size image of themselves which they paint and decorate in their own style. The emphasis is placed on the process of children learning to cut, hold a brush and attach objects together rather than the end result. These are displayed so that children can be proud of their efforts. Children have opportunities to bake as they make pizzas, selecting from a range of vegetable for toppings and collect berries on country walks which they use when they make muffins. Children's understanding of basic mathematical concepts are developed during daily routines such as asking children which lid would fit the milk bottle the 'biggest or the smallest' one. They count the cup cases into the muffin tins and complete jigsaws. Younger children access a range of appropriate activities and resources which stimulate an interest them. They enjoy 'squishing the dough' as they make their bread rolls and join in gluing activities alongside the older children. Children in receipt of nursery education are able to identify initial letters, matching them to other words which begin with the same sound and letter. They listen to animal noises as they play sound lotto and mark-make across all activities. Children's imagination is well supported as they confidently access a good range of resources. The childminder supplements her resources by borrowing toys from the Network. These expand the opportunities available and help to sustain children's interest.

The childminder has attended training on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and uses this to plan the daily activities of the younger children. These plans are used by her co-childminder to effectively support these younger children. All children are interested in the toys and play materials available and use their initiative to move around freely and confidently decide what they want to play with.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

The childminder makes good use of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to plan an exciting range of activities. This ensures that children's learning is enhanced and helps them to acquire new knowledge and skills. The co-childminder lends a 'critical eye' as activities are being planned to ensure the best learning opportunities are achieved. He generally supports the younger children in their play while the older children are engaged in more complex activities, but sometimes the childminders swap roles and he will lead on some of the planned activities. This gives children the opportunity to have two good role models to support their learning.

The childminder has a very good understanding of how children learn but sometimes misses opportunities to extend their learning. For example, children became very excited as the childminder pointed out that a caterpillar was climbing up the door frame. They looked at the caterpillar and discussed what it may change into, but this opportunity was not taken any further by reinforcing the learning with reference books or developing it into an art and craft activity. Children are regularly reminded to wash their hands but are not given explanations as to why they should do this.

The activities are planned around children's interests and she generally adapts these to follow children's lines of interest. As a result, children are motivated and make good progress towards the early learning goals. This is recorded using photographs, by collecting samples of children's work and by written observations. Overall, children make good progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder has a good understanding of strategies to use to help children learn what is and is not acceptable behaviour. She provides clear and consistent boundaries and discusses these boundaries with the older children, who then create their own list of rules to display and work towards. The younger children learn through sensitive reminders and explanation. The childminder explains why it is kind to share, and sad to take a toy from another. She uses praise and encouragement well to help build children's self-esteem and to manage their behaviour.

The childminder values effective partnerships with parents to ensure a consistent approach in children's care. She takes time to establish what the children's care needs are before they attend and works with parents to ensure children are cared for consistently. She gathers information about children's likes and dislikes in addition to their care routines to ensure she is able to meet their individual needs. The childminder has most of the required written permissions from parents in place. However, some need further development to ensure aspects of care, such as the application of sun cream are clearly defined and the complaints policy has not yet been updated to reflect current practice. The childminder keeps parents fully informed of their child's

care and activities. A daily-diary is completed by the childminder and taken home by parents. The childminder encourages good partnerships with parents, by being approachable and by developing good channels of communication. Parents speak highly of the care and education provided for their children. Children's Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents are provided with information about the Foundation Stage, the early learning goals and the stepping stones children take in order to achieve them. Daily, written information is provided for parents explaining the activity of the day and what she hopes children will achieve from it. This, together with verbal feedback keeps parents up-to-date with their children's progress. Positive relationships are in place between the childminder and the parents of children in receipt of Nursery Education. This supports and underpins the learning of the children. The childminder has forged good links with the reception class teacher and the Head Teacher of the local primary school so that children's transition to school is well supported.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder ensures her home is organised so that children receive a good standard of care and education. Children are able to make choices and self-select from a vast range of age appropriate resources in the conservatory which is set out as a playroom. Time is organised effectively and in accordance with the children's individual routines and around the school day. On the days when her co-childminder is present, she is able to be more flexible with parents, such as collecting from school clubs, because they are able to organise collecting the children between them.

The childminder holds an appropriate child care qualification and attends numerous workshops and courses to underpin the care and education offered to the children. These include the 'Birth to three matters' training and those that relate to the delivery of the nursery education. This ensures she remains up-to-date with current childcare practice. The childminder, being the full time carer, organises the daily routines and plans the majority of the activities for the children. Her co-childminder contributes to these plans with ideas and tends to lend his expertise to the business side of their childminding partnership. Documentation is well organised and the childminder understands the requirement to keep records up to date. She ensures children's medical details and parent's mobile phone numbers are updated regularly. Comprehensive policies are in place, and are available to share with parents; the majority of which are up to date.

The childminder is keen to provide a quality service to the children in her care. She carefully checks that the education offered to the children is broad and balanced by using appropriate guidelines, and consults with other childminder at network meeting to assess her practice. The childminder takes self-evaluation seriously and her co-childminder offers support ensuring high standards are maintained. She values the feedback from parents regarding the quality of the care offered. The childminder has achieved the 'children come first' quality award.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to, ensure that the name of the childminder caring for the children at any given time is recorded. This information is now recorded daily, promoting the welfare of the children.

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 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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- develop the policy regarding complaints so that it reflects practice and the regulation. Obtain further agreements with parents relating to care such as the application of sun cream
- develop the child protection policy to include procedures to follow if any allegations are made against the childminder or a member of the family.

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):

- ensure opportunities are taken to extend children's knowledge and understanding through play and daily routines.

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