



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	250650
Inspection date	06 February 2007
Inspector	Deirdra Keating
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 lives with her husband and three children in a spacious house in a village near Sudbury. She has been a registered childminder since 1998. Children have use of the lounge, play room and kitchen with toilet facilities nearby. There is an enclosed rear garden. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. She attends parent toddler groups and takes children to the local park.

The childminder is registered to care for seven children, all of whom attend on a part-time basis.

The childminder has a pet dog and is a member of a childminding network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well through clear policies and procedures. Children are becoming aware of good personal hygiene, they wash their hands before meals and after going to the toilet using appealing child-friendly soap. The childminder explains to the children about germs which underpins their understanding of the consistent routines. Good preventative measures are taken when providing personal care to protect children from cross-infection. Children receive appropriate care if they become ill or have an accident because the childminder follows careful and correct procedures. Written permission is obtained regarding emergency treatment and any medication requirements. The childminder has a first aid certificate and well stocked first aid box, subsequently children's health is not compromised in the event of an accident or emergency.

Children's dietary needs are met well, through the provision of healthy and nutritious snacks. They have an extremely good understanding of fresh food as they enjoy eating vegetables they have grown from seeds. Children's dietary requirements are recorded in written agreements from parents which ensures their individual needs are respected. Free access to drinks ensure children remain well hydrated at all times. Children have the benefit of daily fresh air and exercise as regular walks are part of their daily routine. They visit the local park and play in the secure garden where they enjoy an exciting range of activities. Children rest and sleep according to their needs in the well ventilated lounge. A travel cot is available for younger children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe in a warm, spacious and well maintained environment. Children are able to self-select from a wide range of resources stored at child height in labelled toy boxes. This promotes children's independence and decision making. Good use of space enables children to use the play room adjoining the kitchen. This is separated by a gate that ensures children are safe and feel secure. Children are able to eat and play together comfortably in the contained and cosy environment. A broad range of safe equipment that is regularly checked supports the children's care learning and play. The childminder takes positive steps to minimise risks and ensure children's safety. The house and garden are very secure and cupboards have child safety locks. Stair gates are fitted throughout the house and smoke detectors protect children from the danger of fire. The childminder carries out regular risk assessments of the minding areas however, some risks are not always minimised effectively.

Children are taken out with written permission from parents. Their safety is paramount to the childminder who discusses the potential dangers of being out. Parental contact details are carried at all times to ensure they are contactable should the need arise. Children are protected well from potential harm as the childminder has a good understanding of her role and responsibilities in safe guarding children. Child protection training has given her an accurate and up to date knowledge of the correct procedures to follow. Clear and concise policies regarding children's welfare are discussed with parents prior to admission.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy a stimulating and varied range of play opportunities and activities provided by the resourceful and creative childminder. This enables children to accomplish many skills with first hand experiences such as cooking, painting, craft, dressing up and junk model construction. The childminder is extremely proactive in sourcing for new ideas in order to maintain children's interest and provide challenge. Attending parent toddler groups and the local childminding network provides new ideas and enables children to develop excellent social skills. The children relish tactile and messy activities including paint blowing and making dough. A low level book case enables children to choose and request stories which the childminder readily reads. She interacts in a warm and gentle manner encouraging their speaking and language skills. The childminder is extremely responsive to all the children's needs. She is enthusiastic and encouraging of their efforts and as a result they develop excellent confidence and self-esteem. Children's efforts are celebrated and displayed and subsequently children feel valued and have an individual sense of belonging.

An extremely good range of planned outdoor activities enables children to accomplish many physical skills. Children gain confidence as they use bats and balls, they play on equipment at the park, fly kites and enjoy feeding the ducks. Sand and water play enable children to pour and mould developing an extensive range of physical skills. Children experiment with soil and compost as they plant vegetables from seed and watch them grow.

Younger children's needs are exceptionally well met by the warm and gentle childminder. Babies are clearly animated as they make music with wooden spoons and tins. An excellent understanding of child development ensures that babies are engaged in rich and routine experiences. Consequently they are stimulated, contented and relaxed. Babies are very much included and valued by the childminder who is innovative and creative at adapting activities to ensure their needs are met.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children and their families are warmly welcomed in to the childminder's home. Photographs of each child's family form a colourful display instilling a personal sense of belonging to each child. Resources and toys are presented extremely well ensuring children all have equal access. The childminder is highly proactive in helping children appreciate other cultures and customs. Children learn through hands on and enjoyable experiences such as craft, books, dressing up clothes and discussions. Resources that reflect a positive view of diversity and the wider community enable children to value each others differences and similarities. Children are happy and settled because the childminder meets their individual needs extremely well. Informative and detailed written agreements enable the childminder to prioritise their specific needs and respect parental wishes. The childminder would positively welcome a child with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into her home. She has had some experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The childminder has an excellent understanding of the need to access support and respect parental wishes in order to promote children's welfare and development.

Children have an excellent understanding of responsible behaviour. A realistic policy sets out clear expectations and a reward system is used to encourage good behaviour. The childminder is knowledgeable and proactive in supporting children's needs. Excellent strategies are in place to diffuse minor situations. Positive reinforcement encourages children to understand their good behaviour is valued. Children clear away toys with the childminder carefully checking for objects that could be hazardous. She discusses this with them as they tidy up encouraging them to care for each other and their environment. Children benefit greatly from the trusting relationship the childminder has built with parents and carers. Extensive information regarding the childminder's practice is given out to parents prior to minding. A colourful and informative notice board enables parents to keep up to date with activities and themes including recent and relevant information. A daily exchange of information ensures that children's needs are carefully and sensitively catered for. Thank you letters from parents highlight this extremely positive working relationship.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder organises her home well to support children's care learning and play. The day is organised to incorporate a good balance of activities both in and outside which promotes all areas of children's development. Children make choices about how to spend their time as they plan with the childminder, subsequently activities are of particular interest to them. The children receive good levels of support from an experienced and dedicated childminder. Necessary checks have been carried out on the childminder and her assistant to ensure children's welfare.

The childminder has attended a very good variety of training including 'Birth to three matters' framework and many courses regarding children's behaviour. This ensures a positive proactive approach is taken consistently with all children. Comprehensive policies ensure children are well cared for according to their parents wishes. All relevant documentation is stored securely and confidentiality and all requirements are met. The childminder has a good understanding of the National Standards and more recent updates. Consequently children's welfare, learning and care are well fostered.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder was asked to ensure that an emergency evacuation procedure is practised to ensure children's safety if there were a fire. This has been comprehensively developed to include a well thought out escape plan that is practised with children to ensure their safety in the event of a fire.

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

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):

- ensure that hazards are minimised effectively, with regard to the temperature of the radiators.

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