

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	256560
Inspection date	02 April 2007
Inspector	Christine Ann London

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 1993. She lives with her husband and daughter in a village near Norwich, Norfolk. The house is within walking distance of the local amenities. The childminder has use of a car to transport minded children to and from school. The whole of the house is used for childminding, with the exception of the daughter's bedroom. A fully enclosed rear garden is available for outdoor play. The family has two dogs and three chickens.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding seven children under eight years, all attend on a part-time basis. The childminder attends the local toddler group and is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted as they are cared for in a clean and tidy environment. They are learning to take responsibility for their personal hygiene needs. The childminder checks

they have washed their hands after using the toilet and following contact with the dogs. The dogs are hygienically cared for and although child-friendly, they are usually kept separate from the children. The childminder has attended an appropriate first aid course and has a first aid box provided. She has clear accident and medication records in place which she shares with the parents. Children's health and well-being is promoted by recording the information gathered from parents at the initial visit and having all appropriate consent forms in place. These ensure the childminder is able to deal with any accidents or medical emergencies effectively.

Children benefit from regular opportunities to engage in physical exercise. The rear garden is used for outdoor activities during the better weather, when children have access to a variety of equipment to promote and develop their skills, such as a trampoline and different sized climbing frames. They enjoy daily walks, such as regular visits to the lambs in the nearby fields and to the local parks. Young children are able to sleep undisturbed in a cot in the spare bedroom, to meet their emotional and physical development. Older children can fulfil their own needs in regard to rest by using the comfortable settee in the lounge or dining room.

Children's dietary needs are consistently met. They have daily opportunities to learn about healthy eating; the childminder asks the children what they would like at snack time, they choose fruit and raisins. The childminder provides most food and drink for the children, daily menus are discussed with the parents, promoting children's healthy growth and development. Older children are able to help themselves to a drink from the kitchen. Younger children have access to their beakers and the childminder encourages them to drink sufficient amounts at snack and meal times to keep them healthy. Information recorded on the children's record forms include any allergies and basic likes and dislikes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a child-friendly and safe environment. The childminder's risk assessment of her property is proactive in identifying and minimising potential hazards. Effective security procedures are in place with doors and gates locked to ensure children are safe in and out of doors. The childminder has suitable safety equipment in place, such as stairgates and socket covers. The childminder has appropriate fire safety equipment in place, for example, smoke alarms and a fire blanket. However, the current emergency escape plan is not consistently shared with the children and their parents, therefore children's safety could be compromised.

Children can reach the toys and play equipment from the boxes on the floor and low-level cupboards. This encourages them to select items independently. The resources are in good condition. The childminder has procedures to follow to ensure they are well maintained and anything broken is discarded immediately. Children sit comfortably to join in activities and play together on the floor of the dining room or lounge. A good selection of equipment is available to meet the needs of the younger children, for example, a buggy, cot and high chair.

Children's welfare is suitably safeguarded and promoted because the childminder is aware of her responsibilities towards the children in her care. The required child protection documentation is available. The childminder has attended recent training to update her knowledge and awareness. The parents are made aware of how the childminder will comply with local child protection procedures if she suspected a child in her care was being abused or neglected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well at the childminder's house and spend their time playing purposefully. They happily play with the Lego bricks and imaginatively with the train sets and the small world figures. The childminder provides them with a wide range of learning and play opportunities which develop their emotional, intellectual, social and creative skills. She enjoys taking the children out and planning activities for them. For example, walking along the country lane to see the lambs, visits to the local church and shops, and having picnics in the garden. Children undertake a variety of art and craft activities, for example, making gifts and cards for special events, such as Easter, which improves their creativity. Children are confident and secure as they move from room to room to watch the childminder preparing their snack and to let her know what they are doing.

The childminder provides a busy, interesting environment for the children. She uses the 'Birth to three matters' framework to help her recognise young children's developing skills and provides them with appropriate play materials for their age and stage of development. She has developed a close relationship with the children and their parents. The childminder makes good use of smiles and facial expressions to create a friendly atmosphere which helps children to feel at ease. The children are supported well with their activities, for example, the discussion about how high the tower is and how much taller can we make it before it tumbles down. The childminder values what children say and do and responds well to their interests. For example, when children ask to play outside, the childminder agrees they can go outside after they have tidied some of the toys away. This meets the children's requests and gives a realistic timescale to them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing a good sense of self-esteem because the childminder gives lots of praise, for example saying 'well done' for sharing out bricks. Some of their toys introduce them to positive images depicting people of various cultures and people with differing abilities. These resources assist in raising children's awareness of the wider world through play experiences. Children have opportunities to learn about their local community by visiting the local farm animals, the park and attending a local toddler group. The childminder is aware some children may have additional needs and would ensure she is able to provide appropriate care to promote their welfare and overall development.

Children learn right from wrong and the childminder encourages good behaviour. Children are getting on well together and laugh as they play and eat their lunch. They know what is expected of them as house rules are discussed, for example, be kind and helpful, share toys and help each other. A behaviour policy is discussed with parents at the initial visit. However, this policy does not fully inform parents of current strategies used by the childminder when managing their children's behaviour.

Children's well-being is promoted by the positive partnerships that have developed between the childminder and their parents. There is a daily exchange of information, and daily diaries for the pre-school age children inform the parents how their children have spent their time and the food they have eaten. Children are looked after according to parents' wishes. Agreement forms are fully completed and include the use of comforters. For example, one child has a cuddly toy when tired. They include details of any specific arrangements, for example, to collect

from home or parents to provide a change of clothes. Registration forms give sufficient details of the children, their emergency contact numbers and those with permission to collect them to keep them safe. The childminder provides parents with informative documentation at the initial visit, which keep them informed about her childcare practices and routines. Ongoing information regarding events and themes are provided for parents. Parents receive clear information about the procedures for making complaints and the process for resolving them.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There have been no changes to the childminder's circumstances and she remains suitable to care for children. She has the necessary experience, skills and ability to provide good outcomes for children that keep them healthy and safe and ensure that they enjoy their time with her. She makes good use of her time to be able to play with the children and take them out. Children feel secure and confident with their surroundings. The childminder improves and develops her knowledge by undertaking childminding training, for example, Managing Children's Behaviour and Safeguarding Children courses. She keeps herself up-to-date with childcare practices by reading useful articles.

Checks have been completed to ensure that persons living or working in the household are suitable. Appropriate documentation is in place which helps to promote children's health, safety and welfare. An accurate register of attendance is kept to ensure children are safe and ratios are maintained. The childminder shares records with the parents, promoting close working relationships and continuity of care for children. The childminder displays her registration certificate in the dining room for parents to see. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to implement systems to secure the premises at all times.

The childminder ensures that the back door is locked at all times when children are present and that the gate leading to the front of the property is locked when the children are outside. This promotes the safety of the children present.

She was also asked to improve systems for dispensing the dogs' food. The childminder makes sure the dogs' feeding bowls are lifted before the minded children arrive. This prevents access by the children and maintains a healthy environment for them.

Finally she was asked to obtain consents from parents to transport children by car and to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. The childminder has written consents from the parents to allow her to transport children in her car and has written consents from the parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment for the individual children. These are now met and promote the children's safety and well-being.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- improve and practise the emergency escape plan
- develop the behaviour management policy to fully inform parents of current strategies used

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