

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	259549
Inspection date	16 May 2007
Inspector	Lindsey Ann Cullum

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 2001. She lives with her two children aged five and nine years, in the town of North Walsham, Norfolk. All areas of the property, with the exception of the bedrooms, are registered for use by minded children. There is an enclosed garden for outdoor play. Local amenities are within walking distance of the home. The family has a dog, a cat, rabbits, guinea pigs and gerbils.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time. Overnight care is not provided. The childminder is currently caring for eight children, some of whom attend only occasionally.

The childminder has completed a NVQ Early Years Care and Education level 3 qualification. She 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 looked after in a clean, warm and well maintained home. The daily routine helps children to gain an understanding of the importance of good personal hygiene, as they are reminded to wash their hands after using the toilet or before eating meals. Children are protected from the risk of cross-infection as effective hygiene practices are used, for example, paper towels are provided for hand-drying and children have their own flannel. The childminder has updated her first aid knowledge and has a well-stocked first aid box to hand, ensuring children's well-being should an accident occur. Clear, written records support children's health needs, which include details of any dietary or medical needs. Children's good health is promoted as the childminder informs parents of her policy regarding the care of sick children and has information available on infectious diseases and exclusions from the setting. Pets are kept clean and well looked after, to ensure children are protected when coming into contact with them.

Children are learning about the importance of a healthy diet. Whilst children currently attending bring packed lunches, care is taken by the childminder to monitor the contents to ensure children develop good healthy eating habits. Children are provided with fruit for snacks. The childminder occasionally uses this opportunity to introduce different foods related to a topic, for example, rice or noodles, encouraging children to try a variety of foods. Mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions where children become independent by feeding themselves and good table manners are encouraged. Children recognise when they are thirsty and drinks are accessible throughout the day, ensuring children remain well-hydrated.

Children take part in a good range of physical activities which contribute to a healthy lifestyle, for example, children enjoy regular trips to the local parks or field. They walk to and from school or pre-school daily, benefiting from the fresh air and exercise. Children enjoy playing in the garden where they have space to move freely or engage in their own imaginative games. The daily routine offers a balance of active play and time for rests, for example, whilst listening to a story.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very safe indoor and outdoor environment, where they feel comfortable and secure. They have easy access to a broad range of developmentally appropriate resources and equipment that is of a high quality and maintained in good condition. Children select toys from accessible storage, promoting their independence and enabling them to pursue their own interests. They are able to move around the premises freely and play safely, with good levels of supervision to ensure their safety. Additional resources are stored so these may easily be accessed by the childminder in order to develop children's play. The childminder regularly checks resources for cleanliness and safety and monitors children's choice of toys, ensuring these are appropriate for their age and stage of development, therefore safeguarding children whilst they are playing.

Children's safety is very well promoted. The childminder completes formal risk assessments of the premises regularly and makes appropriate records. A daily visual risk assessment prior to children's arrival, ensures potential hazards are identified and suitable action is taken to minimise

the risks for children. The childminder is aware of children's constantly changing abilities and ensures effective safety measures are in place around the home in order to effectively protect children from harm. Good levels of supervision by the childminder and close monitoring of children's play, ensures children are able to play safely. Children are developing an awareness of their own and other children's safety through careful explanations from the childminder. For example, helping to clear away toys from the floor in order to create a safe environment in which to play. Fire safety equipment is in place and an emergency evacuation plan displayed in the entrance hallway. Children regularly practise this with the childminder so they are familiar with the procedures in the event of a fire. Children are protected as suitable security measures are in place.

Children regularly enjoy outings with the childminder who has clear strategies in place to keep them safe. For example, they hold onto the buggy or childminder's hand when walking. Children are learning to use safe practices when out, for example, when crossing the road they know to look left and right to look for cars. The childminder assesses the safety of places visited, ensuring they are suitable for the children attending. When planning specific outings, risk assessments are undertaken, in order to fully safeguard children.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded as the childminder has a secure understanding of local child protection guidelines and procedures. She has attended relevant training to update her knowledge and has a written statement on child protection which she shares with parents in order to protect children. Children's welfare is further promoted as she has thought about emergency back-up plans.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy and settled with the childminder as she is caring and responds sensitively to their needs. Her warm approach ensures children are at ease and eager to participate in the broad range of activities available. Children are very well supported by the childminder, who displays her interest in their activities and spends time on an individual basis with the children. Children play well together and enjoy one another's company. They have started to form friendships and say 'Goodbye' as children go home. Children chat together and share their ideas, for example, to do a puppet show. Older children are learning to be considerate of others feelings, for example, fear of the crocodile puppet. They are learning to share resources and ask politely for a particular item.

Children thrive on the broad and varied range of activities provided by the childminder. Their independence is encouraged as they confidently select toys and resources they would like to play with. The childminder is guided by what the children would like to do, listens to their ideas and provides thoughtful support and encouragement in order that they achieve. Effective use is made of spontaneous learning opportunities such as a child playing with a rocket to talk about the moon and space, enhancing children's learning. Children are given time to concentrate on activities, explore materials and learn at their own pace. Children eagerly join planned activities as these are well presented to stimulate children's interest. The childminder is skilled in adapting activities to meet the differing needs and abilities of the children present. Children relish exploring the coloured rice in large trays. Younger children experiment by letting the rice fall through their fingers or listening to the sound made when rice is placed in a container and shaken. Older children draw shapes or letters and talk about these with the childminder. Children initiate their own imaginary games, telling stories with the puppets or playing with the farm. They enjoy dressing up in the varied range of costumes provided and act out being a policeman

or fairy. Children's language skills are promoted as they talk about what they are doing, chat with each other or ask questions. The childminder introduces new words, for example, 'reversing' whilst children are playing with the cars and uses simple explanations and visual demonstrations so children grasp the meaning of the new word. They are learning about numbers, colours, shape and size as these are introduced into their play by the childminder. Children regularly visit the local toddler group where they are able to socialise with children of a similar age. They enjoy many opportunities to play outdoors either in the garden or more often at the nearby park. Visits to the Post Office to post letters or the library to choose books provide additional learning opportunities. Children are learning about their natural environment through planned topics, currently, frogs and tadpoles. They are involved in caring for a small number of tadpoles and observe the changes as these develop from tadpoles to frogs. The childminder uses skilled questioning to seek out what the children already know, for example, when asked they remember a tadpole is a baby frog. Daily routines are planned to offer a balance of active play and time to rest, for example, whilst sharing a story.

The childminder uses her knowledge of child development to plan activities which encourage children to learn through their play and first-hand experiences. She has a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and has incorporated different aspects into planning activities for the under threes. The childminder observes and notes children's progress. She uses her observations and knowledge of children's developmental needs when planning and setting out activities, in order to provide sufficient challenges for children and encourage them to develop new skills. As a consequence, children are making very good progress in all areas of their learning and development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel confident and at ease in the childminder's home. Their individual needs are met because the childminder knows them well and understands their routines. She obtains information from parents on their individual preferences and needs at the start of the arrangement and through ongoing discussions, enabling appropriate care to be provided. The childminder treats children with respect and gives them praise and support, fostering their self-esteem. She acknowledges individual children's current interests and ensures resources are available for children to pursue these, for example, recent interest in playing with the puppets. All children have access to appropriate toys and play materials which contribute to their development. Some resources and topics help children to become aware of diversity and acknowledge cultural differences, including books and dolls. Although the childminder has limited experience of caring for children with specific needs, she is aware of children's developmental stages. Consequently, she feels able to approach parents if she is concerned about children's development and obtain support to ensure that children can make progress.

Children are happy and behave well as they are interested and occupied in the activities on offer. The childminder uses positive strategies to manage children's behaviour which are appropriate to each child's age and level of understanding. As a consequence, children are learning right from wrong at an early age. Children are spoken to in a calm, polite manner and thrive on the praise and encouragement they receive. They are learning to share, take turns and play co-operatively. Strategies used to manage behaviour are shared with parents through a written statement and discussion, promoting consistency.

Children benefit from the strong partnerships the childminder builds with their parents. All the required documents and consents are in place to ensure children are cared for according to

their parents' wishes. The childminder takes positive steps to ensure parents are kept well informed. A folder of information is available containing training certificates, policies and details of the childcare practices used. The childminder has a written policy covering complaints, however this requires updating in line with recent changes to the National Standards. Children's well-being is assured through the effective systems used to aid communication between parents and the childminder. Daily discussions and detailed diaries inform parents of the days events, activities enjoyed and progress noted. Scrapbooks contain photographs of the children enjoying activities or examples of their creative work for parents to enjoy. All records are accessible to parents who frequently add their comments.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and welfare is enhanced by the childminder's professional attitude and commitment to ongoing training and development. She has recently completed the NVQ Early Years Care and Education level 3 qualification and uses this knowledge to effectively plan and provide a wide range of stimulating and challenging play opportunities, which promote children's all round development and learning. Consideration has been given to organising the home so this is a child-friendly and welcoming environment for children, enabling them to feel comfortable and settled. Children experience a sense of belonging as their pictures and artwork are attractively displayed on some walls and they have space for their belongings.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as all adults in direct contact with children are suitable. The childminder has a good understanding of the National Standards which is reflected in the care she provides. The required record keeping is maintained to a high standard and as a result children's health, welfare and development are promoted successfully. All records are stored confidentially, in line with the childminder's confidentiality policy. Parents may have access to their child's records at any time and are regularly given these to take home, in order to keep them fully informed and involved in their child's care whilst with the childminder. Overall, the needs of the children who attend are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of the last inspection the childminder agreed to improve feeding arrangements for the dog and obtain required medical consents.

The childminder ensures all pet feeding bowls are removed prior to children's arrival and gains parents' written consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment for children, which further promotes children's health.

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):

- improve the information provided for parents on the procedure to follow should they wish to make a complaint or raise a concern and develop a system for recording any complaints received.

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