

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 250905
Inspection date 09 August 2007
Inspector Glenda Kathleen Field

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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since 1993. She lives with her husband and two adult children in a house in Ipswich, Suffolk. Amenities such as shops, library, schools and playgroups are all close by or a short drive away. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and there are currently nine children on roll. The registration also enables a maximum of three children to be cared for overnight. The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those that speak English as a second language.

Children predominantly play in the dedicated playroom. The adjacent kitchen diner is used for meals and messy activities. There is a toilet directly off the playroom for the children to use. An enclosed garden is available for outdoor play. There are six cats, a rabbit and a guinea pig kept as pets. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. Visits are also made to the shops and local park.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are welcomed into an exceptional, friendly, warm and clean home where they learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. Exemplary practices demonstrated by the childminder are maintained and encouraged. Children demonstrate with confidence how they effectively wash their hands, and know why this is necessary to remain healthy. They wash their hands after outdoor play, touching the animals, using the toilet and before eating or preparing food. The childminder works to detailed, purposeful policies and procedures she has devised in relation to health, hygiene, medication and illness in the children which are clearly reflected in her excellent practice.

Children can rest and sleep according to their needs, younger children use a travel cot which is placed in a quiet well ventilated room with clean comfortable bedding, the childminder is committed to providing continuity of care. Children's understanding of the benefit of good fresh food is greatly increased through the provision of healthy and nutritious snacks and meals. The childminder actively encourages children to try new healthy foods. Children are involved in excellent first hand experiences where they have opportunities to help prepare their own food, for example, fresh fruit salad. Children have constant access to drinks to ensure they do not become dehydrated, younger children have their beakers replenished regularly by the childminder. Further drinks are encouraged during meal times and after exercise. Children's individual dietary requirements are very clearly recorded in written agreements and are sensitively catered for.

Children have excellent opportunities to extend their physical development both indoors and outside so contributing to a healthy lifestyle. Children enjoy the daily benefit of fresh air which is enthusiastically promoted by the active childminder. Free access to the rear garden and regular walks to the local park provide them with plenty of fresh air and access to a range of equipment offering appropriate challenge. In the hot weather the childminder is vigilant in promoting sun safety, ensuring that children wear sun cream. Children develop control of their bodies while using wheeled toys, pushing buggies, or using the climbing equipment and swings at the park. They develop their manipulative skills using a wide range of equipment, such as mark making tools, construction kits and scissors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment where they can move around freely and independently. The large well maintained house provides a warm and welcoming environment for children and their parents, with a designated playroom. The playroom is bright, light, decorated with children's photographs and their art work and set up invitingly for play. Children have use of high quality play materials and equipment which are well maintained, appropriate to their age and covers all areas of their development. Children help to take some responsibility for their maintenance as they help to tidy up. Toys and resources are organised effectively to enable children to choose activities that interest and motivate them. Children make excellent use of their environment and adapt the layout to suit their play. The garden is used regularly with the playroom door open in fine weather to enable them free flow from indoors to outdoors during their play.

The childminder has a very clear understanding of how to keep children safe and she has taken all the necessary steps to reduce risks. For example, all potential hazards are made inaccessible to children by the use of child-proof catches on cupboards, the entrance gate to the premises is kept locked and the shed in the outdoor area is padlocked. The childminder has sound procedures in place when taking children on outings or in a vehicle and always carries all their emergency contact details with her along with a first aid kit.

Children are learning effective strategies to keep themselves safe and prepare for future independence, such as learning the 'Green Cross Code' and discussing 'stranger danger' with the childminder. This allows children to learn some sense of danger and knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm. In addition, the childminder explains and practises with children how to dial the emergency services, this is supported by picture details for children which are attached to the wall near the telephone. This teaches children of action they can take if an emergency situation arises such as the childminder having an accident. All the necessary fire safety precautions are in place and the children regularly practise emergency evacuation procedures with the childminder to ensure they know what to do in the event of a fire. Children tell the inspector that 'if there is a fire in the kitchen we go out of the playroom door.' Children staying overnight are safe and secure as the childminder ensures they are well protected from persons not vetted.

Children are very well-protected by the childminder who has a high awareness of child protection procedures and gives top priority to children's welfare. Information on her responsibilities are shared with parents and a clear written policy supports her practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are eager to attend and relish their time in this child centred environment which puts them first. They confidently make themselves at home because they are familiar with the daily routine, and are extremely secure in their relationships with the childminder. This contributes greatly to a strong sense of belonging and security. Children are rapidly becoming independent as they access the toilet themselves, prepare their own food such as fresh fruit salad, help to tidy the toys, and respond to simple requests of help by the childminder, who constantly praises and acknowledges their achievements.

Children thoroughly enjoy an excellent range of play opportunities provided through stimulating toys and activities. The childminder draws on her skills and knowledge to maintain and create resources that provide interest and challenge. For example, the childminder suggested to a child that they make a mosaic picture from cut up paper, explaining to the child how this was done. The child then told the inspector of mosaic tiles of an octopus and fish that his mother had made and how she had placed them above the sink in the bathroom of their home. Children build confidence and self-esteem through the development of warm and close relationships with the childminder who is very intuitive of their needs. The childminder constantly gets down to the children's level and joins in with their play, consolidating and extending their language and curiosity with open ended questions. Children are motivated to learn and interested in what they do because the childminder provides a fantastic range of planned activities starting with the children's interests. Children relish their time as they enjoy craft, cooking, modelling and a wide range of construction materials. A dynamic and exciting range of planned and spontaneous activities enable children to develop excellent physical skills, for example, trips to the local park and many cutting and sticking crafts. Equipment is replaced and rotated regularly to maintain interest and challenge. Children are very dextrous as they have many

opportunities to draw, thread and use scissors. Children are actively encouraged to tidy away activities before starting something new, this encourages children to take responsibility for their actions.

Younger children's needs are exceptionally well met by the warm and gentle childminder who plans exciting activities and reflects all aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework in her outstanding practice. Babies have access to natural resources which they can use to explore textures thus developing their curiosity. The childminder encourages their communication skills by patiently listening and responding to their questions so they know their views are valued. She is very alert to their need for consistency and believes in offering plenty of one to one time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children develop a very strong sense of belonging because the childminder knows them and their families well and ensures they are all valued and included. Children have built extremely good relationships with the childminder who responds sensitively to them and respects their individual personalities. All children have equal access to toys and equipment that meet their individual needs so they can become confident and independent. The childminder has several resources reflecting diversity and discusses people's similarities and differences with children, to help them develop an understanding of others.

The childminder has a very positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. She has considered how the environment and activities could be adapted to ensure inclusion. The childminder works very closely with parents to provide individual care required to promote children's welfare and development. She is willing to work with other agencies to further increase her knowledge and would undertake further training to accommodate an individual child's needs and promote their welfare.

Children's behaviour is of a consistently high standard and they respond extremely well to the childminder's highly effective, clear and consistent strategies to manage their behaviour. Clear explanations and age-appropriate reasoning why behaviour is unacceptable provides children with firm foundations to build on their understanding of right and wrong. Children are spoken to in a consistently positive and sensitive manner, and thrive on the praise and encouragement given by the childminder.

Children benefit from the excellent relationships the childminder develops with their parents and carers. The childminder is flexible and cooperative to fit in with parents' needs and works closely with them to ensure their children settle well. All the required documentation and written consents are in place to ensure children are looked after according to their parents' wishes. The childminder takes positive steps to ensure that parents are kept well informed about all relevant policies and procedures through sharing her operational folder. Detailed information is shared verbally each day to ensure children's changing needs are met, with daily diaries used for babies to ensure continuity of care. Parents show a very high level of confidence in the childminder and the care she provides for their children, through the numerous cards and letters praising her friendly disposition and the care she provides. For example, written comments such as 'thank you for being a special person in my children's lives' and 'thank you so much for the care you have given my child and for being a friend to me.'

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder is aware of the need to inform Ofsted of any changes relating to her registration. The current registration certificate is displayed where it can be seen by parents. All adults living on the premises are checked for suitability, reassuring parents and keeping children safe. The childminder is very experienced and knowledgeable and has attended all the required training to support her registration. She is proactive in updating her practice and skills by attending numerous workshop and childminding conferences. The knowledge and understanding gained from this training is used to update and enhance the provision and the care provided.

The childminder has a very high regard for the well-being of all the children in her care to ensure they are fully supported in reaching their full potential. The childminder is meticulous in maintaining all the required documentation and consents to support the care and welfare of children. Records are stored securely and the childminder has an excellent understanding of issues relating to confidentiality. The childminder has compiled a substantial operational folder containing detailed information about her provision to promote children's good health, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Children's care is significantly enhanced by the childminder's very effective organisation of time, space and resources and the balanced range of activities provided to promote their care, learning and play. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable. There were no improvements identified at the last 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 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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

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