

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY253848
Inspection date	25 July 2007
Inspector	Sarah Johnson
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 was registered in 2003. She lives with her husband and three children aged seven, 10 and 12 in the town of Bury St Edmunds. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder walks to locals schools to take and collect children. The family has a dog and pet gerbils.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding five children, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and the Suffolk Childminding Network. She attends local toddler groups and childminding groups with the children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is extremely well promoted and greatly enhanced, as they are cared for by a childminder who is vigilant in implementing robust and purposeful policies and procedures for health and hygiene. Children clearly understand the need to wash their hands before eating,

after touching animals and using the toilet. They use spotlessly clean toilet facilities and can independently wash their hands as they are provided with steps at the sink and low-level facilities for hand washing. Individually labelled towels and flannels are available for each child and liquid soap is provided to effectively minimise the risk of cross infection. Children rest and sleep comfortably and according to their needs. For example, they sleep peacefully on the sofa with soft cosy cushions and clean blankets.

Exceptionally well thought out procedures are in place to ensure children receive the best care should they become ill or have an accident. The childminder holds an up-to-date paediatric first aid certificate and vigilantly checks the contents of the well stocked and easily accessible first aid kit. Detailed records of accidents and any medication administered are signed consistently by parents, ensuring children's health is not compromised. An informative written policy and details of communicable diseases are shared with parents so they are fully aware of when it is appropriate for children to attend and when they should be kept at home.

Children develop an excellent awareness of the benefits of a healthy diet and lifestyle through a rich array of activities. For example, they visit the local supermarket to choose healthy foods for snack and develop an understanding of where vegetables come from when they plant and care for their own tomatoes and runner beans in the garden. Children remain very well hydrated as they frequently help themselves to water from a jug and independently refill the jug when it is empty. Children's individual dietary needs are fully recorded and adhered to and the childminder has proactively sourced information about cultural dietary needs to ensure she is very well informed. Children enjoy a balanced array of nutritious snacks including melon, pear, apple, biscuits, toast and cheese. The childminder sensitively encourages parents to provide healthy lunch boxes for their children by implementing a policy of no sweets and nuts. Children's health is protected as the childminder follows excellent procedures when handling food and storing it at the correct temperature in the refrigerator.

Children relish the daily benefit of fresh air which is consistently promoted by the childminder. They enjoy free flow access to the secure and inviting garden whatever the weather. A varied and stimulating range of equipment promotes their physical development extremely well and ensures they gain daily exercise. For example, they use ride on toys, skipping ropes, push along toys and chase bubbles in the air. Visits to the local park and adventure centres give children ample opportunities to pursue their climbing and balancing skills using large scale equipment and to run around freely.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are kept extremely safe in a spacious, spotlessly clean environment that is welcoming for children and parents alike. Children benefit as the childminder dedicates her home to childminding and is skilful in offering a homely and child friendly atmosphere. They play mainly in the living room which is very light and airy and offers large patio doors which enable the childminder to maintain a good view of the children when they are playing in the garden. Children confidently self-select from an extensive range of resources and toys which are stored in wicker baskets at ground level and labelled boxes on shelves. The childminder rotates toys carefully in order to maintain interest and consequently children are motivated and stimulated by the array of resources on offer. Additional resources are sourced through the local authority topic box scheme, which ensures children access resources and activities covering a wide range of themes. For example, children use resources from a topic box about disability awareness.

Children's safety is effectively promoted as the childminder vigilantly checks and cleans toys and resources to ensure they are safe and in a good state of repair.

Children are cared for in an extremely safe environment, where the childminder takes positive steps to minimise risks and prioritise children's safety. The childminder is very conscientious and conducts ongoing visual risk assessments to maintain a safe environment. The childminder is constantly vigilant in her supervision of children but ensures this is not intrusive and allows them to take safe risks. Children benefit from the vast range of safety measures in place. The childminder ensures that the premises is fully secure, hazardous chemicals are stored in locked cupboards and safety gates are installed at the top and bottom of the stairs. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe through ample fun and child focussed activities. For example, they visit the local fire station and use large road signs and traffic lights to learn about road safety in their play.

Comprehensive procedures in place to ensure children are extremely safe in the event of a fire or other emergency. A fire extinguisher, carbon-monoxide detector and smoke alarms are vigilantly checked and an effectively planned fire evacuation plan is practised frequently and sensitively with the children. As a result, children confidently understand how to keep themselves safe in the event of a fire. Children take part in extremely safe outings as the childminder plans and organises these meticulously well. Full details are provided in letters to parents, the childminder vigilantly considers all associated risks and children wear orange t-shirts which make them easily identifiable.

Children are expertly protected from harm as the childminder has completed training in child protection and demonstrates extensive knowledge of issues relating to safeguarding children. A comprehensive written policy is fully implemented to ensure concerns are dealt with effectively and children's welfare is prioritised.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy the time they spend with the childminder and thrive in the stimulating and rich environment. They settle immediately as they are familiar with the routine and have very trusting and loving relationships with the childminder. The childminder's excellent understanding of child development is evident in every aspect of her care for the children. The childminder is kind and warm in her approach. She dedicates time to talking and listening to children and finding out about their likes, dislikes and daily routines. Consequently she is very intuitive of their individual needs. Children are building very strong relationships with each other as a result of the happy and cooperative atmosphere at the setting. For example, they show care and concern for younger children, checking they are sleeping comfortably and are covered properly with the blanket.

The children respond extremely well to the flexible routine which is lead almost completely by their interests. They confidently choose from a wide range of stimulating resources and often request alternative activities, which the childminder happily provides. For example, when children ask to play with water in the garden, the childminder gives them complete freedom to independently access jugs of water. The childminder is skilful in making the most of incidental opportunities that arise, providing children with a wide range of meaningful experiences. For example, children look for a rainbow when the weather changes. Children's independence is highly supported as the childminder encourages them to take responsibility for simple tasks such as cleaning up spilt water and tidying away resources. Children are familiar with the routine

as the childminder provides pictorial timetables and displays a cardboard clock to remind children of the time throughout the daily routine.

Children experience ample opportunities to socialise with adults and children in their local community, which helps them to develop excellent social skills. For example, the children frequently attend toddler groups and childminding groups, visit the local shops and library. Children excitedly welcome the opportunity to work creatively on a large scale when drawing around their bodies on large sheets of paper and using paint to express their ideas. The childminder shows genuine interest as she asks questions about their finished pictures. Children are developing their knowledge of the environment as they plant sunflower seeds, noticing changes as the plants grow and showing care as they water them daily.

Younger children receive excellent care as the childminder draws on her vast experience of caring for babies and young children and effectively reflects all aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework in her practice. Young children are actively listened to and the childminder gives her full attention when they communicate with her. Attentive and caring responses are consistently provided, which contributes effectively to younger children's sense of belonging and ability to settle when their parents leave.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive as their individuality is celebrated and they are fully included in all aspects of the setting. They show a real sense of belonging as they eagerly seek out the childminder to show her their finished paintings and share photographs of themselves with enthusiasm. There is a comprehensive written policy in place for equal opportunities, which is implemented precisely to ensure children are treated with equal concern and have full access to all aspects of the setting. The children's awareness of diversity and the world around them is effectively developed through an excellent range of activities and resources. For example, they frequently meet different people from their local neighbourhood, look at books depicting positive images of culture and disability and learn about visual disabilities when negotiating tasks while wearing blindfolds. The childminder is motivated in providing excellent support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, working in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure children's individual needs are fully met. Children benefit as the childminder proactively sources information on the internet regarding specific needs and attends ongoing training in aspects including 'Autism Awareness'.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They respond exceptionally well to the childminder's calm and consistent approach. The childminder encourages children to play freely by providing consistent boundaries which help the children to learn limits. For example, she responds calmly when children spill water and paint and as a result children take responsibility for their actions and promptly clean up their spillages. Younger children are supported as the childminder is an excellent role model and is skilful in using appropriate explanations and distraction to diffuse minor disputes. Children's behaviour is supported further as the childminder records and discusses concerns with parents in order to determine any possible causes and decide on the best way to support the children together.

Children benefit from a strong and very effective partnership with parents. The childminder dedicates significant time to talking to parents on a daily basis about their children's day at the setting, their changing needs and development. Parents respond extremely well, passing information back to the childminder and ensuring continuity in the care of children. The

childminder facilitates communication with parents further by completing a daily diary for younger children and providing a more detailed written review of children's progress every six months. Parents who are unable to collect their children from the setting are updated consistently via email. As a result, children and parents are reassured that their care and well-being is very highly considered. Parents are extremely well informed when they first join the setting as the childminder shares a comprehensive folder of information including the written policies and procedures. The childminder has proactively responded to the needs of parents. For example, she designed an excellent leaflet with suggested questions to ask childminders and adapted the contract following comments from the parents. A detailed written complaints procedure is shared with parents and consequently they have all the information they need to enable them to raise a complaint or compliment the service offered.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are extremely well cared for as the childminder approaches childminding with a professional but approachable manner and demonstrates clear commitment to providing outstanding care for children. Children are effectively safeguarded as the childminder is vigilant to ensure they are never left alone with adults who are not vetted. The childminder is very well qualified, knowledgeable and experienced. Children benefit from her strong commitment to continuing her professional development. For example, the childminder keeps fully up-to-date with good practice by accessing regular training courses, attending meetings arranged by the Suffolk Childminding Network and meeting up frequently with other childminders to actively share ideas.

Children's care, learning and play are significantly enhanced by the way the childminder effectively organises the provision. Children experience excellent levels of supervision and individual attention as the childminder fully complies with the ratios defined in her conditions of registration. Excellent contingency arrangements are in place for emergencies as the childminder has forged strong links with three other registered childminders in the local area. Children benefit significantly from the childminder's ability to evaluate the provision and identify areas for improvement. For example, the childminder actively involves children when completing the self evaluation form and responds effectively to their suggestions.

Children's welfare is positively supported as the childminder maintains up-to-date documentation, which is easily accessible and above and beyond requirements. The documentation is handled and stored effectively to ensure maximum confidentiality and the childminder is fully committed to informing Ofsted of any significant changes or events. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder agreed to ensure that pet food is inaccessible to children. The childminder is now vigilant to ensure that pet food is stored in a locked cupboard and is out of children's reach when the dog is being fed. As a result, children cannot access the pet food and their health is no longer compromised.

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 outstanding. 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

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