

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	256270
Inspection date	28 August 2007
Inspector	Rosalie Mary Turner

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 1996. She lives with her husband, their adult daughter and children aged 12 and 14 years in a town a few miles outside the city of Norwich, Norfolk. All areas of the childminder's house, except for the bedrooms and utility room, are used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and she is currently minding 10 children under eight years on a part-time basis. The childminder also cares for children who are over the age of eight years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well. They are cared for in a warm, clean home where the routines implemented by the childminder help to maintain their well-being. Young children have their hands wiped before eating their snack 'in case they are dirty', therefore, they quickly learn the importance of robust personal hygiene practices. The childminder agrees with parents that she

will not accept children if they are suffering from a contagious illness to limit the spread of infection. She keeps a fully stocked first aid kit and maintains her training so that children are able to receive appropriate treatment if they hurt themselves.

Children thrive because the childminder is health conscious and she checks their dietary requirements before she provides care. She discusses their preferences and keeps robust records, for example, that some children will 'eat anything' while others are 'picky eaters'. Children display very good manners as they sit together to enjoy their mid-morning snack saying 'please' and 'thank you' when they are offered food. They begin to understand the meaning of a healthy diet because the childminder uses her knowledge to encourage them to eat nutritious foods such as salads, raisins, fruit and wholemeal bread. However, children are not always able to help themselves to a drink of water as a way to encourage them to take responsibility for their own well-being.

Children benefit from regular opportunities to play outside in the fresh air and they have free access to the garden where they can run around and use up their surplus energy. The childminder provides a worthwhile range of large physical play equipment including a see-saw, swings, wheeled toys and a trampoline to encourage children to recognise that regular exercise will help to keep them fit. Children also learn to protect their health by putting on hats before they go out in the hot sun.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are emotionally secure because they are warmly welcomed into a child-centred home where they are able to gain a sense of belonging. The conservatory is set out for the specific use of the children and contains a comprehensive range of safely maintained, high quality toys to help them to settle quickly and stay relaxed.

Children have a safe environment in which to play as the childminder carries out a regular risk assessment to identify and reduce any potential hazards. For instance, she covers all low-level electrical sockets and uses a safety gate to reduce the risk of children having accidents on the stairs. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe from an early age, especially when they are outside the childminder's home. She discusses road safety with them so that they learn about the dangers from traffic and ensures that all children practise the fire drill. As a result, they are confident in evacuating the house quickly and safely.

Children's welfare is effectively promoted. They are well protected from the risk of possible 'stranger danger' because they are never left alone with persons who have not been vetted or released to adults unless the childminder has permission from their parents. The childminder has updated her child protection training and she has a thorough knowledge and understanding of actions that she must take if she has concerns about children. She has developed a policy which is shared with parents to ensure that they understand her responsibilities to refer her concerns and she keeps Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance to hand. Therefore, children are protected from the risk of possible harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and contented in the setting. They have formed a strong bond with the childminder who is warm and kind towards them. She shows a genuine interest in all of the

children and her enthusiastic encouragement ensures they are fully occupied in meaningful play. For example, the childminder sits with the children and continually chats as they complete 'Magic Maize' pictures. She helps them to persevere with the challenge of sticking the colourful shapes on to the paper through the use of praise saying 'You can do it! Good boy!' As a result, children complete the work for themselves and show pleasure in their accomplishments by repeating 'Well done!'

Children are stimulated to build on their existing skills because the childminder asks skilfully posed questions that make them think such as 'What colour?' or 'Why won't it stick?' She counts with the children and uses positional language asking them to 'put that one in the middle' so that they develop their mathematical skills. Children are always well occupied as the resources are regularly circulated to ensure that they can make progress in all areas of their learning, regardless of their patterns of attendance.

Children enjoy looking at books because the childminder makes stories interesting. She points to the pictures to help them to develop early reading skills and clearly repeats words so that toddlers develop their vocabularies. Consequently, children eagerly select books for themselves, turn the pages and pretend to read a story.

As a result of the childminder's valuable support, children enjoy themselves and have fun while they learn.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are respected and valued by the childminder who meets their individual needs very well. She works closely with parents and carers to follow the normal daily routines of children from all backgrounds. Children learn about the lifestyles of others through the stimulating range of positive resources that reflect our multicultural society. The pleasing range of small world figures of all abilities are particularly effective in helping children to think about what it might be like to have a body which does not always work perfectly. Children quickly develop a positive self-esteem because the childminder uses their names and maintains eye contact during conversations to help them to feel good about themselves.

Although the childminder has not provided care for children having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, she has a good knowledge and understanding of the stages of child development. She is able to recognise any delays in reaching milestones and she would immediately discuss any identified concerns with parents or carers so that their children receive appropriate support. Consequently, children of all abilities are able to reach their full potential and make progress.

Children are exceptionally well behaved because they are able to model their reactions on the childminder's positive example. For instance, she is confident and consistent, praising children's good behaviour so that it is repeated. The childminder sets fair boundaries and she uses her policy to agree positive tactics with parents so that her practices are consistent with those used at home. Therefore, children know what is expected of them and they behave very well.

Strong relationships with parents and carers have been developed that enable the childminder and parents to work together to meet the needs of their children. As well as collecting comprehensive details about each child, the childminder ensures that parents have all the information that they require before minding commences. For instance, she provides policies and leaflets about her service so that prospective parents are fully informed about the care

that will be provided for their children. This valuable exchange of information continues once minding is established through daily conversations when children are delivered or collected. As a result, children's needs are robustly met and the childminder feels that parents are pleased with her provision. However, she has systems in place to guide them on actions that they may take if parents have future concerns about her practice so that children's welfare, care and learning is supported.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's well-being is supported by the pleasing organisation of the provision. All household members over 16 years of age are vetted to make sure that children are safeguarded. The childminder uses her knowledge of their developmental needs to organise the resources to support their care and learning. She places great importance on developing her knowledge of childcare issues and she has maintained all required training. She continues to update her skills by attending short courses so that she can broaden children's experiences and improve her service.

Children enjoy a routine, based around trips to school and pre-school groups, that gives them maximum opportunities to play freely and develop their skills. The childminder uses her time effectively to stimulate children's intellectual, social and physical development. She organises the premises to provide opportunities for children to make choices and engage in a range of activities where they can be messy, concentrate, be active or simply relax and have fun.

All legally required paperwork is robustly maintained and the register is marked as soon as children arrive and depart to ensure that they are safeguarded in an emergency. The childminder's policies help her to operate her service effectively and she keeps children's details in individual wallets to ensure that their personal information is confidential. The childminder reviews her contracts with parents every year, or sooner if details change, to ensure children are provided with care that is appropriate to their current requirements.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection recommended that the childminder should record parents' acknowledgement of any medication administered.

The childminder has provided the National Childminding Association accident, incident and medication record book. Although she has not been required to give medicines to children, all prompts are in place to ensure that parents' signatures are obtained to acknowledge that medication has been administered. As a result, children's well-being is assured.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 6: Safety, National Standard 8, Food and drink and National Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers. Ofsted investigated by conducting an announced visit. As a result of the information received and evidence gathered, two actions were raised under National Standard 6 to ensure children are directly supervised at all times and to ensure that they are unable to leave the outside play area unsupervised. The provider responded by securing the garden gate

and supervising children at all times. She remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

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 fresh drinking water is available to children at all times.

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