

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	256392
Inspection date	15 January 2008
Inspector	Melanie Calway

Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since 1991 and lives with her husband and two children, aged 10 and 11 years, in a village near to the town of King's Lynn. The whole of the ground floor and an upstairs bathroom of the house are used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. She takes children out on walks and occasional outings to a childminding group.

The childminder is registered to work with an assistant. Alone, she may care for six children at any one time. When working with an assistant all of these children may be under the age of five years. She is currently minding five children, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder has one cat, which lives upstairs when childminding takes place.

She is a member of the National Childminding Association. She is also an accredited member of the West Norfolk Childminding Cluster and currently provides funded early education.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well because there are good hygiene procedures in place. Children are encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet and so are learning about good hygiene through the daily routine. A step stool is provided for them in the bathroom and individual towels to prevent the risk of cross infection. Before they have their snack their hands are wiped with individual flannels, which are then disposed of in a small bin and washed. Toys are cleaned regularly. Nappies are dealt with hygienically and disposed of appropriately.

Children's medical needs are met as the childminder and her assistant have a current first aid qualification and a first aid kit is kept in the kitchen so that minor accidents and injuries can be dealt with appropriately. An accurate record of all accidents is maintained. There is a system for recording the administration of medicines and consent has been obtained from parents to seek emergency treatment or advice so that the childminder can seek help in the event of an emergency. Children are protected from the risk of infection as the childminder has clear procedures on not accepting children with infectious conditions, which she shares with parents.

The childminder works mainly in the mornings so children do not normally need a sleep but they can rest on the sofa if they are tired and a travel cot is available for children who may need a sleep. Children have regular opportunities for exercise and fresh air as they play in the garden on most days and go for occasional walks. Children develop co-ordination as they manoeuvre ride-on toys around the front drive or play with balls. Inside there is a rocker to play on and a balancing board. Children develop manipulative skills as they use play dough tools, scissors or paint brushes.

Children are well nourished. The childminder offers them a healthy snack of fresh fruit. Children enjoy preparing the fruit for their snack. Displays about fruit and vegetables encourage children to learn about a healthy diet although explanations are not always given in the daily routine about how to live a healthy lifestyle. Children are able to have a drink when they are thirsty as beakers of diluted juice are placed within easy reach. However, fresh drinking water is not available for children to access independently.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in premises which are safe and suitable. Doors and the outside gate are locked while children are present. The environment is made welcoming as posters are displayed in the kitchen and utility area, for example a welcome poster displaying different languages and pictures of children playing. A good selection of toys is available at child-level and some are stored in low-level drawers and units to encourage children to help themselves.

Children are kept safe as the childminder maintains a good level of supervision. She works with an assistant and a volunteer so children benefit from a high-level of adult attention. She risk assesses the premises to make sure they are safe for children. Stair gates are placed at the top and bottom of the stairs and children are always supervised when going upstairs to the bathroom. All toxic substances are placed out of reach. Children begin to develop an awareness of safety issues because explanations are given, for example, they are asked to sit properly or they might fall. She uses outside play as an opportunity to discuss road safety with the children. Children's safety is promoted on outings as the childminder takes a first aid kit with her as well as emergency contact numbers and a mobile phone. A risk assessment is carried out if going anywhere new. Children are protected from the risk of fire as there is a clear written fire evacuation procedure which is displayed in two downstairs rooms and upstairs. Smoke alarms are in place and are tested weekly. The fire evacuation is practised with the children so that they learn what to do in the event of a fire.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as the childminder and her assistant have attended training on child protection and the childminder is aware of her duty to report any child protection concerns. She has the relevant information to be able to make a referral if necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a good range of activities. They attend a local childminding group and go for walks in the village. Inside they can choose freely from a good range of toys which are placed at floor level. Resources are arranged in small units to encourage children to make choices. However children are not always encouraged to put items away after they have used them and as a result the environment becomes cluttered. They have opportunities for outside play on most days when they can run and ride on bikes. Children benefit from the child-centred approach, which allows them to ask for certain activities. Children show excitement as they help to prepare the fruit or join in with finger painting. They also have opportunities to mix dough while they make cakes. The childminder, her assistant and volunteer sit with the children at their level and chat to them while they play. The adults speak to the children quietly and kindly and the children are happy and settled in their care. The adults praise the children, which promotes their self-esteem. Children's independence is promoted as they choose what to play with, help to prepare the snack and put their coats on for outside play. Children show excitement as they help to prepare the fruit or join in with finger painting.

Children under three are cared for appropriately. The childminder has the 'Birth to three matters' framework pack and uses it to plan appropriate activities for the under threes.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The childminder has a satisfactory knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plans activities to broadly cover the six areas of learning. However, plans are not sufficiently detailed or systematic to ensure that all areas are covered. The plans do not show the learning intention, the language to be used or how individual children can be provided with challenges.

Children communicate well with the childminder. They are confident in approaching adults and enjoy stories on the childminder's lap. They recognise some print as there are posters around the room and they select their names when they first come in. Pencils and pens are available for them to draw and write, and children make patterns with finger painting to encourage early writing skills. However, opportunities to write for a purpose, for example, making shopping lists, are limited as are opportunities to link sounds and letters. Adults count as they go up and down the stairs with children but miss chances to get the children to count or perform simple calculations as they play. Children enjoy experimenting with different media such as play dough or finger painting with paint and foam. Imaginative play resources are available for children to use their imaginations. Children learn about the world around them through topics based on the seasons and have some opportunities to learn about information technology as they help with the photocopier or play with a tape recorder. Children generally play together well and are interested in the activities on offer.

The childminder keeps scrap books for each child which contain written observations of their play and learning as well as some examples of their work and photographs. However the assessment system is not systematic enough to ensure that all areas are covered. The childminder knows the children well and is aware of what they need to help them progress but the next steps for children's learning are not recorded and are not used to inform the planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met as the childminder gathers good information from parents about their care on their record forms. She meets with parents before they start so that she can find out about children's care and routines. She gets to know the children in her care well so that she can respond to their needs. She communicates with parents and so is aware of any special circumstances which may affect the children's welfare. Children are beginning to learn about the wider world as resources reflect other cultures and lifestyles and displays reflect different kinds of people. The childminder talks to children about people who use wheel chairs to give them an understanding of people's similarities and differences.

Children are given appropriate support. She and her assistant have experience of working with children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and have attended training on relevant topics. The childminder works with parents to ensure that she meets all children's needs. Children behave well in the childminders care as she has consistent boundaries so that children know what is expected of them. Her house rules are displayed in the kitchen so that parents are aware of her expectations. Children are encouraged to share and take turns. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are forming positive attachments with adults and with each other.

Children are cared for effectively because she has a very friendly relationship with parents. They come in and chat at collection times about what their children have been doing. Notice boards and posters display useful information, for example, information about Ofsted. When parents start they are shown the policies which outline how the setting is run. These are available for parents to see at any time. The childminder has many cards from parents and children expressing their appreciation of her service. The complaints procedure is in line with current

regulations and Ofsted's number is displayed so that parents can contact the regulator if they need to.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. The childminder invites parents to contribute items linked to the topics but information to parents on the Foundation Stage is limited. Parents are advised that they can see their children's scrap books at any time but there is no system in place for parents to see the records regularly or to contribute to them to become active partners in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder is a suitable person to care for children. She has many years of experience in caring for children and has had the necessary checks. She checks that assistants and volunteers are also suitable. She has attended a wide range of training courses to develop her knowledge and skills and keeps in touch with childcare issues through her membership of her local childminding group.

Resources are arranged to enable children to help themselves to items but space is not effectively organised to enable children to make the most of these opportunities. The environment is cluttered and does not always enable children to develop and extend their play or to fully promote their independence. A record of children's hours of attendance is kept.

All of the required documentation is in place and is maintained in an orderly and accessible manner. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to complete an appropriate first aid course that includes training in first aid for infants and young children. The childminder and her assistant have current first aid qualifications so that they can deal with minor injuries and accidents appropriately. She was also asked to make sure the premises are secure and that children are unable to leave them unsupervised. The premises are now secure so that children are unable to leave them. She was asked to use space in the house to better advantage, to ensure that children's imaginative development is not inhibited. Space is still not used effectively to fully meet children's needs and this remains a recommendation at this 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

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- promote further children's health by providing explanations in the daily routine about how to live a healthy lifestyle and make fresh drinking water available for children to access
- encourage children to put toys away after they have used them to keep the environment uncluttered
- organise space and resources to ensure that children's needs are met effectively.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop the planning system to include the learning intention for activities, resources to be used and the language to be used with children so that they are provided with sufficient challenge
- record the next steps for children's learning and use these to inform the planning in order to help individual children to progress in their learning
- use opportunities in the daily routine to encourage children to count, perform simple calculations, write for a purpose and link sounds to letters
- improve the information given to parents on the Foundation Stage and develop systems to ensure that parents have regular opportunities to see their children's records and contribute to them so they become active partners in their children's learning.

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