

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	259569
Inspection date	07 August 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 July 2001. She lives with her husband and two children aged 10 and 12 years, in Thorpe Marriott, near Norwich. All areas of the downstairs of the premises plus two bedrooms and the bathroom on the first floor are used for childminding. The second floor of the home and the converted garage are not accessible to 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 rabbit and some fish in a tank in the lounge.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time. Overnight care is not provided. She is currently caring for 16 children, some of whom are over the age of eight years. All the children attend on a part-time basis.

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's health is very well promoted as they are cared for in a warm, clean and well-maintained home. The childminder displays excellent hygiene practices and follows effective procedures to prevent the spread of infection. Children therefore gain a very good understanding of the importance of personal hygiene as they follow established daily routines, for example, washing their hands before eating. Teddy shaped soaps encourage children to wash their hands and they independently access paper towels for hand-drying, minimising the risk of cross-infection. Children know they need to wash between their fingers to ensure their hands are fully clean and that dirty hands could make them ill. Pets are kept clean and well looked after, to ensure children are protected when coming into contact with them. The childminder has devised an excellent range of policies and procedures which relate to health, illness, accidents and medication. These are shared with parents in order to promote their children's good health within her home. The childminder has recently updated her first aid certificate. She keeps a well-stocked first aid box to hand, the contents of which are checked regularly and carries emergency contact numbers with her at all times, in order to deal effectively with any incident should this occur. Robust recording systems support the excellent practices used by the childminder.

Children develop a positive attitude to healthy eating as the childminder includes this topic in everyday conversations and activities. For example, whilst looking through books they talk about healthy fruit and vegetables. Children enjoy cooking activities with an emphasis on learning about healthy eating. Each child has an opportunity to help tend the plants in the vegetable garden and are excited at the prospect of harvesting and eating their crop. Children choose from a varied range of fruits for their snack. Their dietary requirements are fully discussed with parents prior to the commencement of care to ensure that no child is put at risk from a reaction to food. Children are able to take responsibility for their own drinking needs as their beakers of drink are easily accessible to them throughout the day.

Children enjoy an extensive range of activities which contribute to their good physical health. They benefit from fresh air and exercise each day as they walk to or from school. Frequent trips to the local parks enable children to run around freely or use large equipment such as swings or slides, promoting their physical and co-ordination skills as they climb, balance or swing. They enjoy time in the childminder's garden where they ably manoeuvre wheeled toys or play games with balls, skittles and hoops. Children enjoy a stimulating variety of resources which promote their manipulative skills, for example, using a wooden construction set with screws to build a car. They enjoy dance and moving to music indoors. Babies and toddlers benefit from well-organised, safe space in which to practise and become skilful in a range of movements. Children are able to sleep comfortably and without disturbance, according to their routines, ensuring they are well rested.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, homely environment where they feel comfortable and secure. They have access to a broad range of developmentally appropriate resources and equipment which are of good quality and maintained in an appropriate condition. Children select from resources which are set out prior to their arrival, promoting their independence.

Additional resources are stored in cupboards accessible to the childminder and resources are rotated regularly to provide children with a varied and interesting range. The childminder regularly checks resources for cleanliness and safety and monitors the children's choice of toys, ensuring these are appropriate for their age and stage of development, therefore safeguarding children whilst playing. Children are able to move freely between the lounge and conservatory, with good levels of supervision to ensure children's safety. Quiet space is provided for young children to sleep in a bedroom upstairs. The childminder is aware of the need to frequently check on very young children whilst sleeping however similar strategies are not in place for older children, compromising their safety whilst asleep.

Children's safety is promoted within the home. The childminder undertakes risk assessments of the premises in order to identify any hazards and minimise the risks for children. She conducts a daily check of the home prior to children's arrival, in order to keep children safe. Fire safety equipment is available and suitably maintained. The childminder has an emergency evacuation plan in place and regularly carries out drills with the children so they are familiar with the procedure. Children are aware of the rules for safety, for example, not running in the house or climbing onto furniture and are developing an awareness of their own and other children's safety.

Children enjoy frequent outings with the childminder who has clear strategies in place to keep them safe. Children know to stay near the childminder and are learning about road safety as they practise this whilst out walking. Young children are strapped securely into a buggy. The childminder assesses the suitability of any venue to be visited and ensures children are supervised at all times when out, ensuring their safety.

Children are protected as the childminder understands her role and responsibilities in child protection and has a sound knowledge of child protection guidelines and procedures. She has attended relevant training and has a written statement which she shares with parents in order to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children flourish as they have many stimulating experiences that promote all aspects of their learning and development. They gain new skills and knowledge as spontaneous opportunities are seized to extend their learning. For example, they sort play food items into either fruit or vegetable categories and talk with the childminder about what seeds need to help them grow. They show great interest in the world around them and are interested in growing their own seeds or tending those growing in the childminder's vegetable patch. Children observe the wildlife in the garden or whilst out walking in the woods and refer to posters on the wall to identify the different types of birds they may see. Children confidently ask questions during their play and receive excellent support from the childminder, contributing to them making rapid progress in their learning.

Children are eager and well motivated to learn. They freely select resources from the broad range available and become absorbed in their activities. Children have lively imaginations and use construction materials with creativity. For example, they make 'magic glasses' with Sticklebricks and take great delight in describing the imaginary room they can see when wearing their glasses. They create their own scenarios with dolls and involve the childminder in their imaginary play. Children enjoy regular cooking activities. The childminder plans some activities to link with specific events, such as Red Nose Day when children made biscuits. A wide range

of resources provide inviting opportunities to be creative, for example, painting, chalking, sticking, drawing or colouring. Children proudly take their work home to show their parents. Children make regular visits to the library and become involved in selecting books. The childminder borrows story-sacks which include items such as puppets or props to stimulate children's interest in the story and enable them to take an active role in the story telling. Planned visit to places of particular interest, such as the Castle Museum enhance children's learning opportunities. New experiences, for example, a ride on the bus are recalled with great excitement. They are learning about their local community as they visit the shops, park and go out for walks.

Children follow a familiar weekly routine which includes attending the local toddler group, music sessions and meeting with other childminders and minded children. They relish the opportunities to mix with children of their own age and are learning to share and play co-operatively. Children have built trusting relationships with the childminder. She is consistently gentle and affectionate in her approach and children develop a strong sense of self from her attentive care and frequent praise. The childminder finds out about children's skills, interests and needs and builds on this information effectively to help children achieve. Children thrive as she provides a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and enables children to learn at their own pace. Observations of children's progress are noted and used when planning forthcoming activities. The childminder has a sound understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and has incorporated some of the aspects into her observations and planning of activities for younger children. As a consequence, children are making very good progress in all areas of their development and learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and treated as individuals. They benefit from the childminder knowing them well and responding to their individual needs and personalities during the day. Children are given appropriate support, contributing to them becoming confident and secure within the childminder's home. Their differing stages of development are accommodated as the childminder adapts activities and uses developmentally appropriate equipment to enable each child to participate in activities and to successfully develop their independence. Children learn to appreciate and respect each others' similarities and differences through a range of planned activities, discussion and playing with a variety of resources which reflect our diverse society. The childminder is aware that some children have specific needs and demonstrates a positive attitude to including all children and working closely with parents to ensure the needs of all children are met within the provision.

Children are happy and well behaved. They are encouraged to be polite, share and play together through the childminder's caring attitude. Good behaviour is encouraged and children are given praise and encouragement. Children receive gentle guidance with regards to rules and boundaries and clearly know what is expected of them. Strategies used to manage children's behaviour are shared with parents to provide consistency.

Children are cared for effectively because the childminder has a good relationship with their parents. She liaises closely with parents to ensure she is familiar with children's needs, routines and progress, enabling appropriate care to be provided. Children's continued well-being is assured as the childminder makes time each day to talk to parents and record relevant information in each child's diary. Parents also contribute to the diary which provides a valuable, two-way means of communication. A folder of information is available containing training certificates, policies and details of the childcare practices used. Systems are in place to manage

any complaints received. Parents' are made aware of the proposed Ofsted inspection and provide positive written references praising the childminder for providing a 'welcoming, family atmosphere', 'working hard to provide varied learning opportunities' and 'excellent communication'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the care of an experienced childminder who is committed to ongoing training and development. She is currently undertaking an NVQ Children's Care, Learning and Development level 3 qualification to enhance her knowledge and skills. The childminder has a good understanding of the requirements of the National Standards which is reflected in the care she provides for children. Clear, informative written policies are shared with parents and support the effective childcare practices used. Checks have been completed to ensure that all adults in direct contact with children are suitable. The childminder offers a work-based placement to a student from a local school. Systems are in place to ensure any student is familiar with the childminder's policies and practices and that checks are completed to assess the students suitability prior to starting work, ensuring children's well-being. The required record keeping is maintained to a high standard and as a result children's health, welfare and development are promoted successfully.

Children feel comfortable and secure in the childminder's home. Space and resources are effectively organised to allow children to move around freely and access a range of resources which promote their all round development. Children follow a familiar daily routine and receive good levels of support and attention, supporting their learning. Parents wishes are actively sought and respected. Overall, the needs of the children who attend are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to improve the recording of children's attendance and documentation when carrying children in the car, increase the accessibility of emergency contact details and obtain parental approval of the emergency evacuation plan.

The childminder has a 'welcome pack' for parents which contains details of all her policies and procedures including her emergency evacuation plan. She has established a system for recording children's arrival and departure times accurately and has written confirmation from the insurance company that cover is provided when carrying minded children in the car. Emergency contact details for children are recorded and the childminder carries these with her at all times. These actions improve children's safety and welfare.

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):

- revise strategies to monitor children whilst sleeping.

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