

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY253573
Inspection date 23 July 2007
Inspector Hazel Meadows

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 partner and two children, aged eight and fifteen, in Kesgrave, Suffolk. The whole of the ground floor, which includes a dedicated playroom, is used for childminding, plus bedroom four is available for daytime sleeping if required. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding five children. She walks to local schools and pre-schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local parent and toddler group and takes children to the local library and for woodland walks. She also takes children to a nearby soft-play facility.

The family has a pet dog and a rabbit.

The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. She is a quality assured childminder and has completed the Suffolk Quality Assurance Scheme and the National Childminding Association 'Children Come First'. She is currently completing an National Vocational Qualification Level three in childcare, development and learning.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is extremely well promoted because the childminder stringently follows current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines. She has clear policies and procedures to protect children from infection, for example, a thorough and scrupulous nappy changing procedure. She keeps her home to a high standard of cleanliness and ensures that pets do not present a health risk to children. She has an excellent knowledge of food hygiene and food is stored and prepared in accordance with recommended procedures.

Children develop an excellent understanding of simple good health and hygiene practices by following the childminder's positive example and gentle reminders. For example, older children independently access the downstairs cloakroom to wash their hands prior to snack and after toileting, using liquid soap and individual hand towels. They have a clear understanding of why they need to do this.

Children are very well nourished and benefit from healthy and nutritious meals and snacks provided by the childminder. For example, children enjoy a mid morning snack of toast, cheese, grapes and raisins. A typed menu is available for parents and the childminder is careful to consider any particular health, dietary needs and preferences the children may have. She works closely with parents to introduce a range of food textures and tastes to the children, including a wide variety of fresh fruit and vegetables. Children increase their understanding about healthy foods by participating in food related topics which encourages them to make healthy choices. For example, one child chose broccoli and carrots to have at lunch time. Older children can easily access a drink at any time and babies and toddlers are offered water or squash at regular intervals, ensuring they are kept well hydrated. Children rest and sleep according to their individual needs using a buggy, travel cot or the settee, depending upon their age and preference. Older children enjoy 'chill out' time snuggled up to the childminder with a book. Their home routine is maintained as much as possible to ensure continuity of care.

Children thrive as they enjoy many physical activities and have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They regularly walk to and from school and enjoy local woodland walks. They enthusiastically access a well equipped garden developing their co-ordination and physical skills using a slide, trampoline, balls of varying sizes and ride on toys. They enjoy participating in more challenging movements at local soft play facilities. They have fun developing finer manipulative skills and control through interesting craft activities, colouring and using scissors plus doing puzzles, construction and playing with play dough.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy and settled in an extremely welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment. All the children, even those who have only been attending for a few weeks, are happy, relaxed, and keen to attend. The dedicated playroom is bright and inviting with child sized furniture. Most of the toys and equipment are within children's reach enabling them to self-select and increasing their independence. Colourful posters and examples of the children's craft work and activities adorn the walls and window sills. Toys and equipment are of good quality, clean and well maintained.

Children have considerable freedom to move around independently as the proactive childminder has effectively minimised risks in the home and garden. For example, all potentially harmful items and chemicals are out of reach or locked away, exits are secure and the trampoline has a safety net. The childminder is aware of the children at all times and alert and vigilant regarding their safety, anticipating potential hazards. For example, when a child tried to climb on the toy garage she moved it to make it more accessible to him and uses a baby ring as a clean surface and support for infants outside. Fire safety precautions such as fire blanket and electric, interlinked smoke alarms are all in place. The childminder has considered and practised an emergency evacuation routine and keeps a whistle in the playroom to alert the children. Children learn to keep themselves safe and take achievable risks, developing their confidence and competence. For example, using the trampoline and playing on soft play equipment at a local play centre.

Children's safety is paramount on outings as the childminder considers possible scenarios in advance. She takes a first aid kit with her and always carries her mobile to contact parents plus a card identifying she is a registered childminder. When travelling in a car children are securely strapped in, using appropriate sized seats and restraints. When walking children hold on to the side of the buggy or wear reins or wrist straps.

Children's welfare is very well safeguarded because the childminder has a thorough understanding of her role and responsibilities in protecting children. She uses opportunities as they arise to explain to the children about keeping themselves safe, for example, stranger danger. She keeps her training updated, and local contact numbers and information are readily available, ensuring she is confident and competent to follow the appropriate procedures should she have concerns about children in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children settle quickly and are extremely happy, contented and relaxed with the childminder and her home and routine. They develop confidence and self-esteem as the childminder treats them with warmth, kindness and respect. She gets to know them well, helping them to make ongoing progress. She encourages toddlers to use words rather than just sounds whilst remaining attentive to their needs. She utilises opportunities as they arise to broaden children's vocabulary, giving them time to think and respond to any questions.

Children are able to select their own resources and initiate their own games from the exciting range of plentiful toys, within easy reach in the inviting playroom. They enthusiastically explore and play purposefully with the wealth of toys and equipment which offers varying degrees of challenge and progression. The childminder is skilled at playing with the children to help focus their attention and increase their concentration and offers positive praise and encouragement for their efforts, for example, when colouring face masks. Children delight in doing an imaginative range of craft work and take pride from their artwork being valued and displayed in the playroom. They relish playing in the well equipped garden which offers a slide and trampoline, sand pit, ride on toys. A large ball enables even very young children to master skills such as throwing and kicking, which encourages them to persevere.

Drawing on her excellent knowledge of child development, the childminder works closely with another childminder to plan a rich variety of weekly topics and activities. Through these, children acquire new knowledge and skills and have fun extending their learning, for example, exploring a variety of international festivals and doing a topic on healthy eating. The childminder plans

her day superbly, offering more challenging and advanced activities for the older and more able children whilst the younger ones are sleeping, for example, more intricate crafts such as miniature gardens. Children enjoy an exciting variety of outings, often linked to the current theme or topic, for example, visits to the local museum, pet shop, seaside and Rendlesham forest. They enjoyed an outing to their local shopping centre, posting a letter and passing a recycling centre on the way. The childminder took photos at various points and drew a map of the area they covered, which they were able to use to review the activity and reinforce the children's learning. Children delight in exploring a variety of textures such as play dough, wet and dry sand and ice, plus there is a treasure basket of natural materials for infants.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are welcomed and their individuality is valued and respected. They are all offered opportunities to take part in activities at their own level and the childminder works sensitively to help each child thrive and make progress. Children are encouraged to be considerate of one another and appreciate differences or particular needs, re-enforced by the positive example and approach of the childminder. For example, at meal times older children are understanding and wait patiently when toddlers and infants need the childminder's attention.

Children develop a greater awareness and understanding of their local and wider community through the rich variety of resources and topics provided. For example, they learn about different festivals and celebrations such as the Japanese Festival of Lanterns, Easter and St Georges day. Children's experience is enriched by enjoying a variety of foods, books, pictures, posters and other resources reflecting positive images of diversity, helping them to appreciate and value differences.

Children flourish in a secure environment where boundaries of acceptable behaviour are clear, consistent and fair. Children learn through firm and calm reinforcement from the childminder. For example, children learn to eat their food sitting at the table. The childminder knows the children very well and is sensitive to their individual personalities, moods and triggers which may upset them. She offers soothing comfort and reassurance if children become distressed.

The childminder establishes extremely positive, open and trusting relationships with parents. She liaises closely with them, working together to meet children's individual needs. For example, she provides a daily diary of their child's day for parents. Children are settled in gradually and regular communication is encouraged to promote the child's wellbeing and to offer continuity of care. Parents are well informed of the childminders policies and practice which she shares with them through conversation and a user friendly file. An informative notice board and her activity plans and menus are displayed in the playroom. Parent's views and feedback are actively sought through a parental questionnaire devised by the childminder. All responses are extremely positive, marking the highest rating. Letters from parents endorse her outstanding quality of care and provision, her reliability and flexibility and how happy their children are in her care.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are extremely well cared for by a childminder who consistently provides an exemplary standard of care and has a professional and enthusiastic approach to childminding. She is highly motivated and has an excellent knowledge and understanding of child development and a high regard for the well-being of all children. She has continued with her professional development

by undertaking the Suffolk Quality Assurance Scheme, formerly the Suffolk Quality Kitemark. She has completed the National Childminding Association 'Children Come First' and is now doing a National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in childcare, development and learning. Children benefit greatly from her exceptional commitment to ongoing training and development, as she readily integrates new activities, requirements and skills to enhance and compliment her daily practice.

Children's care and wellbeing are significantly enhanced by exceptional organisation. All documentation is orderly, up to date and very well presented. The childminder has written policies and procedures which are clear and comprehensive, individual to the setting, applied in practice and shared with parents. She has a thorough understanding of the National Standards and is well informed about childminding and childcare issues both locally and nationally, which is reflected in her documentation, positive approach and practice. To ensure ongoing improvement she regularly reviews and evaluates her practice and seeks feedback from parents. Her competence and experience enable her to offer sound advice and support to newly registered childminders as a support childminder for Suffolk County Council.

The childminder organises her home and time effectively and efficiently to make sure the outcomes for children are excellent. She is highly skilled at meeting the individual needs and routines of the children, providing a superb balance of play and learning experiences. Children flourish in a fun and stimulating environment, provided both indoors, outside and on outings. The childminder's caring and attentive manner and her consistent and reliable approach, coupled with flexibility, offer security and reassurance for children and their parents. Children thrive because of the outstanding quality of care given, the childminder's exceptional commitment to improve and the dynamic variety of play and learning activities. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the childminder was encouraged to maintain, and continue to improve, her existing good practice. She intended to develop written policies and to continue with the Suffolk Quality Kitemark.

She now has written policies and has continued with her professional development by undertaking the Suffolk Quality Assurance Scheme, formerly the Suffolk Quality Kitemark. She has completed the National Childminding Association 'Children Come First' and is now doing a National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in childcare, development and learning. The childminder displays a strong commitment to developing her practice in order to bring about the best possible outcomes for children in her care.

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