

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY265084
Inspection date	08 August 2007
Inspector	Andrea Caroline Snowden
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?

This childminder was registered in 2003. She lives with her son aged 17 years in Sudbury, Suffolk. The ground floor of the house is used for childminding purposes, whilst the first floor is excluded at the request of the childminder. 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 is currently minding three children on a part-time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and also attends the local childminding support group. The family has two cats and cold water fish indoors and outdoors.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is well promoted. The childminder seeks very clear information about allergies, dietary needs and health issues before care commences. The childminder adopts stringent cleaning routines to ensure children are not placed at risk from infection or contamination. She is able to respond to accidents because she has the necessary knowledge

to do so, however the first aid box is not fully stocked having the potential for children's treatment to be affected. Parents have given written consent for her to seek emergency medical help if required. Children are learning about their personal hygiene through their normal daily routines. They are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times and very young children are encouraged to wash after using the potty. They brush their teeth after breakfast and when looking at books explain that they wash their own faces and brush their own teeth, demonstrating an early understanding of personal hygiene issues.

The children enjoy eating the food their parents provide whilst at the childminder's home. She provides top-up fresh fruit and breadsticks if needed. The childminder helps children learn about healthy eating through a range of good activities which are fun and meaningful. They have cut pictures from food brochures and discussed what is healthy, grown vegetables in the childminder's garden and harvested the strawberries for their snack. The children fondly remember collecting apples and blackberries from the hedgerows and clearly enjoyed gathering and eating food for themselves.

Children have very many opportunities for outdoor activity. Every day the childminder encourages a walk to the park or to feed the ducks. They visit the horses and play in the park. The childminder's garden is well resourced and children climb up the slide and throw and catch balls, demonstrating good skills at this. Children who fall asleep on buggy walks are permitted to finish their sleep once at home because the childminder does not disturb them. Older children snuggle up with the childminder or on the settee when they feel tired.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are settled in the safe environment. The childminder creates a homely setting where children can play and rest as they wish to. They are able to access a range of facilities and do so independently. Children use a good selection of play equipment which is safe and suitable for their use. They arrive to a room which has been set up with interesting and stimulating equipment in order to help them settle more quickly. Children are able to choose what to play with, promoting their independence and free choice. They learn to respect equipment and help the childminder to tidy away between choices. The children know where equipment is stored and are heard asking the childminder 'Shall we put this in the little cupboard?' The childminder ensures toys and equipment are cleaned and checked regularly to maintain children's good health and welfare.

The childminder has minimised hazards in her home and as a result children are able to play without fear of hurting themselves. She has identified emergency evacuation routes and practised fire drills with the children to ensure everyone can be safely evacuated. Children are given many opportunities to develop an understanding of personal safety. The childminder talks to children about road safety and they practise stopping at the kerb and looking and listening for cars. Whilst at the park they are helped to use equipment safely and understand the dangers of walking in front of a swing if someone is on it. Whilst constructing a bridge from building blocks children refer to the fact that 'you have to hold on' demonstrating that they have absorbed the childminder's comments from when they walked over the river bridge.

Children are protected by the childminder who has a sound awareness of child protection issues. She has the appropriate documentation to support her in this and is aware of the possible signs that a child may be being abused. Children are only permitted to leave her care with authorised persons identified by parents and children are never left with people who have not been vetted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and content in the company of the childminder. Interaction is warm and kind and a close relationship has developed between them. Children are observed cuddling up close to the childminder, giggling and laughing as they play together and being confident enough to voice their wishes. Children's choices are respected and the childminder ensures she asks if they would like to go outside, or if they are ready for their lunch. When they respond negatively the childminder moves on providing more activities as requested.

The childminder helps children learn through their play and daily routines. Whilst painting with soapy water in the garden the childminder encourages children to write their names on the wall. Together they write the initial letter and sound it out. The childminder promotes counting and children are recognising shapes and colours because the childminder instigates these questions during activities. She encourages children in problem solving. When the construction of a bridge proves too wobbly they discuss how they can improve the construction to make it stronger. Children enjoy washing the ride-on toys in the garden. They use their paint brushes and soapy water and explain that they are making it 'shiny'. Children's imagination is good. When the activity centre telephone rings the childminder picks it up and tells a child 'it's Mummy', the child responds 'you've got to tell her I'm too busy'.

Evidence suggests that children enjoy excellent activities which help them learn about the natural world. For example, having watched 'Springwatch' on television the children make rabbit masks. They regularly use their home-made weather charts and enjoy walks in the country side to collect blackberries and apples from the hedgerows.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals by the childminder. She seeks information from parents to help her meet their needs effectively including their likes and dislikes and any specific requirements. Children are helped to develop respect for others and taught to value differences in people. There are some nice resources which promote diversity and the childminder plans activities such as cutting and sticking from magazines to promote discussion and raise awareness of the wider world.

Although the childminder has not cared for children with learning difficulties or disabilities, she demonstrates a positive attitude towards this work. She explains how, through working with parents and other professional agencies, she would be more equipped to meet children's specific needs. She is able to adapt activities to ensure all children can enjoy taking part and succeed.

Young children are beginning to learn right from wrong. The childminder adopts a calm approach towards unwanted behaviour and uses strategies which are relevant to the age and level of understanding of each child. Young children are distracted to different activities and encouraged to share and receive explanations, if appropriate about why certain behaviour is unacceptable. The childminder has set reasonable and achievable boundaries and encourages the children in self-discipline. Children's self-esteem is promoted successfully, for example when the childminder congratulates a child and tells them they are clever.

The children benefit from the effective working relationship which has developed between the childminder and parents. An introductory letter to parents is friendly and informative and the settling in process helps children and their parents feel secure. The childminder has developed some written policies to keep parents informed of how the setting works, although these are not always clear. The written complaints procedure does not set out clear steps to be followed if parents should have a complaint and as a result parents may not be fully aware of the procedure and options open to them. The home diary system gives parents a clear overview of their children's time with the childminder and ensures they can contribute towards their children's play and learning once at home. As a result children benefit from the continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder is suitably qualified and shows commitment to her work. She is interested in seeking further training and has implemented systems in order to monitor the quality of her setting. The organisation of the setting is good and the childminder ensures that everything is ready for the children's arrival. The children have ample space to play and the childminder organises resources in the most appropriate way.

Most of the required record keeping is in place and maintained to a good standard. A daily register is kept in order to keep children safe and children's record are updated as necessary to ensure they are cared for according to parents' wishes. The childminder ensures that information is held confidentially. Overall the provision meet the needs of the range of children attending.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to ensure that any medication which was given to children was countersigned by parents. Systems have been adapted to ensure that parents now countersign the medication record in acknowledgment that they have been informed medicine has been given. As a result children's welfare is further maintained and parents informed.

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):

- ensure the first aid box is stocked according to the first aid trainer's advice
- further develop the existing complaints procedure and the complaints log.

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