

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251088
Inspection date	21 August 2007
Inspector	Christine Eglinton

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 1994. She lives with her adult son on the outskirts of Bury St. Edmunds. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house and one of the upstairs bedrooms is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is currently minding five children of whom four are aged under five years. Children attend on different days, and some only attend during the holidays. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. Children regularly attend local toddler and support groups and the childminder is the chair of the local childminding group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and clean environment where they benefit from good levels of cleanliness and hygiene throughout the home, which effectively contributes to limiting the risk of cross infection. For example, the childminder uses anti-bacterial sprays to clean equipment such as highchairs and changes children's hand towels daily. Children learn to keep themselves

healthy because they follow good hygiene routines. They wash their hands after they use the toilet and before eating their snacks and meals. Older children are able to confidently explain the consequences of not washing their hands, and understand that this could lead to them being unwell.

The childminder operates a sick child procedure which involves excluding children from the premises until they are clear of any infectious illnesses. This helps to protect children from infection. She has put in place effective systems to gather information from parents concerning children's medical and dietary needs which are strictly adhered to. This helps to promote children's good health. The childminder has maintained her first aid certificate which means she is able to give appropriate care if there is an accident.

There are effective storage facilities for parents who provide their children with packed lunches to prevent the food from spoiling. Children are learning about foods that are good for them in practical ways. For instance, they have made their own healthy menus and place mats which reflect pictures of healthy foods. Children are able to help themselves to a drink whenever they need one which encourages them to become independent, and helps them learn to take responsibility for their own personal needs.

Large play equipment in the outdoor area such as rockers, go-carts, skipping ropes and stilts gives children good opportunities to practise and develop their physical skills. Children also attend ball parks where they are able to access a further selection of large play apparatus. Younger children are given good opportunities through play and equipment which help promote their large muscle control, enabling them to take their first steps unaided. The childminder is able to recognise signs of tiredness in young children and acts on this knowledge to plan appropriate periods of rest. This contributes towards children's physical well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder offers a welcoming and child friendly environment where children enjoy looking at a large collection of minded children's photographs displayed within the home. This encourages children to develop a sense of belonging within the setting and helps them feel secure and confident. Space is well-organised and used effectively, to allow children opportunities to engage in a varied range of activities. For example, younger children enjoy sitting on the floor with the childminder while they look at books and play with pop-up toys, while older children sit in the kitchen and draw pictures.

Children are able to rest and relax in a quiet area and eat their meals in a comfortable and safe place. Children enjoy playing with a wide range of good quality toys and equipment which are safe, stimulating, and suitable for children's stage of development. They are able to choose their favourite toys which are stored at low level so that children can access them safely and easily. The childminder rotates the toys on a weekly basis which means children do not become bored playing with the same selection of play materials. This also guarantees that play equipment is offering children appropriate challenges.

Children's safety is promoted because the childminder is vigilant at reducing risks and minimising hazards. For example, she uses a written hazard check sheet to identify possible safety hazards in addition to implementing safety equipment. For instance, safety gates are fitted to stairs and safety locks are fitted on low cupboards containing hazardous items. Brightly coloured stickers are used to make the patio doors more visual to children. As a result, children are able

to move around safely, freely and independently. The childminder uses simple explanations to help children gain an awareness of safety rules within the home. For example, she reminds them about being careful of the younger children when they play indoors with the toy buggies

The childminder has sound knowledge of child protection issues and is clear regarding her role and responsibilities of the procedure to follow if she has any concerns. Appropriate procedures are in place and contact numbers are readily accessible. This promotes and safeguards children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The childminder offers a sensitive settling-in period where children follow the same patterns for eating and sleeping which encourages them to quickly settle. The childminder knows the children well and takes an active part in engaging with them during their play. For instance, she sits with the younger children on the floor while they play with a cause and effect toys which plays musical tunes, and encourages the children to say 'blast off' every time the toy repeats the word. This encourages young children to link words with actions.

Older children spend lots of time concentrating making stain glass pictures by colouring in pre-drawn shapes and make special cards for their parents. They enjoy examining different types of shells and use a toy magnify glass to look at different objects more closely. However, although the childminder has a very good selection of equipment and resources suitable for the older children, they are not always utilising the equipment effectively. This does not encourage them to build on their natural curiosity as learners and make full use of the range of resources on offer to extend their play and overall enjoyment.

Children are able to represent their ideas and feelings through using different materials including natural and manufactured which enables young children to make important connections in their learning through exploring their senses. Children attend a variety of toddler and support groups where they take part in a varied range of activities. For instance a 'beach' theme enables children to play in the sand with buckets and spades. Children make dolphin biscuits and watch a Punch and Judy show. This offers young children a good range of stimulating activities while supporting their learning and development in fun and enjoyable ways.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder encourages all the children to participate in all the activities provided which ensures children have equal opportunities to maximise their learning and achievement. Children are helped to become aware of their own and other cultures, through planned activities as they celebrate different cultural festivals. Resources reflect positive images of the wider world which means that children learn to acknowledge and accept differences. The childminder is able to demonstrate that she has good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The childminder is very calm and gentle in her approach to managing children's behaviour. This encourages children to respond effectively to any guidance and praise. Children are helped to learn important social skills such a sharing and treating each other kindly. They show affection towards each other and hug each other spontaneously.

The partnership with parents is good because the childminder is using effective strategies to enable a real sense of shared care. For instance, parents are able to attend development reviews where they meet to discuss their child's development, and share ideas for future activities. The childminder uses videos to record important development milestones, and utilises other forms of technology where children are able to transmit special messages to parents workplaces. Daily diaries record activities, food intake and sleep. This regular sharing of information enhances children's progress and provides children with consistent care between home and the childminding setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder is complying with all conditions of her registration. She is very clear about meeting the agreed ratio of children and is able to demonstrate her responsibility in respect of notification of changes. This helps to promote children's welfare. The childminder has shown a good commitment towards training which she regularly attends. This ensures she is kept fully updated of any new childcare practice, and helps her to reflect, monitor and improve her own practice.

The childminder organises her time well which enables her to spend all her time playing with the children while offering them appropriate support. She responds immediately to young children who do not always settle during sleep periods, and closely supervises children during their play to ensure their safety. Children benefit from the childminder's good organisation of the premises which provides them with sufficient space to play and access resources independently. Children feel at home and at ease, and daily routines provide children with opportunities to relax as well as be busy and actively occupied.

All mandatory records are stored in a confidential place and are well maintained. The childminder uses her written policies and procedures to help guide her daily practice. This guarantees the safe and effective management of the setting. A good two-way flow of information between parents ensures continuity of care. Parents are able to view an extensive portfolio which covers all areas of the childminder's practice in addition to a parent booklet. This enables parents to make an informed choice. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to develop her knowledge and understanding of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. The local child protection procedures are now readily accessible and the childminder has attended appropriate child protection training. This helps to promote and safeguard children's welfare within the setting.

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 the 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 older children make full use of available resources and equipment to extend their learning and enjoyment.

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