

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	259460
Inspection date	23 July 2008
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 2001. She lives with her husband and two children aged six and eight on the outskirts of the city of Norwich. The home is within walking distance of the local shops, park and schools. A car is also used to transport children. All areas of the childminder's house are used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The family has a cat and a dog.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and sometimes works with an assistant who may, at times agreed and confirmed in writing by parents, be left in sole charge of the children. She is currently minding five children on a full or a part-time basis. The childminder also cares for children who are over the age of eight years. The childminder supports children with English as an additional language.

The childminder is qualified to NVQ Level 3.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and well-maintained home. Older children independently use the toilet and hand-washing facilities and are provided with paper towels to minimise the risk of cross-infection. Good hygiene practices such as wearing gloves whilst nappy changing and providing each child with their own individual bedding promote children's good health. The childminder has a system for monitoring the cleanliness of resources. Baby toys are cleaned frequently to ensure they remain suitable for babies' use. Some larger pieces, which are not frequently used, have collected small amounts of dust, compromising children's health. Hygiene routines with regards to pets are appropriate and the children are learning to treat animals with care and respect. Information is gathered from parents at registration regarding children's health and medical needs, enabling appropriate care to be provided. The childminder holds a current first aid certificate and has a well-stocked first aid box to hand, ensuring children's well-being should an accident occur. Systems are in place to record any accidents or medication administered to children although accidents are not always recorded promptly, compromising children's welfare.

Children's growth and development is promoted as the childminder provides children with regular meals and snacks. Parents provide food for their children which meets their dietary needs and parents' wishes are respected. Snacks of fresh fruit, chopped vegetables, breadsticks or cubed cheese are available and children are encouraged to develop good eating habits. Mealtimes are social occasions with all children eating together. Children can readily access drinks as their cups are easily accessible, ensuring they remain well hydrated.

Children benefit from a wide range of activities which contribute to their physical development and promote a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy daily opportunities to play outdoors in the childminder's garden. Equipment which provides an appropriate range of physical challenges for all children is available, including a small and larger slide, climbing equipment, swings and trampolines. Regular trips to the park enable children to experience a greater range of outdoor experiences. Indoors, children have space to move freely or use small wheeled toys. Quiet space is provided for young children to sleep undisturbed, ensuring they are well rested. Older children choose to rest on comfy sofas.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, child-centred indoor and outdoor environment that is safe and secure. Space is well organised to offer children space to freely play in the playroom, sleep undisturbed in upstairs bedrooms or older children can use the lounge for quieter activities. Children experience a strong sense of belonging as there is low-level storage for their personal belongings. Pictures, photographs of children enjoying activities and some of their artwork decorate the walls creating an attractive play environment. The playroom is set out with a wide range of developmentally appropriate resources and equipment of good quality and suitably maintained. Children are able to access toys from low shelving or boxes, promoting their independence and enabling them to pursue their own interests. The childminder regularly checks resources for safety and monitors the children's choice of toys, ensuring they are appropriate for their age and stage of development, thereby safeguarding them whilst playing.

Children's safety is promoted within the home as suitable action has been taken to minimise the risks. The childminder carries out a daily risk assessment of her home to reduce hazards and minimise the risk of accidental injury. Dangerous household substances and electrical sockets are inaccessible to children and all low-level glass is safety glass. Fire safety equipment is in place and the children practice fire drills so they are familiar with the routine.

Children enjoy regular outings with the childminder who has clear strategies in place to keep them safe. Emergency contact numbers are on hand at all times and the childminder carries out a risk assessment prior to undertaking any planned visits, ensuring these are appropriate for the age of the children attending and she is prepared for any incident.

Children are protected as the childminder has a sound understanding of her role and responsibilities in safeguarding children. She has attended appropriate training and has relevant literature available for reference. A written policy is shared with parents outlining the measures the childminder has in place to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident, secure and happy in the childminder's home. They thrive in the relaxed, homely environment where they enjoy a range of activities which contribute to their development. Children's self-esteem is fostered as they are offered lots of praise and encouragement. Children have developed warm and trusting relationships with the childminder who is supportive and caring in her approach. Children's interests and capabilities are known by the childminder, who plans activities which stimulate children's interest and help them achieve new skills.

Children can independently access a good range of age-appropriate toys and play materials as the playroom is well organised. Low-level shelving or storage boxes contain a wealth of resources which children eagerly seek, enabling them to pursue their own interests. Young children are placed on comfortable activity mats where they can reach toys easily. They explore musical toys, pushing buttons and listening to the sounds. Toddlers enjoy the freedom to move around and join in a variety of activities. They are captivated by the cars or train moving around a track and repeatedly push the button to activate the toy again. Children of different ages play together and invent their own games. Older children are learning to be considerate of the younger ones. Children chat together during their play promoting younger children's communication skills. The childminder sits on the floor, joins in children's activities and is on-hand to support children's learning. For example, colours or counting are introduced during games or vocabulary extended as she talks with the children about what they are doing. The childminder has a flexible weekly plan of activities which includes cooking, creative activities, time outdoors and outings. Children regularly meet with their peers during visits to the local toddler group. They enjoy trips to the park or specific outings during school holidays. Maximum use is made of the childminder's garden and in good weather children choose to play indoors or outside. They delight in demonstrating their skills on the small trampoline or ride small wheeled toys. The childminder uses outdoor activities to promote children's learning. For example, they observe the tomato plants growing in bags and talk about when these are ripe. Older children have space in which to play games or use larger pieces of physical equipment, such as a large trampoline. Children are very well occupied and interested in the activities on offer. As a consequence, they enjoy their time spent with the childminder.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated as individuals helping them to feel valued and building their self-esteem. They benefit from the childminder knowing them well and responding to their personal needs and personalities during the day. The childminder has an inclusive policy and all children have access to appropriate toys and play materials which contribute to their development. Resources and activities are used to promote children's understanding of the wider world and help them develop a positive and caring attitude to others. The childminder is aware that some children have specific needs and could adapt activities so that all children are able to actively participate in activities.

Children are happy and well behaved. The childminder uses positive steps to manage children's behaviour and gives gentle guidance with regard to rules and boundaries. Good behaviour is valued and children are given praise and encouragement. The childminder has incorporated a behaviour management statement into the information she provides for parents so they can support their children as needed.

Children benefit from the effective partnerships which have developed between their parents and the childminder. Children's individual needs are accommodated as discussions take place prior to the commencement of care, enabling children's needs to be fully met. Parents are well informed about the service the childminder provides through well written policies and photographs of the children enjoying activities. Clear systems are in place to receive any expression of concern or complaint from parents. The childminder makes time at the start and end of the day to talk to parents, share the day's events and keep up to date with progress, contributing to children's well-being. Parents have expressed their satisfaction with the service by writing references or 'thank you' cards which the childminder holds on her file.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a qualified and experienced childminder who is committed to ongoing training and development. The childminder has attended various courses and workshops covering different aspects of childcare and completed an NVQ level 3 Early Years Care and Education. She has a clear understanding of the requirements of the National Standards which is reflected in the care she provides for children. Checks have been completed to ensure that all persons living in the household are suitable. Records which contribute to children's health and well-being are available and stored confidentially.

Children feel secure and comfortable in the childminder's home. Consideration has been given to ensuring the premises provide for children's needs and enhance their learning. For example, the playroom is attractively decorated and set out with a range of stimulating activities, direct access to the garden enables children to play either inside or outdoors and quiet space is provided for children to sleep. Regular routines are established which help children to feel settled. Parents wishes are actively sought and respected. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of the last inspection the childminder agreed to ensure Ofsted are notified of significant events or changes and ensure hazards within the home are minimised.

The childminder carries out a daily risk assessment of her home and takes appropriate action to minimise risks for children, ensuring their safety. She is fully aware of the requirement to notify Ofsted of any significant events or changes in order to comply with the requirements of the National Standards.

Complaints since the last inspection

On 25 July 2007, Ofsted received concerns about the numbers of children being cared for by the childminder, the care provided to children in terms of nappy changing and meeting children's needs, children being left in the care of un-vetted people, communication with parents in relation to explaining the causes of bumps and bruises and the safety of children in relation to them being transported in the childminder's car. These concerns related to National Standards 1: Suitable person, 2: Organisation, 3: Care learning and play, 6: Safety, 7: Health, 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers. On 30 July 2007, Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to investigate these concerns and found that the provider was not meeting National Standard 7 and 14. Ofsted issued the provider with 2 actions, under National Standard 7, to ensure that a signed record of any accidents is maintained, and under National Standard 14, to ensure that an accurate record is maintained of children's hours of attendance. A satisfactory response has been received to the actions set. The provider remains qualified for registration.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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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):

- ensure all accidents are recorded promptly and review the current system for checking the cleanliness of large pieces of equipment.

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