

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	259473
Inspection date	11 October 2007
Inspector	Georgina Emily Hobson Matthews
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 child aged four months, in a village south of Norwich, in Norfolk, close to local schools and parks.

The childminder is registered to care for five children at any one time and is currently minding four children, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder also cares for children over eight years of age. She is registered to provide overnight care for two children.

Children have access to all parts of the childminder's home other than the main bedroom and an enclosed garden is available for outdoor play. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The family has two cats.

The childminder holds a level 4 qualification in childcare and is a member of the National Childminding Association and a local childminding network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment and their health is well-promoted. They are protected from becoming ill as the childminder displays good hygiene practice and has effective systems in place to prevent the spread of infection. Children's welfare is promoted as the childminder can respond to accidents and take appropriate measures if children are ill. She holds current first aid training and a first aid box is well-stocked and easily accessible.

The childminder talks to the children about 'germs' and children learn the importance of personal hygiene. They take responsibility for their own personal needs as they wash their hands before meals and after toileting and cover their mouths as they cough. Children use paper towels to prevent cross-contamination. However, hand washing is not encouraged prior to snack time and children use wipes at this time. As a result, consistency is not promoted in their routines in order that they learn how to maintain good hygiene in the home. Cross-contamination from pets is safeguarded as children are supervised carefully when handling the family's cats. Appropriate arrangements are in place for feeding and preventing the cats from fouling any areas used by the children.

Children benefit from a healthy diet and develop a valuable awareness of healthy eating. The childminder has a good understanding of nutrition and provides freshly prepared, balanced meals and snacks for the children. Special dietary requirements are identified prior to the commencement of care to ensure that parents' wishes and any religious needs are met and that no child is at risk from a reaction to food. The childminder talks to the children about the importance of healthy foods and encourages them to make healthy choices. Children's awareness of healthy eating is raised further through activities such as when they design their individual 'healthy eating menus'.

Children develop a positive attitude to exercise as they walk to and from school each day. The childminder talks to the children about how exercise keeps their bodies healthy and they have regular opportunities to explore a variety of physical movements. During the summer months outdoor play takes place in the garden and during the winter in the local park. Children develop confidence on adventure play equipment that provides challenge in the park and at a local toddler group. They learn to move with confidence, control and co-ordination and have opportunities to travel around, over and through while they balance and climb. Children rest and sleep according to their individual needs in cots, beds or on sofas. The childminder has suitable procedures in place to provide overnight care for children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe, indoor and outdoor environment. They have sufficient space for free movement and to spread out activities and there is adequate storage space for equipment. Children use an extensive range of developmentally appropriate, safe and suitable equipment that is in meticulous condition. The childminder cleans and checks resources for safety on a regular basis and maintains a log to evidence this. Children's safety is well-fostered. The childminder has accessed training in risk assessment and has carried out an extremely thorough, written risk assessment of her home and of all outings to reduce hazards

and to minimise the risk of accidental injury to children. This assessment is ongoing and under regular review to ensure children's safety.

Children learn to keep themselves safe as they are provided with clear explanations about safety issues within the setting and outside. They learn about fire safety and practice how to evacuate the premises in the event of a fire. Children learn about road safety. They use safe procedures as they walk to and from school and the childminder talks to them about the Green Cross Code. Children's awareness of staying safe in the sun is raised as they apply sun cream, wear hats and learn to play in the shade during the summer months.

Children are safeguarded as the childminder is aware of her responsibilities in the area of child protection. She has a secure understanding of the procedures to follow if she has child protection concerns and has sound systems in place to release children into the care of other adults in the event of an emergency.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and at ease in the childminder's care. They develop confidence and self-esteem as the childminder is gentle and affectionate and attentive to their needs at all times. She works at their level, supports their play and responds to their sounds and gestures.

Children enjoy their play and show interest in what they do. They are offered a varied and stimulating range of activities that cover all areas of learning. Children are able to make choices from easily accessible, low-level storage units and to play at their own pace. A child-sized table and chairs are provided for younger children where they explore craft materials and have sociable meals and snacks. Children have opportunities to explore a variety of materials such as paint, glue, dough, sand and water. They immerse themselves in imaginary play with small world resources and develop their language as they 'talk' to friends and family on the telephone. Children learn to hold pencils and to make marks as they use large pencils and a selection of papers. They snuggle up with the childminder to listen to stories and look at pictures in large books. Children look at books independently and handle these with care. They delight in singing simple songs such as 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' and exploring new words. The childminder has a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and uses this to plan activities for the under threes. As a result children are involved in a broad range of activities which support their development and learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel a sense of belonging in the childminder's home as familiar resources are organised well and easily accessible to the children. The childminder is attentive to their needs at all times. Their individual needs are identified with parents prior to the commencement of care and each child is valued and treated with equal concern. Children are developing positive attitudes to diversity as the childminder includes images of the different people that make up our society within her resources and celebrates festivals with the children. They become aware of the wider society as they socialise with others at local toddler groups and have outings to places such as Banham Zoo and to the sea. The childminder has an awareness of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Children begin to understand responsible behaviour and to distinguish between right and wrong. They behave well as the childminder uses positive behaviour management strategies that are appropriate to each child's level of understanding and maturity. She offers the children lots of praise, is consistent and provides the children with clear explanations if behaviour is inappropriate. Children learn to share resources, to take turns and to play happily alongside each other.

Children's ongoing progress is supported as the childminder works closely with parents. They are able to assess that children's well-being is being promoted as the childminder provides each set of parents with an informative 'Welcome Pack' outlining her childcare practice. She shares information regarding the children with parents at the beginning and end of each day and maintains a short weekly review for each child. Parents are invited to offer comments and suggestions regarding her practice at any time and in an annual service review. Their satisfaction is reflected in their positive feedback.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children benefit from the care of an appropriately vetted, qualified and experienced childminder. They are never left alone with anyone who is not vetted. Children's progress is enhanced as the childminder accesses ongoing training to update her knowledge and to improve her practice.

The childminder organises her home effectively to accommodate children's play. They are able to move around easily and safely and to access equipment in a well-prepared environment. Main play takes place in the sitting room and children have access to a toilet on the ground floor. Overall children's needs are met.

An extensive range of comprehensive documentation to promote the welfare and care of the children is maintained by the childminder. This is well-organised and she has systems in place to reflect on and to evaluate her provision in order to enhance children's care. Children's individual files are stored securely to ensure confidentiality and contracts are reviewed with parents on a regular basis.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to continue to monitor her practice to maintain her high standard. She has implemented further systems in order to do so and accesses additional training to keep up-to-date with current practices.

Complaints since the last inspection

A concern was raised with Ofsted that the provider was caring for more children than the number recorded on her registration certificate. This relates to National Standard 2: Organisation. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit on 10 April 2006. It was found that the childminder had exceeded the number of children specified in her conditions of registration on one occasion. The provider agreed an action to comply with the conditions of registration at all times by meeting the required adult to child ratio. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- encourage children to wash their hands before eating snacks.

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