



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251094
Inspection date	21 December 2005
Inspector	Susan Elizabeth Warren

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 2001. She lives with her husband and 2 children aged 10 and 13 in the Moreton Hall area of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. All areas of the property are used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time and is currently minding 10 children all of whom attend on a part time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends a local parent and toddler group.

The childminder supports children with special educational needs. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very well organised, clean and hygienic environment. They are able to use the bathroom independently or with support as needed. They are encouraged to wash their hands and dry them, and know why they do this. Children can take and use a tissue as needed, and know where to dispose of it hygienically.

Children are kept healthy as consents are in place and all medication and accidents are recorded and signed by a parent or carer. If children become unwell whilst being cared for they are kept comfortable until collected by a parent or carer.

Children are supplied with nutritious foods suitable for their age and in line with individual dietary requirements. They mainly bring packed lunches from home and enjoy snacks and drinks in accordance with parents' wishes and their dietary needs. They can also join in with family meals if this is appropriate. Children can have a drink as and when they want one, suitable cups are available.

Children make choices about what they play with, well guided by the childminder who provides an excellent range of toys and equipment to allow children to express themselves, for example, role play and creative activities including crafts and cooking.

Children have excellent opportunities for physical development. They enjoy regular exercise when they play in the garden and when they visit local places of interest such as the park and garden centre. They can run and play in the fresh air and use the toys and outdoor equipment. A trampoline provides exciting fun and exercise; this activity is well supervised and only allowed after obtaining consent from parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a safe and suitable environment which is child friendly with all safety considerations well managed. They have a space to put their belongings, which they can access throughout the day, and are made to feel welcome as they enter the childminder's home. They use specially adapted furniture such as safety seats with straps which keep them secure when sitting at the table for a meal or to do an activity. Babies sleep in sturdy travel cots and each has their own bedding. They can access toys and equipment easily as it is at floor level, in well labelled storage boxes. The excellent range of equipment offers stimulating and exciting play possibilities and covers all areas of development, for all ages of children cared for.

Children are cared for in a very safe and secure environment with all aspects of

safety within the home very well considered. Children cannot leave the premises unseen and visitors are admitted by an adult only. Stair gates mean children have supervised access only to the upstairs area, where they enjoy playing in a designated playroom equipped with television, keyboard and toys. This room is also used for sleeping babies, safely and quietly away from the hubbub of children playing downstairs. Monitors are in place so babies can be safely left; they are checked frequently. The garden is safe and enclosed with no hazards and offers opportunities for physical play. Equipment includes sand and water play, swings, wheeled toys and a trampoline, appropriately protected by a safety enclosure and which children use after written permission has been obtained and under supervision by an adult.

Any glass within the home is of safety standard and coloured stickers at child height help children stay safe when using the large patio doors. Cupboards are fitted with child proof locks so children cannot access any potentially dangerous products or kitchen items. A first aid kit is easily accessible by the childminder, being wall mounted, so children's bumps and bruises are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Children are unable to access medicines as they are stored out of reach, accessible only by an adult. Suitable insurance is maintained in line with requirements.

A fire blanket and smoke alarms are in place and children practice an evacuation drill. Children are reminded about moving around safely when playing indoors, particularly as they move equipment, such as the shopping trolley, between rooms and when walking upstairs. Outings are very well considered and form an important part of the children's care routine. Children have safety seats, reins or buggies as needed when travelling by car or on foot. A wide range of children are cared for, from babies to school age children, and the childminder has a thorough understanding of procedures including an emergency plan to ensure their safety and welfare at all times.

Children are further protected by the childminder's good understanding of child protection procedures. All concerns are dealt with appropriately and the relevant contact details are to hand. Parents are made aware of responsibilities and procedures in place to protect their children. The childminder is vigilant in ensuring that no unchecked adults have unsupervised access to the children at any time.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

All children's needs for care and learning are extremely well met. Activities for children aged three and over are based on the Foundation Stage curriculum, while children under three have the 'Birth to three matters' framework used as a basis for care and learning. They enjoy a balanced range of worthwhile and purposeful activities designed to promote all round progress within a stimulating and diverse day. They can freely play with the excellent range of toys and craft materials provided and have opportunities to make things such as seasonal decorations, cakes and other edible goodies, as well as free expression with paint, modelling materials and sand and water.

They have both active and quiet times during the day; after a play session they can

watch selected children's television programmes, a favourite video or listen to a story. The children love to dance and move to music, provided by the keyboard or compact discs. They sing and clap along to favourite songs. Children play well together and share the toys, developing role play and games such as shopping, looking after the babies, setting up the small world play with vehicles and animals. They develop language skills as the childminder talks to them about what they are doing, interacting in the play in an unobtrusive way, whilst offering guidance to ensure that children share the equipment fairly, and take turns. Children are eager to talk about their homes and families; a result of feeling confident and secure and being able to express their feelings and ideas in a safe environment.

Children enjoy the company of other children as they frequently mix with other minded children on a weekly basis and on special occasions such as birthday parties, a Christmas party and summer get together. Outings to local places of interest, such as the zoo and garden centre, are well planned to provide stimulating learning opportunities which the children develop by drawing pictures and re-enacting within their role play. These activities are also recorded in lovely scrapbooks which include samples of artwork, photographs, children's comments and other memorabilia. Parents and children alike can enjoy looking through these and the children delight in recalling the events and spotting themselves and their friends among the photographs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are very well known; the childminder keeps comprehensive notes about each child and has frequent dialogues with parents to ensure information is up to date and correct. Children are all treated equally but as individuals with differing needs, according to their age and stage of development. They have opportunities to develop ideas about diversity and cultural differences as festivals and celebrations are included as part of the activity programme. Children are taught to have regard for the feelings of others, and learn to share and take turns when playing and asking to have their needs met.

Children needing additional help are very well supported; the childminder has a very good understanding and knowledge of the range of special needs, both educational and medical, and helps children make progress and reach their milestones by working closely with parents and other professionals. Children's dietary and medical care requirements are accommodated ensuring they receive high quality care appropriate to their particular needs.

Children behave very well as a result of feeling secure and settled. They are frequently praised and rewarded for their positive behaviour and are seen to be co-operative and helpful, understanding the rules of conduct expected of them. Children benefit from the childminder's clear and consistent strategies for managing the range of behaviour; parents are made aware through the childminder's excellent, well thought out policy.

The partnership with parents is excellent. The relationship with parents is seen as

crucial to a successful childminding arrangement; some families have been with the childminder since she began minding. Details of the children's days, such as food intake and sleep and play patterns, are recorded and shared each day. The childminder is flexible and accommodates parental working hours as well as emergencies for example recently when a parent had a hospital stay the childminder stepped in and took care of the child for extra hours. Parents speak very highly of the childminder and she has many cards and letters of positive endorsement and praise.

The children are encouraged to have high self esteem and a sense of belonging. Minded children are treated as members of the family in many ways, resulting in them feeling happy and settled, secure and confident. Children's art and craft work is valued and displayed so parents can see it and children are able develop a pride in their achievements. They take home their cooking to share with brothers and sisters, forming another valuable link to help them develop a sense of belonging.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are kept safe as all adults in the household have undergone vetting and checks, and are suitable to be in contact with children. They are cared for in flexible groupings so they see a variety of friends and faces throughout the week, always with the correct ratio of adults to children observed. The childminder has a very positive and proactive approach to her work and has completed training courses; she continues to update her knowledge and expertise in child care by attending further day courses and reading widely. She regularly meets with other local childminders to share ideas and develop good practice.

The home is very well organised to care for children. They have space to play freely between the downstairs rooms, and can visit the bathroom independently or with support as needed. The toys and equipment are all accessible so children can move freely between activities. Babies sleep upstairs in a quiet room with a monitor, older children may nap on the sofas or cushions if needing a rest. Suitable chairs are available allowing children to sit together at the table for meals and snacks, or to complete messy activities such as painting and sticking.

The childminder has developed a very efficient record keeping system so that she knows exactly which children are attending and when. This enables her to plan the days to suit the children and include activities and outings whilst maintaining the routines of school and pre-school drops and pick ups. All supporting paperwork and documentation is produced to a very high standard, securely stored and immediately accessible. A well thought out plan is in place for a neighbour to take control in an emergency and all children's details are available in a simple format whilst maintaining confidentiality.

Records are kept for the requisite time and all are updated and renewed frequently. Daily diaries are passed between home and the childminder; these provide a record of the children's care needs and arrangements such as if someone other than a parent is collecting a child.

The childminder has a very professional approach to her work and successfully strives to provide a very high standard of care for the children, with whom she develops strong, warm relationships, making a positive experience for all the children in her care.

Overall the range of children's needs is met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report since the last inspection.

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

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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 *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk