



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	256722
Inspection date	24 April 2006
Inspector	Rosalie Mary Turner

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 2000. She lives with her partner and 2 children aged 9 and 12 years in a market town on the border between Norfolk and Suffolk. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The family has a cat and keeps cold water fish.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding seven children under eight on a part-time basis.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning to understand the importance of personal hygiene through appropriate routines for hand washing and by being encouraged to help themselves to tissues to blow their noses. The play environment is well maintained and the childminder ensures that floor surfaces where young children play are clean so that they are protected from the spread of germs. She keeps a robust record of accidents and parents sign to acknowledge any medicines that have been given to children. However, children's well-being is not fully assured because the childminder only obtains verbal instructions from parents before she administers medicines. Furthermore, her practices for seeking emergency medical help are not robust and children may not be able to receive immediate help if they are seriously ill or injured.

Children are prompted to have drinks throughout the day and their beakers are within reach to help them meet their own health needs. They learn the importance of a healthy diet because children are provided with a balanced range of nutritious foods such as fresh fruit, vegetables and pasta to help them to thrive.

Children have worthwhile opportunities to play actively to help them to maintain their health through exercise. For instance, they access the garden if the weather is fine where they are able to ride on wheeled toys or play ball games. Children also enjoy walking to the local shops or park to ensure they have regular access to fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a child-centred environment where positive steps have been taken to ensure their safety. Younger children benefit from close interaction such as cuddles or lap time and are emotionally secure. They quickly settle when they see the valuable range of safe, attractive toys that are set out in the living room whilst the comforting background music helps them to stay relaxed.

Children of all ages are appropriately safeguarded through the childminder's sound understanding of safety procedures. For instance, she carries out thorough checks of the play areas to ensure that potential hazards such as those from electrical sockets or cleaning materials, have been minimised and ensures that children only have access to resources which are of high quality, safe and well maintained. Children learn to keep themselves and others safe because they are encouraged to keep the floor tidy to prevent accidents. Furthermore, they are also learning about road safety because the childminder talks to the children about the dangers from traffic when they go out for walks. Consequently, children understand that they must hold on to the buggy or the childminder's hand when they are outside the house.

Children are well protected from the risk of 'stranger danger.' For example, the childminder will neither release them to adults unless parents have given their consent, nor leave children with persons who have not been vetted. The childminder is able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse, such as changes in children's personalities. She keeps local child protection guidance to hand and says she would take action quickly to make her concerns known. Therefore, children are effectively safeguarded from the risk of possible harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy and at ease with the childminder because she is kind and exceptionally sensitive to their needs. Her warm approach is reassuring for the younger children who respond well and often climb on to her lap for a cuddle. The childminder shows a genuine interest in all of the children and her enthusiastic encouragement ensures they are fully occupied in meaningful play. As a result, children are very confident in each other's company and firm friendships are forming.

Children relish the superb range of stimulating play equipment that they are able to independently access. The childminder rotates the toys and regularly reviews her play provision to ensure that children make rapid progress in all areas of their learning, regardless of their patterns of attendance. Toddlers giggle with excitement as they explore the vibrant colours, different sounds and textures of manufactured toys. They quickly become absorbed in sorting a wealth of different toys to fill their storage canisters, prompted by praise and encouragement from the childminder.

Children are stimulated to build on their existing skills because the childminder spends all of her time playing with them. She clearly enjoys the children's company and asks skilfully posed questions that make them think, such as 'Who has the biggest?' or 'Can you find me a red one?' As a result, children are making superb progress in all areas of their learning. Toddlers are learning to talk and demonstrate excellent communication skills because the childminder chats to them about what they are doing as they play. She speaks clearly and repeats words asking children 'Can you say that? Good girl!' so that they extend their vocabulary. As a result, very young children chat to each other and clearly make their needs known.

Children thoroughly enjoy stories because the childminder holds the book so that they can see as she reads to them. She points to the pictures to help children learn that print carries meaning and skilfully modifies her voice to maintain their interest. Consequently, children are developing competent reading skills and they are eager to select a book, turn the pages and pretend to read a story to another child.

As a result of the childminder's commendable interaction, children spend their time purposefully engaged in play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly respected and valued by the childminder who meets their individual needs exceptionally well. They have excellent opportunities to learn about themselves and show respect for others through the stimulating range of positive resources that reflect our multicultural society. The childminder warmly welcomes families from all walks of life and skilfully divides her time so that all children are able to benefit from individual attention. As a result, they feel a true sense of belonging. Children quickly develop a positive self-esteem because the childminder makes exceptional use of praise and encouragement to help them to feel good about themselves.

The childminder is experienced in providing care for children having special educational needs and she has a superb awareness of the stages of child development. Therefore, she is quickly able to recognise any delays in reaching milestones and discuss any identified concerns with parents or carers so that their children receive appropriate support. Consequently, children of all abilities are able to reach their full potential and make rapid progress.

Children's behaviour is exemplary because they are able to model their reactions on the childminder's superb example. For instance, she politely thanks children and praises their positive actions so that they are repeated. She has high expectations of their behaviour and provides commendable guidance to the younger children. She gets down to their level if she intervenes, asks them 'not to bend the cards or they will break' and talks about their actions. As a result, children learn to distinguish between right and wrong and they play harmoniously together. Children's learning is further reinforced because the childminder agrees positive tactics with parents and uses techniques that are consistent with home. Therefore, children know what is expected of them and they behave very well.

Relationships with parents and carers are excellent. As well as collecting comprehensive details about each child, the childminder goes to great lengths to ensure that their parents have all the information that they require before minding commences. For instance, she has developed a comprehensive telephone check list to ensure prospective parents are fully informed about the service that she offers and to help them to understand the high standards of care that will be provided for their children. This valuable exchange of information continues once minding is established through daily conversations when children are delivered or collected and a regular diary that also tells parents about their children's experiences whilst they are in the childminder's care. As a result, children's current needs are superbly met and parents 'really appreciate the child-centred care offered.' They feel 'my child's day is full of fun' and state that 'every visit is documented brilliantly.' Despite their obvious satisfaction, the childminder has systems in place to guide parents on actions that they may take if they have future concerns about her practice. Consequently, children's welfare, care and learning is supported exceptionally well.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's well-being is supported by the skilful organisation of the resources

together with the childminder's in depth knowledge of child development. She continues to update her training and has recently completed a refresher course in child protection to ensure that children are always given care in accordance with current guidelines or legislation.

Children have maximum opportunities to play freely and extend their learning because the childminder ably divides her time between educational play and supporting children's emotional and physical needs. She also organises the premises very well providing a safe, warm and child-centred home with areas where children can be messy, use up their surplus energy or simply relax and have fun.

All legally required documentation is robustly maintained to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. The childminder keeps children's details in individual wallets to ensure that their personal information is confidential. She reviews her contracts with parents at least every year, sooner if details change. As a result, children are provided with care that is appropriate to their current requirements.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection recommended that the childminder should obtain written permission for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. She was also asked to ensure that all parents sign medication records.

Some parents have asked their family doctor to provide treatment if their children are hurt whilst in the childminder's care. However, she has not obtained their written permission to allow her to seek medical help for children if they are admitted to hospital to fully safeguard their welfare. The childminder has revised her practice to ensure that parents sign to acknowledge medicines that have been given to their children and, as a result, children's well-being is partly assured.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted 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

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.
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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):

- request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment for each child
- improve medication records by obtaining written permission from parents to administer medicines.

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