



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	256199
Inspection date	15 February 2006
Inspector	Marianne Gascoyne

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 satisfactory. 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 1995. She lives with her three children aged 14, 12 and 10 in a village near to the town of Fakenham. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder walks to the local school to take and collect children.

The childminder is registered to care for six children at any one time and is currently minding six children under the age of five years on a part-time basis. She occasionally cares for two children between five and eight years during school holidays and also cares for children over eight before and after school and during

school holidays.

The family have two dogs and two pet rabbits.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder takes positive steps to promote children's good health as she ensures they wash their hands prior to eating or after handling the pets. She does not always encourage very young children to begin to take responsibility for their own health needs by giving them an understanding of the need for good hygiene practices, through constant explanation, or ensuring they can easily access facilities. Toys and the home are cleaned regularly to ensure children are able to play in a hygienic environment. The sick children policy, information from parents and effective nappy changing procedures help prevent the spread of infection and meet children's health needs. The childminder can respond to accidents appropriately because she has current knowledge of first aid procedures and her first aid box is well equipped.

Children are adequately nourished by packed lunches provided by parents, which are stored safely in the fridge. Snacks do not always promote healthy eating and healthy lunches are not requested. Children sometimes have opportunities to enjoy freshly cooked nutritious meals and help prepare and try new foods. They are not encouraged to drink fresh water by making it available at all times. Children walk to school on a daily basis which ensures they have plenty of fresh air and exercise. Visits to the play park enable them to develop different physical skills.

Children under three are given the emotional support they require and enjoy a warm, close relationship with the childminder. The individual needs of babies for food or sleep are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are safe and well cared for in the welcoming, child-centred premises with toys easily accessible to them. The number of children present during the school holidays restricts the space for movement available in the playroom but children make good use of the space and the kitchen is used for craft activities. Toys and equipment, which are suitable and safe, are stored effectively to enable children to choose activities they wish to undertake. All the children are able to sit and eat or take part in activities at the table with suitable seating available for the younger children. Appropriate furniture is not provided for children to sleep in comfort and babies sleep in a pushchair.

Children's safety is promoted because the childminder takes proper precautions to prevent accidents in the home and appropriate safety measures are in place. Discussions about road safety, and clear rules when taking children out, helps them

learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, holding hands. They gain an awareness of safety as they practise the fire evacuation procedure using different exits from the home. The garden is divided in two to provide a safe, secure play area for the children and an area for pets to use without any health or safety risk to children.

Children are adequately protected because the childminder has a sound understanding of her role in child protection and has all the information to hand to enable her to put procedures into practice.

Younger children are able to explore and investigate their surroundings safely. They are encouraged to take responsibility for safety by clearing toys from the floor after use.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and confident and well occupied. They all get on well together and older children over eight encourage the play of the children under three. Children are developing a good range of knowledge and skills because the childminder provides them with a variety of experiences and provides appropriate activities and play opportunities. Younger children are given opportunities to mix with other children to develop their social skills and are taken to feed the ducks or visit the play park to give them experiences outside the home. Activities planned, with the needs of the older children mainly in mind, are adapted to enable younger children to enjoy taking part. The routine of the day is flexible to meet the needs of the children attending. Children begin to distinguish right from wrong and form positive relationships through the positive input and role model provided by the childminder.

The childminder sits at the children's level and encourages their play, listens to them and encourages them to communicate. She provides them with challenges as she asks questions to encourage their thinking skills and offers activities to encourage their concentration. She uses praise to bolster their self-esteem. The children all enjoy good relationships with the childminder and involve her in their play and learning. She is able to meet the needs of the wide age range of children attending. All the children enjoy music and movement, singing along to a tape, and the childminder and older children encourage the younger children to count and calculate as they join in. Meal times are social occasions when all the children sit together at the table and conversations take place. Children's independence skills are not fully encouraged at this or other times.

The childminder is starting to use the 'Birth to three matters' framework and ensures children have access to natural materials to explore such as sand and water.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are relaxed and secure in the childminder's care and good relationships are in place. The childminder works closely with the parents to ensure she has the information necessary to meet the individual needs of all the children. She adapts planned activities to ensure all children can take part and children are able to choose the activities they wish to undertake. Discussions and available resources are helping children to develop positive attitudes to differences within people. The childminder has a pro-active attitude towards the care of children with special needs and would undertake training, if this was necessary to enable her to offer appropriate care. She would work closely with parents and other professionals in meeting any additional needs.

A positive, easily understood behaviour management policy is shared with parents and seen in practice with children behaving appropriately and getting on well together across a wide age range. The childminder provides a kind and caring role model to which children respond well. Children willingly help tidy away the toys and respond to the praise and encouragement given.

The childminder enjoys positive relationships with the parents of the children she minds and gives additional support and advice when asked. Informal verbal communication takes place on a daily basis to ensure parents are aware of how their children have spent their time with the childminder. A complaints log has not yet been set up.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the many years of experience and the child care qualification obtained on leaving school which gives the childminder the knowledge to meet their needs. A warm, caring environment is created in which the children feel valued, secure and aware of the high regard the childminder has for their well-being. The childminder ensures all adults having access to the children are suitable, and a support system is in place to provide cover in an emergency. The environment is organised with the needs of the children in mind to ensure they can easily access toys and equipment and babies can sleep without disturbance.

Documentation is well organised to help keep children safe, and clear records help to make sure children's individual needs are known and met. All the necessary documents to safeguard children are easily available for inspection. Some policies and procedures have been developed to provide clear information for parents and are effectively implemented to promote positive outcomes for the children.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children attending.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to ensure that toys and equipment are well maintained and easily accessible to the children; to ensure the arrangements for sick children protect others from illness and infection; to develop the behaviour

management policy and to develop knowledge and understanding of child protection issues.

Toys are now stored in a well organised unit in the playroom and are labelled and easily accessible to children. A policy has been written on sick children which would safeguard children's welfare, and a positive behaviour management policy written and shared with parents. It has not been possible for the childminder to gain access to a child protection course to develop her knowledge. However, she has read all the appropriate guidance documents and ensures they are easily accessible. She is now aware of the referral agency.

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 satisfactory. 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 children are provided with a healthy diet and have access to fresh drinking water at all times
- ensure children are provided with suitable facilities to enable them to sleep in comfort
- encourage children's independence skills at all times

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