



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	250694
Inspection date	05 September 2006
Inspector	Gill Thornton
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 1993. She lives with her husband and two children aged eight and 13 in Ipswich. The whole of the property is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding five children who all attend on a part-time basis. She sometimes works with an assistant. The childminder takes and collects children from local schools, attends local children's groups and takes children to the local library and park. The family has a dog and keeps chickens and rabbits in the back garden. The childminder is a member of a local childminder support group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted. They are cared for in a clean and well maintained home where they develop good hygiene practices from an early age through well established routines. For example, the childminder keeps hand hygiene gel in the shed near the chickens so children can clean their hands with 'magic soap' after collecting the eggs. In addition, the childminder ensures children wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals, however, their understanding of why this is important is not routinely reinforced during everyday practices.

The childminder obtains information from parents on their children's individual health care needs and ensures the appropriate consent forms are in place to support this. The childminder has attended first aid and food hygiene training to ensure she is aware of the correct procedures to follow to maintain children's health and prevent the spread of infection. A well stocked first aid kit is available and the childminder takes this with her on outings to promote children's welfare in an emergency.

Children are learning about healthy eating as they enjoy a range of meals featuring fresh fruit and vegetables that take account of their individual dietary needs and preferences. Children enjoy lunches of sandwiches with fruit and yogurt, which they sometimes eat outside on the patio, and a cooked tea such as their particular favourite of pasta. Children enjoy planting vegetables, such as potatoes and pumpkins, in the family allotment and share in the experience of seeing them grow.

Children enjoy a good range of physical play experiences that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They have regular access to the rear garden, which leads down to communal allotments where they enjoy going for nature walks and using the swings. Children develop their hand to eye coordination during a range of activities, such as 'Hama Beads' and mark making opportunities. The childminder also takes children to local parks and a nearby private swimming pool. Babies and younger children develop control of their bodies through the provision of suitable indoor and outdoor equipment, for example, a small climbing frame, rockers and various cause and effect toys.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment where they play in safety under the childminder's close supervision. The rooms are bright, light and well-organised to provide a welcoming environment for children and their parents. The childminder has a very clear understanding of how to keep children safe and she has taken all the necessary steps to reduce risks. For example, a safety gate is used effectively to prevent children's access to the stairs and all potential hazards are stored out of children's reach. The childminder is vigilant in promoting children's safety and ensures older children are aware of the possible dangers to babies from small toys.

Excellent use is made of the outdoor area with the garden divided into safe and secure terraced areas available for different activities. Children enjoy using scooters and ride-on toys in the grassed area which includes a well organised playhouse for imaginative play. The decked area near the back door provides children with an inviting seating area for 'chilling out' with a large table so they can enjoy eating outside. Children understand and follow clear safety rules in the garden and remind each other of possible hazards, for example, to be careful of the gates.

The childminder follows very effective procedures to keep children safe on outings; she always takes children's emergency contact details with her and explains possible hazards to the children. In addition, she ensures children understand the importance of wearing their seatbelts and obtains parents' written consent for outings and to go in a vehicle. Children are learning effective strategies to keep themselves safe and prepare for future independence, for example, how to use a slide safely or discussing the possible hazards of going too near the pond on their nature walk. All the required fire safety precautions are in place and the children regularly practise emergency evacuation procedures with the childminder to ensure they know what to do in the event of a fire.

Children have access to a stimulating range of high quality toys and equipment which meet safety standards. All equipment is well maintained and checked regularly to ensure it is suitable. The childminder monitors and supervises children's play to ensure they are safe and that toys are used appropriately. Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted because the childminder has an excellent understanding of her role in protecting children. She updates her training every three years to ensure she is aware of the correct procedures to follow if she has a concern and she has a clear child protection policy in place which is shared with parents before their children's first session.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and well settled in the welcoming and child-friendly environment. They form warm and lasting relationships with the childminder, who delights in spending time with them, consequently promoting their sense of self worth. Children are enthusiastic about going to collect the eggs and the childminder is careful to make sure that even the youngest child is trusted to carefully collect an egg from the nest box. Children's confidence and self-esteem is effectively promoted, for example, through the childminder proudly saying "it's a big day for you tomorrow" in reference to a child's first day at school. All children develop pride in their own achievements through the childminder's use of praise and encouragement, such as when encouraging a younger child to show everyone how clever they are at putting on their own shoes.

Children spend their time engrossed in activities that motivate and interest them because the childminder provides them with a balanced range of stimulating play opportunities using her sound knowledge of child development. Children benefit from positive interaction and support from the childminder during their play to extend their learning. For example, encouraging a child to sort and count the farm animals to develop their early mathematical skills or through helping them name and identify colours while making models with the 'Hama beads'.

Children are confident communicators and the childminder promotes their natural curiosity, for example, a child asks "what noise does a giraffe make?" while playing with the animals and the childminder suggests they will have to listen next time they go to the zoo. Children use their imagination well, for example, while playing outside in the playhouse or pretending to take their 'pet rabbit' for a walk. The childminder skilfully asks open ended questions to promote children's learning, such as asking an older child to help her spell a younger one's name and then encouraging them to write their own names.

The childminder incorporates many aspects of 'Birth to three matters' in her good practice and is booked on training to further support her use of the framework. She ensures all children are provided with activities appropriate to their stage of development to help them make progress. For example, providing chunky crayons for them to use while sat in their high chair or singing 'See saw Margery Daw' while they play on the rockers in the garden. Children have regular opportunities to develop their social skills through attending local children's groups. They enjoy various planned outings, for example, trips to a rare breeds centre, the zoo or going crabbing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging as the childminder ensures they are all valued and included. They have excellent relationships with the childminder who responds sensitively to them and respects their individual personalities. Children have equal access to toys and equipment that meet their individual needs so they can become confident and independent. The childminder works closely with parents to ensure children's specific needs are met. Children have many opportunities to learn about their local environment and develop an understanding of the wider world through discussing which countries different foods come from and they have access to books promoting a positive view of diversity.

Children are learning to manage their behaviour effectively as the childminder is a positive role model and has a good understanding of appropriate strategies dependent on children's stage of development. Children learn to show concern for others and the childminder thanks them for being polite and helpful, this promotes their good behaviour.

Children benefit from the positive relationships the childminder develops with their parents. All the required documentation and consents are in place to ensure children are cared for according to their parents' wishes. The childminder takes positive steps to ensure that parents are kept well informed about all the relevant policies and procedures via a parents pack detailing her childminding practices. Parents provide positive references praising the loving and homely environment and the regular excursions and activities provided. Information is exchanged verbally on a daily basis to ensure children's changing needs are met and to provide consistency of care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder successfully organises her home to provide a welcoming and child-friendly environment with all the facilities to support their care, learning and play. They benefit from regular routines which help them feel confident and secure. Space and resources within the home are well organised to provide a balanced range of stimulating activities. The childminder follows sound procedures to promote children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution.

The childminder is experienced and knowledgeable and has attended all the required training to support her registration and she is aware of the importance of complying with her conditions of registration. All the required documentation is in place and well-organised to be easily accessible to support the care and welfare of the children attending. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At her last inspection the childminder agreed to continue her good practice through keeping up to date with the required training and current childcare practices, so enhancing children's care.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004. 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):

- reinforce children's understanding of the importance of good hygiene practices.

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