

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	255988
Inspection date	29 May 2007
Inspector	Anne Walker
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 has been registered since 1999. She lives with her husband and two children on the outskirts of the town of Holt, north Norfolk. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding with bathroom facilities and a room for sleeping babies on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder can care for a maximum of six children when she works on her own. When she works with an assistant she can care for a maximum of six children all of whom can be under five years. She is currently minding nine children of whom all but one are under eight years. Children attend a variety of days and sessions. The childminder has the use of a car for taking and collecting children from school and nursery.

The childminder attends local carer and toddler groups. She is a member of an approved childminding network and of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are looked after in a clean environment. Excellent hygiene procedures are in place which promotes children's health appropriately. From a very young age children learn the importance of washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. They take part in this process with enthusiasm and enjoy the soapy bubbles and warm water. They have their own towels which minimises the spread of germs. Noses are frequently wiped and tissues disposed of appropriately. When changing children's nappies very good procedures are followed so that cross-infections do not occur. Parents are given detailed information of communicable illnesses and a written sick child policy so that they have a clear knowledge of the childminder's expectations. This enables them to work cooperatively with her to safeguard the health of all children looked after and prevent the spread of illness. Foods brought by parents that require refrigeration are unpacked from lunch boxes. The fridge temperature is monitored with a thermometer to ensure food is stored correctly.

Commendable training has been undertaken by the childminder to ensure that children are provided with a healthy diet and that anyone with a special diet is appropriately catered for. The children have regular meal and snack times and are provided with a broad range of fruits and vegetables. Toddlers happily try new tastes and talk about their favourites because the childminder understands the need to introduce new foods on a regular basis and in a variety of ways. Drinks are served with snacks and meals and water is readily available at all times so that young children help themselves when they become thirsty. Information is recorded at the point of entry so that any dietary needs are addressed to ensure children's welfare.

Children's good health is promoted through the regular use of the garden in most weathers so that children have fresh air and exercise. There is a broad range of play equipment that promotes their large muscle skills as they pedal trikes or negotiate the small climbing frame. During poor weather the children have opportunities to use their bodies actively in response to music.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety has been given good regard. A child-centred environment has been created through regular risk assessments of the house and garden. Hazards are identified and managed, enabling the children to play safely and have independence in their environment. Children are supervised effectively as their carer plays alongside them. Sleeping children are checked and a monitor provides reassurance when the childminder is downstairs. The children have opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe during outings as their carer talks with them about road safety. They practise a fire drill so that older children know what they must do and the childminder is sure that she can evacuate the house quickly and safely with a group of young children.

The children play with a broad range of good quality play materials that are clean and well maintained. The toys are accessible to children in boxes or containers at ground and eye level and there is child-sized furniture. These things enable the children to be as independent as possible in their environment and ensure they can access things safely.

The welfare of children is safeguarded through the carer's good knowledge of her responsibilities with regard to child protection. There is a clear written policy that is shared with parents so that they are fully informed of the records she has to keep. Training has been accessed by the childminder so that she is up to date with recent changes. Documentation is readily to hand and used as a reference guide if needed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual development is well fostered through their carer's excellent knowledge of how to support this through play. She makes very good use of 'Birth to three matters' and other guidance to observe and informally plan for all aspects of their learning and development. This builds on what the children can already do so that they have appropriate challenges which they find stimulating. The day is child centred with good amounts of time provided for children to explore what interests them using the play activities in the home. They are very motivated and inquisitive and readily make choices about their play, sustaining good levels of concentration in relation to their age. Trying on the pirate and fairy costumes provides good opportunities for them to tackle dressing, undressing and managing simple fastenings. They use play-dough, glue and collage to express their ideas and show pride in their achievements.

The childminder plays alongside the children and is a confident practitioner who knows the children well. She times her support and intervention according to each child's needs so that they happily try new things but do not become frustrated or despondent. Relevant questions are asked and children use their good emerging language skills to respond or express ideas or wishes. As they play with construction materials they talk about colour and number. They use a range of musical instruments to explore sound and join in with action rhymes.

Commendable opportunities are provided for the children to mix and socialise in their local community through attendance at toddler groups and through the childminding network. The nearby country park, which they can walk to, enables them to become aware of the natural environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Good attention is paid to meeting children's individual needs so that they are settled and secure. Initial records ensure needs are clearly identified. Day-to-day discussions, as well as a diary for each child, promotes effective communication with parents so that developmental needs such as potty training are successfully addressed. There are appropriate strategies in place to support children with additional needs. A variety of play materials and activities supports children's awareness of the wider world and fosters their respect for people's similarities and differences.

The children have warm relationships with their carer, her family and each other. Young children feel safe as they allow themselves to be reassured. They readily give and receive cuddles and allow themselves to be settled to rest. The children are learning to get along with others and manage their own feelings and emotions through consistent expectations conveyed to them. Positive strategies suitable for their level of development help them understand right from wrong.

A helpful portfolio of information is shared with parents. This provides information about the childminder's qualifications and experience as well as guidance about how the setting is run.

It enables parents to establish a working partnership with their child's carer to ensure children's welfare.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable environment where they are welcomed into the family. Good regard is given to the use of space in the home so that children have suitable areas to play and have their meals, with separate space for them to rest peacefully.

The children benefit from being cared for by a childminder who is motivated and professional. She has ensured that required training, such as first aid, has been maintained so that she has the necessary skills to deal with any accidents or emergencies that could arise. In addition, a wide range of courses has been attended which add to her skills. They ensure she remains up to date with professional matters such as child protection and the new guidance for supporting pre-school children's development and learning through play.

All required records are in place and stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality. All relevant consents from parents are obtained in writing, including emergency medical consent. Currently these consents are kept safely at home but would not be easily accessible in the event of an emergency occurring when the minded children are out of the house. This could potentially lead to a delay in treatment for a child if parents were not able to arrive quickly. There are good processes to ensure that information held about children and contacts for parents are up to date as well as formal reviews for contracts so that the care children receive remains appropriate. All records are clearly recorded and used to ensure the safe day to day management of the provision. The childminder is meeting the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to improve the recording of medication administered to children. A new system has been put in place that gives clear details of what parents require and what has been administered by the childminder. Parents give written consent to administer and sign the record at the end of the day to acknowledge the entry so that it is clear they have been informed of the medicine and the time it has been given during the day.

Complaints 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.

Ofsted received a complaint which raised concerns about confidentiality. Ofsted requested a report from the childminder, in particular in respect of National Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers. As a result of the information provided, the childminder was given the following action: ensure that confidentiality and privacy is maintained at all times. A satisfactory response to the action was received on 01/02/2007 and the childminder continues to be qualified for registration.

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):

- ensure that emergency consent forms are readily accessible at all times.

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