



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	201983
Inspection date	03 August 2006
Inspector	Janette Elaina Lockwood
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 registered since 1987. She lives with her husband, in a house in Great Wakering near Southend, Essex within walking distance of shops, the park, school, pre-schools and the beach. The whole of the house is registered and there is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for six children under the age of eight years. She is also registered to care for two children overnight. The childminder is currently minding three children under the age of eight years and four children over the age of eight years

The family has two guinea pigs.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and children are taken to local children's groups.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very clean and hygienic environment because the childminder has good housekeeping routines. She actively encourages children to learn the importance of keeping their hands clean by reminding them to wash them regularly. Children understand they must take extra care after touching animals, going to the toilet and before eating, to help prevent the spread of germs.

An effective written procedure, along with up-to-date first aid training, ensures that children are cared for properly and sensitively if they are ill or have an accident.

The childminder has undertaken training in food hygiene and offers nutritious foods that are properly prepared. As a result, children have a nutritious snacks. They learn to make healthy choices at mealtimes and drink milk, water or juices with no added sugar. Mealtimes are a happy, sociable occasion with the childminder and children sitting together.

Children have a variety of activities both inside and out to help them develop good physical skills.

They are active, regularly go out to the park to run about and use large apparatus and have access to an excellent range of equipment in the garden. The childminder provides many opportunities to help children develop their finer skills with the smaller equipment. She makes arrangements for older children to use small toys and bricks, for example, without compromising the safety of the younger ones.

Children under three years learn to feed themselves, using child sized cutlery to help develop independence. They are beginning to recognise some of their own personal needs such as when to go to the toilet and when to go to sleep.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The childminder has taken steps to minimise most of the risks in her home by using safety equipment such as gates, socket covers and safety door closers. Consequently, children are cared for in a well-organised home, which is secure and comfortable to play in. An exception to this is that the large garden contains some sharp twigs and plant sticks that protrude and could compromise their safety when playing outside.

The play areas include the lounge, sitting room and play room, which are all open plan, providing a large area that is stocked with a vast amount of safe, clean toys and equipment.

The childminder takes active steps to protect children and teach them to be safe when she takes them out of the premises, for example, teaching them road safety awareness. She has a good understanding of the new laws relating to car safety seats and provides suitable equipment to ensure children are safe in a vehicle.

Children are safeguarded because the childminder is very aware of her responsibilities, has a written policy to share with parents and is committed to updating her skills in child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children have access to a wide range of excellent activities that excite and motivate them to learn. Interaction is very good and children are challenged in their play, building on what they already know. The childminder often follows the children's lead in their play and shows great skill in using their enthusiasm for learning in a constructive manner. A chance viewing of a pirate movie, for example, inspired children in their role play. This was further encouraged by the childminder and added activities such as making aged treasure maps and telescopes were arranged. Children learned about different countries through their imaginary voyage on a pirate ship, with the childminder cleverly asking imaginative questions to make them think.

Throughout her practice, the childminder encourages and challenges children in their play, with numbers, colours, and knowledge and understanding of the world, for example. She thinks quickly so she can ask relevant questions or extend a game children are involved in thus increasing their interest and desire to learn.

Children under three years have stimulating activities whilst working alongside older children and are encouraged to become independent and to build their confidence. The childminder uses the 'Birth to three matters' framework in her planning to ensure she is meeting the needs of the younger age group and is aware of their learning and development. She has organised folders for children under three, into the areas from the 'Birth to three matters' framework. These records include photographs, for example, of children drinking from a tumbler and walking unaided up some safe steps at the park, to demonstrate their developing self-awareness.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children effectively learn to appreciate each other's similarities and differences because the childminder encourages children to talk about their beliefs and customs. She provides good quality toys and resources that reflect our diverse society.

The childminder appreciates that some children may have special needs and has systems in place to care for them appropriately. She cares for them according to their needs, learning skills such as Makaton, and works in partnership with their parents to maintain consistency and help them achieve.

Children are very confident and well-mannered, with any unwanted behaviour managed in a positive manner, by the childminder. She explains to children why the behaviour is not acceptable and is patient and calm. Older children are learning to negotiate with one another and play harmoniously.

The childminder builds a good working relationship with parents to ensure children are cared for in partnership with them. Children benefit from the use of daily diaries between home and

setting which helps them settle well, developing a sense of trust. Written policies and procedures help new parents to be aware of her practices and make informed decisions. The childminder aims to provide long-term care for children and has minded most of her charges since babyhood. As a result the children develop a sense of belonging.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder is positively committed to her own personal development through attending relevant training such as child protection and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. She skilfully uses this knowledge effectively to provide children with a wide range of learning experiences.

Children are cared for in a very organised environment with flexible routines that help them to be confident in what happens next. The childminder manages her time very well with maximum contact time with children. Overall children's needs are met.

The childminder has developed extremely well-organised play areas, which appeal to children, providing learning opportunities that are easily accessible and are decorated with posters. The organisation of the premises allows many activities to take place simultaneously to keep all the children, whatever their stage of development, interested and busy.

All records are very well kept, with written policies and procedures available to support the childminder's practices. Parents are kept informed about their child verbally and in writing on a daily basis. All significant information is recorded, demonstrating to parents that children are being provided with a stimulating routine offering sufficient challenge to their development. A photographic record is kept on their progress in individual scrap books

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the childminder has increased her range of play opportunities and activities for older children so they are using their time effectively to enjoy and achieve.

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.

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):

- assess risks to children in relation to the sharp twigs and plant sticks in the garden and take steps to minimise these.

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