



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	202770
Inspection date	03 July 2006
Inspector	Anne Daly

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 1992. She lives with her husband, two adult children and her other two children, aged 12 and 15 years, in a residential area of Rayleigh, Essex. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to provide care for six children at any one time, currently minding two children, part-time. She takes children to the park, library and shops. The family has a budgerigar.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and of a local childminding group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through daily routines and by following the childminder's sound hygiene procedures, such as regularly washing hands to avoid cross-infection. Children are protected from the spread of infection by the childminder's written sickness policy being shared with parents to ensure that they know when to keep their unwell children at home. Children are appropriately cared for and made comfortable when they are unwell. She is able to act in their best interests if they are ill or have an accident as parents have given their written permission for her to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment. However, if children have a serious accident, she may not be able to act in their best interests as her first aid qualification has expired. The childminder ensures that pets do not pose a health risk to children.

Children enjoy eating the meals and snacks supplied by their parents. Their individual dietary requirements are well understood to ensure that all meals and snacks provided are in accordance with parents' wishes and consider all children's dietary needs. Children are beginning to have some understanding of the importance of a healthy diet. The childminder treats mealtimes as opportunities to help them enjoy their food and to become independent in feeding themselves, such as giving them finger foods. Children do not become dehydrated as they can help themselves to their drinks at any time.

Children enjoy a variety of daily activities to enable them to experience physical activities and to develop their skills. They are developing their physical and emotional independence. They are acquiring control over their bodies while learning new physical skills such as manipulating malleable materials, for example, play dough. The childminder supports babies well-being by being involved as they try out their developing skills such as crawling.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy using a range of toys and equipment appropriate for their stages of development. The childminder provides accessible resources so that babies and young children can choose what they need to independently begin an activity. The childminder regularly cleans and checks equipment and toys to ensure that they remain safe for children's use.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and child-friendly home. Regular risk assessments undertaken by the childminder help to safeguard children from some potential hazards. Steps have been taken to minimise some hazards by the use of safety equipment, such as safety gates and electrical socket covers. However, insufficient steps have been taken to minimise other potential hazards, such as blind cords and an electrical point not securely fitted to the wall.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe, because the childminder encourages them to learn about safety both within her home and on outings. She shows them how to safely use equipment, such as the correct way to use scissors to avoid accidents. Children learn how they

can keep themselves safe by practising the Green Cross Code when crossing roads on their walks to and from the park. The childminder has devised evacuation procedures, but has not practised such procedures with the children to ensure their safety by knowing what to do if smoke alarms sound.

Children are safeguarded by the childminder being aware of the need to ensure that they are only collected by authorised persons. She is aware of and understands her child protection responsibilities and has devised a written statement to inform parents of these responsibilities. She knows who to contact if she has concerns about a child's well-being, but does not maintain a record of such contact details. The childminder has not obtained current Government publications, such as 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused', to increase her awareness of child protection information and to enable her to act in children's best interests at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled in the childminder's care and home, where activities allow them opportunities to play and learn. They learn through everyday experiences, because the childminder asks them questions about what they are doing, listening to what they say, to find out what they know. Children acquire new knowledge and skills, such as when using different shaped cutters in play dough.

Children can freely choose from the toys on offer. Interaction between the childminder and children is warm and caring, with appropriate encouragement given to raise their self-esteem. Children build positive relationships with the childminder, who spends time joining in with their activities, talking to them when sharing books to provide positive support with their learning. Children have opportunities to mark make and to refine their skills on a regular basis, because the childminder provides them with a range of mark-making materials, such as crayons, paints and a mega sketch. Children are acquiring social confidence and competence by the childminder providing many 'small world' materials, such as dolls and tea sets to talk about while playing.

Babies are developing their self-assurance through their close relationships with the childminder, who plays with them at their level to encourage early conversation. However, the childminder's care practice has not yet been extended through reference to current publications, such as 'Birth to three matters', to enable her to plan activities to help younger children to make progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. Their needs are met as their normal daily routines are discussed with parents and followed by the childminder. Children are beginning to learn about the wider world through everyday activities and experiences such as trips to the park. They are forming positive relationships with the childminder and others through individual

attention. Younger children are beginning to appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences by the provision of books and resources such as play people from around the world.

Young children and babies are developing an awareness of themselves and finding out what they can do. They are developing confidence in their physical skills and are secure emotionally, enabling them to express their needs. The childminder responds to their achievements in a positive way to increase their self-confidence, while reinforcing their desirable behaviour by plenty of praise.

Children benefit from the childminder's trusting partnerships with parents, who are made welcome and kept informed of their children's experiences through a daily exchange of information. The childminder provides flexible care to suit parents' working patterns. Information is shared to ensure that children's individual needs are met and that parents are aware of the childminder's role and responsibilities. However, the childminder's complaints procedure requires review to ensure that they are fully informed how she will deal with a complaint.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder organises her time to ensure that she spends most of her working day completely involved with the children, who all evidently enjoy each other's company and their time together. Children feel at home with the childminder and are encouraged to develop their independence. They have ample adult support to help them to feel secure and confident, because the childminder limits the number of children in her care. They therefore have more than adequate indoor and outdoor space, with appropriate resources for their ages and stages of development.

The childminder has 14 years experience and has attended some training to develop and support her childminding practice. However, she does not hold a current first aid certificate to ensure that she can act in children's best interests following an accident. She has some understanding of the National Standards and associated guidance, but has no means to record complaints. The necessary records are maintained to support the welfare, care and development of children and to ensure that parents are kept informed and able to contribute to the continuity of care.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder was asked to ensure that all persons over the age of sixteen living on the premises underwent checks, to ensure that electric sockets in areas accessible to children were fitted with socket covers and to provide play materials reflecting diversity and showing positive images of people from a variety of cultural backgrounds and with varying needs. She was asked to develop documentation regarding parental written permission for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and to ensure that her car insurance included business cover.

Children are now being cared for in an environment where the childminder understands vetting procedures, although checks are currently being processed for one of her adult children. There

have been improvements in documentation as the childminder has organised her record keeping to enable her to act in children's best interests. Some risks to children have been minimised as the childminder has covered all lower level electrical sockets, although a socket was not securely fixed to the wall. Children are treated with equal concern as the childminder has provided a varied range of play materials reflecting positive images of cultures, gender and disabilities.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints 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 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 that hazards to children on the premises are minimised with reference to electrical sockets and blind cords
- improve the outcomes for children from birth to three by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters'
- complete an appropriate first aid course that includes training in first aid for infants and young children.

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