



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	202805
Inspection date	26 July 2006
Inspector	Susan Elizabeth Warren
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 2002. She lives with her husband and three children aged nine, six and one adult, in a house in Brightlingsea, 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 care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding five children under eight, all of whom attend on a part time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local parent and toddler group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are kept healthy at the setting as the childminder is aware of and follows good basic health and hygiene routines. Children have written consent in place to receive emergency care and attention if needed. They receive first aid for minor injuries, which are recorded and signed off by a parent or carer. An emergency plan is in place whereby another nearby childminder would be called upon to take over if required, for example if a child had to be taken for emergency care or treatment. Children do not attend if they are sick or infectious; the childminder advises parents of the necessary exclusion times for different conditions, helping to prevent the risk of spread of infection. If they become poorly whilst at the childminder's home, they are kept comfortable until they can be collected by a parent or designated person.

Children use the downstairs bathroom independently or with assistance, and understand why they must wash their hands after using the toilet. They all have sun cream applied before playing outside and are encouraged to wear a hat; children know why this is important and help with the application of sun cream if they are able. Children know the importance of drinking plenty of water during hot spells, and they can access a drink of water at any time. Babies are offered a drink frequently in the cup or bottle of their preference.

Children learn about healthy eating as they enjoy a nourishing diet of meals and snacks whilst at the setting. These might be items supplied by parents or provided by the childminder in accordance with parental wishes. Children's dietary needs and allergies are known and the childminder is careful that no unsuitable foods are given. Snacks are always healthy and include fruit and vegetables, cheese and crackers, yogurt or bread. Children can talk about what they are eating and why this is good for them. Babies' food intake is noted and reported to parents verbally at the end of each day.

Children enjoy physical play and fresh air in the very well equipped garden. There is space to run and move freely and a range of equipment to help them develop climbing and balancing skills, such as the small slide and climbing frame. Older children can use the trampoline, enclosed by a safety net, and the pool, under supervision and with prior parental consent. Shade is provided under a large canopy, so babies can be safe and comfortable out of doors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are warm and welcoming to parents and children. The children are cared for in a spacious, dedicated playroom well equipped with all toys and resources to support their care and play needs. Children are kept safe and secure; they cannot leave the premises unseen and all visitors are screened before entry. There are low tables and chairs for children's use, with parasols for sun protection when used in the garden. They can play on the floor to create railway and road layouts or use the large dining table for crafts and colouring. A travel cot is used for sleeping babies in a quiet room downstairs, within earshot of the childminder. For outings there is a range of buggies and car seats appropriate for the children's ages and sizes, and in

accordance with the latest safety recommendations. The childminder ensures that these are all well maintained and conform to standards of safety, thus keeping children safe while away from the house.

Children's safety is considered with the provision of fire safety equipment which includes a fire blanket and smoke alarms. There is an evacuation plan in place though this has not been practised as yet. The childminder is aware of safety issues when children are moving between indoors and outside for play, and keeps an eye on the youngest children to make sure they are safe.

The children can reach their toys and play materials easily as they are all stored at low level and well organised into boxes and tubs. The child sized furniture makes children feel secure and develops their independence, allowing them to choose and use the puzzles, games and mark-making equipment.

Children are protected from potential harm or neglect as the childminder is aware of her responsibilities regarding child protection, and has a statement detailing this in her information folder, accessible to parents. Any concerns are noted and incidents recorded for monitoring.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The childminder follows babies' individual routines in terms of sleep and feeding patterns. They have opportunities to try new things and their physical development is well supported; they can pull themselves to standing and cruise the furniture when they are ready to do so. They are encouraged to feed themselves, supported when needed. The childminder uses appropriate language and echoes babies' attempts at speech, reinforcing their desire to communicate.

Older children can be independent in their personal care and choice of activities as all are set out within easy reach. They are encouraged to put away one thing before using another. They become absorbed and spend time at an activity, such as an explorer's programme on the computer, developing perseverance and learning to take turns and share.

Children have access to a range of toys and play materials carefully chosen to provide fun and help with their all round development. Younger babies and toddlers enjoy the musical toys, role play and books, developing language and imaginative skills. Older children use the computer, which is well supplied with a wide choice of suitable educational programmes, encouraging thinking and decision making and, in some cases, creativity. Dressing up and face painting is fun for all. The childminder is always looking for new craft ideas to try with the children so they remain interested and stimulated.

Toddlers attend a play session locally, where they can mix with other children and enjoy a change of scenery as they learn new things. Outdoor play is made exciting with the choice of small and large equipment; there are swings and a slide, wheeled toys for all ages, a pool for swimming, with parental consent, and a trampoline used under close supervision. Children also enjoy planting and tending seeds for flowers, fruit and vegetables, giving them an idea of life cycles and growth and the changing seasons.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well known to the childminder. Their records are amended as changes are made to keep them up to date. All children are included in activities and the childminder balances a range of ages successfully. Children are given insight into the wider world as they celebrate festivals and seasonal celebrations, and have some multicultural resources such as books and dressing up clothes. Children and parents can reflect and look back at activities through photographs showing some fun times and special occasions such as birthdays and picnics. Children who may have the need for additional help are supported; the childminder makes sure she has the necessary information to provide for their particular needs.

Children learn to share and take turns with equipment and for attention. They learn to be considerate of the needs and feelings of others, such as when being asked to wait for their snack while the baby is being fed. The childminder has various strategies to manage the range of behaviour amongst children, for example, she successfully uses distraction to defuse a potentially difficult situation, offering a child an interesting alternative and helping him to settle and become absorbed in it.

There is an effective partnership with parents and this is seen as key to a positive relationship between the child, the parent or carer and the childminder. An two way flow of information and flexibility to meet the differing needs of working parents are important features and help to make the children feel at home, secure and settled. Babies' routines are followed as far as possible and all significant events are reported. Older children are made to feel welcome and able to enjoy choosing activities and games, or completing homework after school. There is a complaints procedure in place and parents are made aware of this.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met.

The children's safety and welfare are well considered and all adults in the household are vetted and checked for their suitability to be with minded children. The childminder has attended a basic training course and gone on to further study as she is interested in developing and improving her practice. She keeps abreast of trends and developments in the child care field by reading, talking to other professionals and meeting regularly with other childminders.

The children are cared for within the correct ratio and the childminder is aware that she needs to carefully balance the ages and numbers of children looked after. The daily record shows children present, with their arrival and departure times recorded. The premises are well used with a large space devoted to the children's needs and the garden made very child friendly and safe whilst offering exciting and challenging play opportunities. Children feel welcome and are able to settle quickly to their choice of activity.

The childminder is aware of the need to keep supporting paperwork and documentation relating to the care and welfare of children. Records are stored securely and confidentially and updated

as required. The childminder has begun to formulate a set of policies relating to the various aspects of childminding and these are available for parents to view within the information folder.

Children's care and welfare is enhanced by the flow of information between the childminder and the parents, as there is understanding of the expectations on both sides; parents can be reassured that the childminder is offering high quality care with regard to the National standards and other requirements.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure that numbers of children conforms to the permitted ratios as detailed on the registration certificate.

The provider is aware that children must not exceed the permitted numbers and is careful to maintain ratios at all times. As a result, children's care and welfare are improved.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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):

- practise and evaluate the evacuation plan so that children are aware of what to do in an emergency.

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