



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	506268
Inspection date	30 November 2006
Inspector	Jacqueline Oldman
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 2000. She lives with her husband and three children between the ages of eight and one year. They live in a house in a residential area of Witham, close to schools, pre-schools, parks, duck ponds and local shops. All areas of the property are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently caring for three children, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder also cares for children aged over eight years. The family has a dog. The childminder takes children to and collects them from a local school. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because the childminder follows current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. Parents are given very clear information about what will happen if a child is unwell and exclusion periods are implemented as required. Her first aid training has been updated so that children's minor accidents can be handled in an informed way. Parents have not been asked for consent to give medication, emergency advice or treatment restricting the childminder's ability to take immediate action. They are asked to sign accident or medical records to ensure they are fully informed.

Strategies such as a catch phrase support children to learn and understand simple good health and hygiene practices. Everyday routines help to protect children from cross-infection. Children take part in regular physical activity both indoors and outdoors. They walk to and from school daily and there is a wide range of outdoor equipment. Children choose to spend time outside and make good use of the garden, particularly in fine weather. They play football, cricket and use the large range of ride on toys. The physical activities support children to develop and refine their physical skills.

Children rest and sleep according to their needs. If a child wants to sit quietly and read after a long day at school, this is respected. Children are provided with fruit snacks after school such as apples or bananas and evening meals are provided twice a week in line with parental wishes. The home cooked meals include fresh vegetables and restrictions are made on fatty foods such as chips to ensure healthy options are available. Children's specific dietary requirements are recorded to ensure their likes, dislikes and parental preferences are respected. The childminder is aware of the importance of children drinking regularly and a selection of juices and water are made freely available to promote children's independence and prevent them dehydrating.

Living a healthy life-style is learned through routines and regular discussions about why it is good to eat and exercise. Children also learn about healthy eating when they help to cook.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play and explore in a very safe and well-organised environment. The childminder is very vigilant about security in her home and ensures that doors are bolted to prevent children leaving the premises unsupervised. Parents are asked to give clear information regarding the people authorised to collect their child and good procedures are in place should alternative arrangements be necessary. Children are protected from unauthorised persons.

The childminder is very knowledgeable about safety issues and demonstrates a sound understanding of the importance of providing a balance between freedom and safety. She has carried out a full risk assessment of the premises and taken positive steps to minimise potential hazards and prevent accidents. The childminder has given careful thought to organising the

home and resources to ensure it meets children's individual needs while keeping them safe. Good use is made of safety items such as cupboard locks, socket covers and stair gates and all wires are secured. Children are helped to develop an understanding of potential hazards and safety issues while their independence is promoted. This is enhanced as the childminder gives children clear messages regarding the restrictions imposed on them.

Children's practical road sense is developed well by the childminder and they are accomplishing a sound understanding of the possible dangers. Children are encouraged to contribute to decision making by communicating when it is safe to cross the road and are helped to learn about keeping themselves safe. The childminder provides a good balance between growing independence and safe limits. Children go on bicycle rides but know they must wear reflective bands and remain between adults at all times. They are protected in the event of a fire. Emergency evacuation procedures have been devised and practised, using the electronically linked smoke alarms to alert children. They are learning an awareness of potential hazards so they can protect themselves from harm.

Children are safeguarded as the childminder has a clear understanding of child protection responsibilities. She keeps up-to-date with current procedures through training and by reading the recommended literature.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have fun at the childminder's home after a structured day at school. They enjoy varied opportunities for free play, confidently choosing their activities from a good range of low-level toys, both indoors and outdoors. They have opportunities to play indoors, outdoors or relax according to their individual needs. Children are encouraged to contribute their ideas and make decisions about what they want to do next in discussion with the childminder. Their needs and interests are known. Children have many opportunities to develop their creative skills as the childminder organises the routines and resources to give them the time, confidence and skills to produce good quality work. She values their individuality by encouraging an environment in which creativity is praised and valued. They design and make their own cards or follow instructions to make crackers or snowmen. Children enjoy going on nature walks when they collect leaves, conkers and other natural products to make collages and prints.

Children broaden their experiences on outings both within the local and wider community as the childminder takes advantage of the extra time school holidays present. Children go on nature and river walks to explore and investigate nature and collect items to bring back for use in their creative activities. They engage in energetic play such as football, cricket and rounders. Good use is made of local amenities such as Colchester Zoo and Maldon Park to provide variety and interest for children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well known because the childminder takes time to gather the relevant information in order to meet their personal needs and provide appropriate activities. Their details are recorded on the child record forms and these are updated as needed to reflect any changes. The childminder is aware that some children will have additional needs and demonstrates a commitment to working closely with parents and outside professionals to meet children's needs and promote their development.

Children are encouraged to be tolerant of one another and understand that they are treated fairly and with equal concern. Children become aware of wider society in meaningful ways. They go on trips in the local and wider community that include walking, using bicycles, trains and buses. Children enjoy first hand experiences to help them appreciate and care for their environment, explore nature and investigate animals and their habitats. Children understand responsible behaviour as they are enabled to resolve any minor conflicts between themselves. The childminder encourages children to reason and compromise or negotiate terms so they are helped to see how their actions and behaviour affect the lives of others. She explains the cause and effect of their behaviour and supports them to develop personal values and a sense of what is right and wrong, and why.

The childminder builds trusting relationships with parents which enables them to resolve any concerns quickly and informally. A verbal exchange of information daily helps provide good continuity of care for children. Parents are made aware of the complaints procedure but the childminder has not made a complaints record available for parents to see on request because she has not received the addendum to the National Standards.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure home where the adults have been checked and vetted to ensure their suitability to be in contact with children. Children benefit from the childminder's knowledge of child care practice and experience. She has completed the required training and updated her first aid knowledge by attending recent training. The home is well-organised and a variety of posters and displays provide a stimulating environment for children. They enjoy free access to the lounge, dining area and garden, which provides them with ample space to move around and play comfortably. Toys and resources are stored in purpose built units to allow children to make independent choices and decisions about their play. The childminder is very enthusiastic about her role and children benefit from her motivation and commitment.

Children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution are supported by the procedures in place that promote the efficient running of the setting. The majority of the required documentation and record keeping systems are in place, available for inspection and stored confidentially. These are shared verbally with parents to inform them of the childminder's routines and care practices. The childminder demonstrates a sound understanding of the National Standards and associated guidance and has implemented them

into her care practice. However, she has not received a copy of the October 2005 revisions to ensure the complaints procedure is in line with the Children's Act Regulations.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Children's welfare and well-being is mostly promoted as the childminder has now obtained prior written parental permission to administer medication and ensures all records for accidents and medication administered are consistently signed by parents. However, written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment has not been requested and a further recommendation has been made because without parental consent, the childminder is unable to take immediate action to meet children's needs.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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):

- obtain a copy of the October 2005 Addendum to the National Standards and associated guidance document and ensure the required changes are implemented
- request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment

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