

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	560131
Inspection date	30 August 2007
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 1999. She lives with her husband and two children, aged six and nine years, in a residential area of Chelmsford, Essex. The whole of the childminder's home is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time, currently minding four children under five part-time and one child over five after school. In addition, two children over eight are minded. The childminder walks or drives to the local pre-school and school to take and collect children. She attends a parent and toddler group with children and also takes them to local recreational facilities. The family has two cats.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning 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. They use individual hand towels and have a choice of different types of liquid soaps to prevent cross-infection. Children wearing nappies are changed by the childminder on their individual mats to minimise the risk of cross-infection. The childminder ensures that pets do not pose a health risk to children, such as by ensuring that the feeding bowls are inaccessible to them.

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's welfare is being protected by a childminder who holds a first aid qualification to enable her to act in their best interests if they are ill or have an accident. Written parental consents and accident records are appropriately maintained to ensure that parents or carers are kept fully informed. There are procedures for the administration of medication to protect children's welfare, with the childminder obtaining prior parental written consent to administer long term prescribed medication. However, the childminder does not record when she has administered medications to children, which is a breach of regulations as it may place children at risk.

Children's dietary needs are being well met through the childminder requesting information from their parents or carers about any dietary requirements and allergies. They enjoy eating well balanced snacks and meals supplied by their childminder or parents. They are beginning to have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet through the childminder talking to them about what they eat and why certain foods are good or bad for them. Children are able to help themselves to their beakers of drink at any time to encourage them to drink freely to avoid dehydration.

Children have daily opportunities to choose from a wide range of physical activities, both indoors and outdoors, to contribute to their good health. They regularly visit the park and play in the garden to enable them to exercise in the fresh air. They enjoy a wide range of physical activities to help them to develop their confidence and to refine their skills when using large and small equipment, such as crawling through tunnels or threading beads. Their individual needs are being considered by the childminder allowing them to rest and sleep when required. Younger children are developing their physical and emotional independence, acquiring control over their bodies, while learning new physical skills, when manipulating malleable materials, such as play dough.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are being cared for in a clean, warm and welcoming environment. Regular visual risk assessments undertaken by the childminder help to safeguard children from possible dangers. Stair gates prevent younger children accessing the stairs unsupervised and additional gates are used across the kitchen doorway to prevent access when the childminder is cooking.

Children are able to self-select activities from a range of toys and equipment meeting required safety standards and their developmental needs. The childminder rotates equipment and ensures that toys and books are both age and stage appropriate. The lounge, dining room and garden are set out with many different types of activities to enable children to independently access resources appropriate for their individual needs, such as two different sized trampolines. The childminder regularly cleans, checks and repairs equipment and toys to ensure that they remain safe for children's use.

The childminder gives priority to helping children understand how to keep themselves safe. Younger children are either strapped into a buggy or on reins during their walks. All children are learning how they can keep themselves safe by practising the Green Cross Code during their regular walks. They are learning about the dangers of water through the childminder talking to them and telling them that they must not go to the edge of the pond when feeding the ducks. Children understand the safety rules and reasons why they must always use age appropriate car seats and safety belts when in the childminder's vehicle for their protection. Her vehicle is appropriately maintained and insured and all parents have given their written permission for their children to be taken in the vehicle or on outings.

The childminder has some understanding of her safeguarding responsibilities, ensuring that children are only collected by authorised persons, while also having appropriate procedures if a child should go missing or is not collected from her care. She understands that she must implement appropriate procedures if she has concerns for a child's well-being. However, children are not being fully safeguarded as her procedures do not include whom to contact in social services or the police if she has concerns about a child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are benefiting from a childminder who is beginning to use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to enable her to plan improvements to the outcomes for younger children.

All children are happy and purposefully occupied while at the childminder's home. They are developing confidence and self-esteem through the childminder ensuring that she provides time and space for them to focus on activities and experiences to develop their own interests. Younger children respond well and creatively to different types of music when dancing, while others thoroughly enjoy listening to and singing nursery rhymes using a microphone. They become playfully engaged and involved in their activities, such as when pressing the piano keys in a book.

Young children are developing an awareness of themselves by finding out what they can achieve. They are developing confidence in their physical skills and are sufficiently secure emotionally to express their needs. They are being given plenty of praise and encouragement by the childminder to promote their self-esteem, to promote a positive attitude to learning and to develop their confidence.

Children enjoy working with a varied range of creative materials. They respond well to challenges when the childminder provides materials appropriate for their ages and stages of development, such as when using different sized beads to make mats. Children feel valued and their self-esteem is being promoted by the childminder displaying these mats on her unit. Younger children are acquiring social confidence and competence by the childminder providing many opportunities to mix with their peers at toddler groups.

Older children are having their individual needs met through the childminder providing more challenging activities, such as some enjoy spotting the differences between two pictures, while others enjoy completing word searches.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are being cared for by a childminder who works in partnership with parents or carers to meet individual children's needs. All children, including those with learning disabilities, are welcomed, treated with respect and made to feel part of the childminder's home and family. The childminder has a good understanding that some children have disabilities and learning difficulties, actively liaising with parents or carers to ensure that she is aware of any children requiring help to meet their individual needs.

Children have a good sense of belonging through being able to help themselves to toys and by having their own hand towels in the downstairs cloakroom. Younger children are beginning to understand the 'house rules' and their self-confidence is being encouraged and fostered by the childminder having clear and consistent expectations and trust in their abilities. Older children know that, when entering the home, they must take off their shoes and must take turns when selecting both indoor and outdoor play provision.

All children are being treated with equal concern and respect. They are learning about the wider world through everyday activities and experiences, such as trips to the library and to the park to feed the ducks. They are beginning to appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences through the provision of books and some resources. They are developing an understanding of which foods are associated with different countries, such as pasta and pizza with Italy and noodles with Asian countries.

Children's welfare is being promoted through each family's personal file containing all details about each child; written parental consents and contracts setting out the expectations of all parties to enable the childminder to act in children's best interests. The childminder shares her policies and procedures with parents or carers to ensure that they are aware of her role and responsibilities, especially regarding how she will meet children's individual needs and how complaints will be handled. She ensures children's individual needs are being well met by completing a daily diary for the younger children in her care and by making time daily to speak to all parents or carers. She had notified parents of this inspection, resulting in some of them writing very complimentary letters about her childminding service.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are being protected through the childminder ensuring that all persons in the household are vetted and that non-vetted persons do not have unsupervised access to children. Children's needs are being effectively met by the childminder ensuring that the required adult to child ratios are being maintained. She organises her day around school runs and the needs of the younger children, such as their rest and meal times, whilst providing them with opportunities to experience a range of both inside and outside activities. Children therefore feel at home with the childminder and are being encouraged to develop their independence.

The childminder has some understanding of the National Standards, but is unaware of the Guidance to National Standards notes or the October 2005 updates and associated guidance.

However, she has devised a complaints statement by downloading information from the Ofsted website.

The childminder maintains some of the required records to promote children's health, safety and well-being. She ensures that all documentation about individual children is shared with their parents or carers.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder agreed to continue to monitor children's safety in the garden with reference to poisonous plants and bushes.

Children can now safely play in the garden as the childminder has removed the berried bushes and continually assesses other plants, removing as and when necessary, to ensure that children will not be harmed by any sharp spikes.

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 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):

- maintain a record of all medications administered to children
- ensure that you know whom to contact in social services or the police if you have concerns for a child's welfare.

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