



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	560187
Inspection date	29 August 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 1993. She lives with her husband and one child aged 17 in a house in Great Bentley, Essex. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding seven children, 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 family has a dog, two cats and two ferrets.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are kept healthy whilst in the childminder's care as they learn about aspects of a healthy lifestyle, for example, they wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. They wear appropriate protective clothing when taking part in messy activities or outside play. Children needing first aid have the details recorded and signed by a parent or carer. There are consent forms in place for emergency medical advice or treatment. If children become poorly whilst at the childminder's they are kept comfortable until they can be collected. Children enjoy the family pets and are helped to stroke and care for them gently and carefully; all the animals are regularly vetted.

Children enjoy a healthy diet whilst being cared for. Children's allergies and dietary requirements are carefully considered to ensure no unsuitable foods are given. They may eat a packed lunch sent from home, which is stored in a cool place until required, or can have meals with the family. Snacks are regulated and include fruit and vegetables as well as an energy giving biscuit or home made flapjack, enabling children to make healthy choices for themselves. The childminder informs parents of what children have eaten each day. Drinks are freely available in a cup or beaker of choice. Children sit at a low table and lunchtime is a shared, social experience where they can chat quietly, encouraged to display good table manners and consideration for others.

Children enjoy healthy fresh air on walks and outings to the local park and countryside as well as in the safe, secure garden. There are outside toys to develop movement skills and a trampoline for older children to enjoy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are made to feel welcome as they arrive; there are low level coat pegs with their names displayed colourfully. They can leave their belongings, including boots for outside play, and return to them as needed. Children are cared for on the ground floor where they have a playroom and easily accessible bathroom, with potties available for those who prefer them. The kitchen is used for messy play, with a low table and chairs provided. They can move freely between the play spaces and have access to the garden when they want to play outside.

Children practise a fire drill so they know what to do in an emergency. When travelling in the childminder's car, children have seats or booster cushions appropriate to their age and size, to ensure safety. Children cannot leave the premises unseen and all visitors are screened before being admitted, ensuring children do not come into contact with adults who have not been checked. The house is child friendly, with socket covers, cupboard locks and other safety features in place, keeping children safe and free from accidental harm.

Children are protected from harm or neglect as the childminder is aware of her responsibilities regarding safeguarding children and has the latest information to hand. Parents are made aware of the childminder's role in protecting children before minding commences.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy an extremely wide range of stimulating and well thought out activities and play opportunities, helping them enjoy their time at the childminder's and make good all round progress. They particularly enjoy messy play and craft activities, taking pride in their achievements and having fun being creative and experimenting with colour and texture. They paint and collage, choosing stickers and arranging them on paper to make an artwork to take home. Face and body painting is a favourite activity, enjoyed by the children and the childminder alike, with due regard for any allergies and skin conditions, and with some spectacular results recorded in photographs to look back on.

Role play with dolls and teddies is popular, with bowls and spoons to feed their babies before they are put down for a nap. Younger children especially like the noisy and musical toys, quickly learning how to operate them and make impressive sounds. The toys are all stored at low level, but may not always be easily accessible to children as they are largely in one big box. There are books which children freely choose, happily counting and talking about the pictures, relating to their own experiences. For example, seeing a picture of squirrels reminded a little girl of when, on a walk through the park, a squirrel took some food from her hand, very exciting.

Older children are able to do their homework or follow their own interests; the childminder is able to balance the needs of all the children attending, sharing her time and attention. Relationships are warm and friendly and the children form strong bonds with one another and the childminder, and are confident to speak to other adults they meet, such as friends who may visit. The childminder extends and develops the play, led by the children's interests, for example, providing carrots for Dora the Explorer to feed to the animals, and utensils for children to feed the dolls.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well known and understood, enabling them to receive appropriate care in line with their established routines and requirements. Children are helped to feel welcome and at home as soon as they arrive; there are named coat pegs for their belongings in the entrance lobby. Toys and activities are set out ready for them to begin playing straight away. Children are introduced to ideas about others' needs and feelings as they celebrate festivals and seasonal and cultural events. They have access to resources depicting various cultures, including dressing up clothes, books and dolls, helping them become aware of similarities and differences in lifestyle between themselves and others.

Children with disabilities or learning difficulties are cared for with due regard for their particular needs, in consultation with parents and working with outside professionals when required.

Children are happy and secure at the childminder's and their behaviour is very good. They respond to praise and encouragement and show pride and satisfaction in their achievements, whether a painting or other artwork, or sending a ball rolling through the helter skelter to excitedly see where it will emerge. They are able to share resources and wait for attention, for

example at snack time or when needing a top up of a particular paint colour, and are able to ask for the help they need.

There is an extremely effective partnership with parents, which the childminder sees as a cornerstone for a successful childminding relationship. The many letters of praise and endorsement from parents and some of the older children demonstrate their happy working relationship and offer reassurance that children are receiving high quality care. They are able to see policies and procedures and many photographs showing how children are looked after, and outlining the child minder's approach, her qualifications and experience. These are all well presented in a folder, which is colourful and appealing. Further, she encourages parents to ask questions and endeavours to be flexible in meeting their needs due to fluctuating work and holiday patterns.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a home in which all adults are checked and vetted for their suitability to be in contact with minded children, keeping them safe and secure. The childminder has completed basic training and continues to take an interest in child care matters, following trends and developments and updating her training as courses become available, for example, the 'Birth to three matters' framework training.

The home is well organised to allow children freedom of movement and space to play, eat and relax. They can ask for any toys or activities and have the opportunity for outside play wearing boots and raincoats if needed. There is low level furniture, which encourages independence and confidence. The childminder clearly relishes her time spent with the children and capably balances their needs for play, personal care, food, rest and activity throughout a busy working day.

All paperwork and documentation to support children's care and welfare needs is in place, to a high standard. Files are stored safely and with due regard to confidentiality. Details are reviewed as needed to make sure that contacts and arrangements for collection are up to date. Parents and children benefit from the childminder's excellent information folder which contains policies and procedures, clearly setting out her approach and with examples of activities depicted in photographs.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder agreed to obtain the most recent information about safeguarding children. She now has this and is familiar with the procedure for referring concerns. Parents are aware of her responsibilities before a minding arrangement commences.

As a result of action taken, children's care and welfare are enhanced.

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 the 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):

- consider ways to organise toys and resources to make them more easily accessible to 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