

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY252764
Inspection date	11 July 2007
Inspector	Barbara Ann Bush

Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder registered in 2003. She lives with her husband and child aged eight years in the village of Tiptree, Essex near to local amenities. The whole premises is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder has pets; one dog and two guinea pigs.

The childminder is registered to care for six children at any one time and is currently minding four children, who attend on a full and part-time basis. She supports children who speak English as an additional language. The childminder walks to local schools and playgroups to take and collect children. She visits the library, park and toddler groups with the minded children. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association. She is an accredited member of The North Essex Network and currently provides funded early education.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is promoted effectively as the childminder takes positive steps to support their understanding of the need to keep themselves clean. Children appreciate taking responsibility for their own health needs and an awareness is fostered from an early age, for example, using the bathroom on their own. Children are protected as detailed information regarding the children's medical backgrounds, conditions and allergies enables the childminder to take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection. Appropriate measures are taken when children are ill or have an accident; written policies and procedures are followed by the childminder and these are shared with parents. Children have completed topic work on self-care with emphasis placed on cooking, cleaning, washing-up and how to take care of their bodies.

Children are well nourished and have excellent opportunities to learn about healthy eating. They access regular drinks and eat food that is nutritious and wholesome. Children learn about healthy living through a wide range of activities that develop their understanding of what foods are good for them, for example children are involved when shopping for food, they cook light snacks and grow various crops like carrots, runner beans and cress. Children learn excellent table manners through sitting together for mealtimes; watching each other use utensils and with the childminder providing an effective role model.

Children enjoy a versatile range of activities that promotes physical development and skill. They visit indoor activity centres, parks, use the garden and take walks with the family dog in the fresh air. The equipment provides children with challenge and stimulation. The children have access to an anatomical doll that has removable organs. This prompts conversation about how their bodies work. Younger children are developing independence both physically and emotionally, becoming more confident and acquiring control over their bodies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure home environment. The childminder uses the ground floor primarily to enable children to access toys independently and safely. She has a dedicated play room in the conservatory and ensures that it is well-ventilated on hot days. Walls are used to display information posters for parents and show children's artwork. Children are protected by locks, alarms and socket covers with clear instructions about areas of the home that they cannot use for play for example, the lounge.

Children independently select activities from an easily accessible, wide range of age-appropriate resources, which are in a good state of repair. She carefully monitors and supervises children's choice of toys, to ensure they are appropriate for their age and stage of development and played with in a safe manner. For example, smaller pieces of equipment that are suitable for the older children will be used when the younger children are sleeping or not attending.

Children are able to move around and play safely, freely and independently because the childminder has identified and minimised risks, balancing freedom for children and setting safe limits. She completes a visual safety check of the home and a written assessment every six months. Children are learning to keep themselves safe because the childminder has clear rules and routines in order to maintain their safety inside and outside the home. For example, the childminder talks to them about road safety, the use of sharp tools such as scissors and being aware of others. Children are transported in age-appropriate restraints in the car. House rules about running and jumping are explained verbally.

The childminder safeguards children's welfare and has the required policies and documents in place. She has comprehensive contact details on file. The childminder has completed some additional training on child protection issues and shares information with parents. These measures assist her to ensure that the children's well-being is protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive and settle quickly in this friendly, relaxed family atmosphere where the childminder carefully prepares her home in readiness for the children. They make themselves at home, demonstrating a real sense of belonging. They relate well to the childminder and socialise with others through regular contact with other adults and children, for example, at the toddler club, the playgroup and childminder support meetings.

The childminder is highly attentive to the needs of the children and ensures they have a balanced programme of activities. She has an exceptionally competent understanding of child development rooted in her expert understanding of the National Standards and Foundation Stage guidance. She effectively uses her training in childcare and her constant commitment to update training to enhance and guide her practice. This supports the provision of flexible, high quality care tailored to each individual child's needs.

Children are supported in developing high levels of independence. They take an active part in their own play and learning. For example, children select from a wide variety of toys, books and activities which appeal to them. They decide when they have finished with a plaything and request alternative resources. Exceptional interaction by the childminder and excellent use of open-ended questioning enables the maintenance of interest and opportunities to challenge children in extending their knowledge. For example, whilst children play with small world figures, the childminder asks questions about the figures and special interests such as 'Star Wars' films. Equipment is then provided for the children to make models, for example, 'waffle' bricks to allow the construction of space ships.

The childminder uses the 'Birth to three matters' framework extensively to adapt activities to promote the younger children's learning. Development records have been set up based on the information in the framework. Despite repeated attempts to complete training, the childminder has not completed the birth to three module. However, this does not detract from her delivery of the framework to the under threes.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The childminder has a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage, having completed a course with the National Childminding Association. She continues to seek additional courses such as 'Providing quality creative play' to help her in her work. Primarily she uses one-to-one teaching sessions but involves all of the children in some of the activities. She plans interesting activities which she adapts to meet individual needs and interests. As a result, children are motivated, challenged and interested in learning. Children behave well and respect each other. Monitoring records are in place which provides information to help children move on to the next stage of learning.

Children handle books confidently and access a large range to interest and amuse them. They develop an awareness of letter recognition and successfully form letters and write their names. They have plentiful opportunities to mark-make due to the well-organised craft materials that are used to good effect. They access writing media and paper at their leisure and are gaining confidence in forming recognisable letters as they label their own artwork. Examples of letter writing are in their folders.

Children have frequent opportunities to count and to problem-solve in practical situations. They learn about number, size, and measurement as they play games and participate in cooking activities which involves weighing the quantities of ingredients. Children are learning about shapes by using the computer, paints, books and three-dimensional building blocks. They develop an awareness and respect for others as they learn about different religions and faiths through the celebration of cultural festivals. They have contact with the local community police officers, the vets and have been on a bug hunt with help from park rangers.

Children are developing their physical agility as they exercise their bodies climbing up and over apparatus, running and jumping as they play. Work is being done to expand the children's awareness of the effects of exercise on their growth and general development. They use a range of tools to enhance their fine muscle movements such as scissors to cut, pencils, pens and paintbrushes.

Overall, activities are well thought out and executed in a purposeful manner. The childminder is skilled at delivering a curriculum due to her growing confidence and knowledge of the Foundation Stage guidance. Children are making progress in all areas of learning. This is recorded in photographs, personal folders and examples of their work which link to the stepping stones.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have a strong awareness and understanding of others because the childminder actively provides opportunities for them to mix and play with resources reflecting diversity. For example, the childminder takes the children out to activity centres and walks around the village, meeting people in the community. She strives to keep her service accessible to all. She provides a good range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world. She makes full use of a toy library to supplement her equipment and provide increased variety and range, for example, dual language books. This means that children access unique equipment from specialised sources to enhance their learning. They establish a strong understanding of their local community as they travel to and from school, visit friends and go on walks.

The childminder has completed training on the needs of children who need additional support. She has a comprehensive policy in place and a good awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act. All children are valued and respected as individuals and are fully included in all activities.

Children are very confident individuals. They have positive levels of self-esteem and respect the opinions and actions of others because the childminder consistently praises their efforts. She reaffirms their achievements, guiding their social and moral values. Children's behaviour is very good. They are polite and wait their turn in conversations. Children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development is fostered.

The childminder effectively meets children's needs through the daily routine which is discussed with their parents. Parents are given regular verbal feedback regarding daily activities. They have access to a good range of policies and procedures, however, the complaints procedure is not in line with current guidelines. Younger children have their own individual record books based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The childminder understands the importance of establishing good working relationships with parents.

Partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded education is good. The childminder has comprehensive written policies and procedures that are shared with parents. The childminder ensures that daily discussion about the service provided, keeps parents informed about the activities on offer each session. This ensures that parents are aware of their child's progress on a day-to-day basis. However, parents do not receive regular written assessments about their child's learning enabling them to have more involvement with their work. Parents have expressed their satisfaction to the childminder in written feedback sheets.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder is an established carer with four years experience as a childminder. She is a qualified nursery nurse who has a professional approach to her childminding practice. She uses detailed written policies and procedures effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. The childminder has completed additional training since registering and continues to look for courses to further her knowledge.

Children feel at home and are at ease within this well-organised environment. They participate in the activities with eagerness and initiate their own play. The days are organised around the children's needs and plans are in place for all of the children to ensure they participate in a range of activities and experiences. The childminder offers very good quality play opportunities which are rooted in her knowledge of childcare and development.

The childminder is committed to maintaining relevant and up-to-date knowledge of child care practice and legislative guidance. She uses training courses and childcare literature obtained from the National Childminding Network. The daily register reflects the times of arrival and departure of the children accurately and therefore it is possible to pinpoint the whereabouts of children on any given day. Comprehensive planning of the daily routine is monitored and adapted to keep children safe and to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development.

Overall, the children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder was required to obtain updated information of child protection procedures. She has now acquired the 'Lilac' book from the local authority, gathered additional information booklets and completed a safeguarding children course. These measures assist the childminder to protect the children in her care.

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.

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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 the complaints procedure reflects current guidelines.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- devise a strategy to ensure that parents receive regular written progress reports regarding their children's nursery education.

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