



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY308239
Inspection date	28 June 2006
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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.
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WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 2005. She lives with her three children, aged 8, 12 and 14 years, in a residential area on the outskirts of Chelmsford, Essex. The whole of the childminder's home is used for childminding and there is a secure area of her garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to provide care for six children at any one time, currently minding three children part-time. In addition, she cares for three children over eight part-time. The childminder drives to a school to take and collect children. She attends the local parent and toddler group and takes children to the park, local

common land, library, shops and local educational facilities. The family has a cat.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and of the Mid Essex, Chelmsford and Maldon Children Come First Network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about health and hygiene because the childminder is very interested in ensuring that they have a secure and purposeful knowledge when washing their hands. Children can observe a poster to remind them when they need to wash their hands, such as after playing outside or touching animals. The childminder ensures that pets do not pose a health risk to children. The childminder's written sickness policy is shared with parents to prevent the spread of infection, by ensuring that they know when to keep their unwell children at home. Children are appropriately cared for and made comfortable when unwell. The childminder holds a first aid qualification, although if children have an accident she may not be able to act in their best interests as she has not requested written parental permission to enable her to seek immediate emergency medical advice or treatment.

Children enjoy eating nutritious, balanced meals and snacks supplied by their parents or the childminder. The childminder guides children to eat the healthy options, such as fresh fruit. Some children bring packed lunches, to be stored in the fridge if they contain perishable items to prevent possible food poisoning. Children's individual dietary requirements are well understood to ensure that all meals and snacks are provided in accordance with parents' wishes and after taking children's dietary needs into account. Children are beginning to have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet, because the childminder talks to them about what they eat and why certain foods are good for them. She talks to them about how some foods and drinks will not be good for their teeth. Children do not become dehydrated as they can help themselves to their drinks at any time. Younger children are developing their physical independence, such as feeding themselves.

Children enjoy a wide variety of daily activities to enable them to experience physical activities and to develop their skills. The childminder plans a varied range of activities to enable them to develop their confidence and to challenge them on a selection of equipment. They regularly visit the park and local common land to play in the fresh air and to have opportunities to learn to climb, jump and balance when using a range of park equipment. Older children develop fine motor skills through the use of tools for cooking. Younger children are excited by their increasing mobility when the childminder ensures that they have clear space to try out their new skills, such as learning to walk with her support. They are allowed to rest and sleep according to their individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children can independently access resources and use a suitable range of safe toys and equipment to support their enjoyable activities. However, there is a limited range of play provision to challenge toddlers to reach their next stages of development. The childminder regularly cleans, checks and repairs equipment and toys to ensure that they remain safe for children's use.

Regular written risk assessments undertaken by the childminder help to safeguard children from potential hazards. They are able to play freely in a safe environment because the childminder considers their ages and identifies risks, such as by fitting a safety gate at the bottom of her stairs to prevent toddlers going upstairs unsupervised.

Children learn to keep themselves safe because the childminder gives priority to helping them to have a good knowledge about safety, both within her home environment and on outings. Children learn how they can keep themselves safe by practising the Green Cross Code when crossing roads. They learn about their own personal safety by regularly practising the written emergency evacuation procedures to ensure that they know what to do if the home smoke alarms sound. Older children have devised evacuation plans of their own homes, including all hazards to be considered. The childminder transports children in age appropriate car restraints in a vehicle with appropriate documentation.

Children are safeguarded by the childminder being aware of the need to ensure that they are only collected by authorised persons. They benefit from being cared for by a childminder who has attended training to acquire a sound awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse. The childminder has devised a written statement to enable her to act in children's best interests and their parents have acknowledged that they are fully aware of her child protection responsibilities. However, she has not obtained a copy of the Government publication, 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused', to fully increase her awareness of child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled in the childminder's care and home, where worthwhile activities allow them opportunities to play and learn. Young children acquire new knowledge and skills through the childminder talking to them, repeating words to develop their language. The childminder sings rhymes and familiar songs to support toddlers' exploration and enjoyment when learning about their bodies and the environment.

The childminder organises worthwhile activities to meet children's individual needs. They enjoy working with a range of creative materials, such as drawing and sticking, to help them to express their experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. Their achievements are regularly praised by the childminder to develop their confidence and to maintain their self-esteem.

Older children thoroughly enjoy using their imagination and initiative to make positive

relationships with each other, such as having their own 'club', where the 'members' devise passwords and create posters. Children show a great deal of interest in acquiring new knowledge and skills, such as hearing and repeating initial sounds. They know which letters represent some sounds, creating an alphabet scrap book. Children have many opportunities and first hand experiences to build on their natural curiosity as learners, because the childminder takes them to the local common land where they have 'scavenger' hunts looking for specific items such as feathers and leaves.

Younger children are cared for according to their individual needs and stages of development because the childminder is beginning to understand and implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They are becoming confident learners because the childminder supports them in their play. She provides a range of toys to enable them to have opportunities to explore textures, shapes and sizes. They show curiosity and interest in the opening and closing of doors in cubes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. Their needs are well met as their normal daily routines are discussed with parents and followed by the childminder. They have a sense of belonging as the childminder makes them feel very welcome in an environment enhanced by a wall display of their artwork. Resources and a varied range of books reflect diversity in a positive way and the childminder talks to children about people's similarities and differences to help them understand equal opportunities issues, such as different religious beliefs.

Children are able to feel a good sense of belonging, working harmoniously with others, while making choices and decisions. Older children understand the 'house rules' and their self-confidence is encouraged and fostered by the childminder having clear and consistent expectations and trust in their abilities. The childminder responds to their achievements in a positive way to increase their self-confidence, while reinforcing their desirable behaviour by plenty of praise.

Children benefit from the childminder building friendly and helpful relationships with parents, who are kept informed of experiences and progress through daily discussions. A parent confirmed that he was very happy with the care provided. Children's welfare and developmental well-being are promoted through the childminder's written policies and procedures being shared with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children feel at home and enjoy the space to move freely between rooms. The childminder plans and organises many interesting activities by ensuring that resources are freely available to children to support their different learning opportunities. She organises her time to ensure that she spends all her working day

completely involved with the children, who all evidently enjoy each other's company and their time together. She balances activities extremely carefully to ensure that children have some time to play independently as well as undertaking activities requiring more of her support and encouragement.

The required confidential records are maintained to support the welfare, care and development of the children and the safe management of the provision. Information about children's progress and well-being is shared with parents to ensure that they are fully informed and can contribute to the continuity of their children's care. Children benefit from the childminder attending training courses to support her care practice, such as the Introduction to Childminding Practice, First Aid and Child Protection.

The childminder welcomes the support she receives from outside professionals and is committed to attend further training to keep abreast of child care trends for the benefit of children.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints to Ofsted since registration.

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

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The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.
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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):

- obtain written parental permission for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment

- develop further the range of toys and play materials to challenge toddlers to reach their next stages of development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk