

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY361787
Inspection date	31 July 2008
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 2007. She lives with her three children, aged one, five and eight years, in a residential area of Canvey Island, 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 four children at any one time and is currently minding two under fives. In addition, she minds two children over eight years during the school holidays. The childminder walks or drives to the local school and pre-school to take and collect children. She takes children to the park and beach.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and of the Castle Point and Rochford Children Come First Network. She holds a Cache level 2 certificate in Pre-school Practice.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children understand simple health and hygiene procedures through the childminder ensuring that they learn to wash their hands before eating food and after using the toilet. They are protected by a childminder holding a first aid qualification, enabling her to act in their best interests if they are ill or have an accident. However, if children have a serious accident, she may not be able to act in their best interests as she has not obtained some parental written agreements to enable her to seek immediate emergency medical advice or treatment. 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 enjoy eating balanced snacks and meals supplied by the childminder, who gathers information from parents about any allergies or dietary requirements to ensure that she effectively meets children's individual needs. Children are developing a sound awareness of healthy eating through the childminder talking to them about why fruit and vegetables are good for them. They know that it is a treat when they have an ice-cream. They are offered frequent drinks to ensure that they do not become dehydrated.

Children enjoy a varied range of activities contributing to the promotion of their good health. They go on trips to the local park and beach or play in the garden to enjoy the physical freedom of environments contributing to a healthy lifestyle. They are developing confidence when enjoying moving their bodies in various ways, for example, when digging on the beach or when facing the challenges of park equipment. Children know that they can quietly watch the television if they need to rest.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are able to self-select activities from a varied range of toys and equipment meeting required safety standards and their developmental needs. Toys and equipment are generally kept in the dining room to enable children to independently access resources appropriate for their individual needs. The childminder regularly cleans, checks and repairs equipment and toys to ensure that they remain safe for children's use.

Children are able to play freely in a generally safe environment, because the childminder considers their ages when being vigilant in identifying risks, such as ensuring that the kitchen cupboard containing hazardous materials remains locked. However, insufficient steps have been taken to minimise all potential hazards when children are moving around the home, for example, leaving uncovered low-level electrical sockets and loose bricks in the garden.

Children have a good understanding how they can keep themselves safe through their childminder encouraging them to learn about safety, both within her home and on outings. They learn that they must use the Green Cross Code when crossing roads. They also learn about fire safety through their childminder practising her emergency evacuation plans with them to ensure that they know the required procedures when her smoke alarms sound. They understand that they must wear seat belts for their protection when being transported in the childminder's vehicle. The vehicle is appropriately maintained and insured, but not all parents have given their written permission for their children to be taken in the vehicle or on outings.

The childminder has a sound understanding of her child protection responsibilities and is aware of the need to safeguard children by ensuring that they are only collected by authorised persons. She shares a written statement of her role with parents to ensure that they understand her responsibility to record and report any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and have developed warm caring relationships with their childminder, who provides many worthwhile activities and opportunities to play and learn independently. They are able to make decisions about their play and learning by freely choosing from a varied range of active or relaxing activities.

Children enjoy working with a varied range of creative materials, such as tissue paper and glue, to help them to use initiative and to express their experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. They are learning new knowledge and skills, for example, when learning how to catch crabs on their trips to the beach. They are learning through their experiences, because the childminder asks them questions about what they are doing, listening to what they say, to find out what they know, for example, establishing if they knew who was wearing red. They exercise imagination when using a variety of construction toys to create vehicles.

Children make positive relationships with each other, for example, when older children help the younger ones to play card games. Children's achievements are regularly praised by the childminder to develop their confidence and to maintain their self-esteem. The childminder is beginning to undertake written observations to enable her to plan for children's next steps of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and their families are welcomed, treated with respect and made to feel part of the childminder's home and family. Their individual needs are met through the childminder consulting with their parents about the need for any special services or equipment. Children have a sense of belonging through having low-level coat pegs on which to hang their coats. They are able to make choices and to take decisions, for example, when deciding the fillings for their sandwiches.

Children appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences through the provision of some resources, for example, small world play figures reflecting positive images of people's disabilities. They also play card games during which they have to create people wearing their cultural dress. They are learning about their own culture, for example, when making Easter baskets. They are becoming more aware of their own needs and of the needs of others by developing social skills, such as taking turns when selecting both indoor and outdoor play provision.

Children are beginning to understand the 'house rules' and their self-confidence is being encouraged and fostered by the childminder having consistent expectations and trust in their abilities. She 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's trusting partnerships with parents and carers, who are made welcome and kept informed of their children's experiences through a daily exchange of information. The childminder keeps a written daily diary for the children in her care all day, while keeping scrap books with photographic evidence for the children attending full time school or pre-school. She shares her written policies and procedures to ensure that parents and carers are aware of her role and responsibilities and that she is meeting their individual children's needs. Personal details are maintained for each child, although the childminder has not obtained some written parental consents setting out the expectations of all parties to enable her to act in children's best interests.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are protected from adults who have not been vetted by the childminder ensuring that they are always within her sight. She organises her day around school and pre-school runs, while giving children opportunities to experience a range of both inside and outside activities. They are made to feel at home by the childminder encouraging them to develop their independence and to enjoy the space to move freely between rooms and the garden.

The childminder has attended a range of training courses to develop and support her childminding practices. The required policies and satisfactory procedures are in place to ensure children's health, safety and well-being. Records are maintained, but she has not obtained some required parental consents to enable her to act in children's best interests.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration, 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):

- take reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children on the premises, both inside and outside, are minimised (this refers to lower level electrical sockets and the garden)
- obtain written agreements from parents setting out the expectations of both parties as to the care of the child and activities provided (this refers to permission for taking children on outings and in a vehicle and 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