



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	202229
Inspection date	15 March 2006
Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
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 was registered in 1990. She lives with her husband and two adult children. They live in a house in a residential area within walking distance of schools, shops and the railway station in South Woodham Ferrers. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time and is currently minding a total of 17 children, who attend part-time. She cares for 8 children aged under 5 years during the day, 6 children aged between 5 and 8 years after school and 3 children aged over 8 years. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children.

The family has no pets.

The childminder runs a local carer and toddler group and meets with other childminders on a regular basis. She is a member of the National Childminding Association. The childminder is a member of an approved childminding network and is currently in receipt of funding for nursery education for four three-year-old children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well nourished. They bring packed lunches, which they eat within a social group. Balanced, freshly-cooked evening meals are provided by the childminder. She ensures that all food is hygienically stored, prepared, cooked and served. Children are encouraged to eat a variety of vegetables and fruit. Drinks are freely available throughout the day so that children do not become thirsty or dehydrated.

Children's health needs are very well supported because the childminder is fully aware of their individual needs. They are protected because she keeps information about communicable childhood illnesses on file for easy reference. Any minor accidents can be dealt with in an approved way because the childminder holds a current first aid certificate. Accident and medication records are in place and well maintained. Children are starting to learn about good health and hygiene procedures by ensuring that they wash their hands regularly. However, this is not always consistent and children could sometimes be at risk of cross-infection.

Children have access to an exciting range of physical activities which contributes to their good health. They enjoy the fresh air and go for walks each day to collect children from school. Children develop their physical skills by balancing and climbing on large apparatus such as a slide, trampoline and see-saw when they meet at toddler groups. They have opportunities to ride on tricycles and sit and ride toys. Good use is made of local outdoor parks and playgrounds and indoor soft play facilities at Marsh Farm and Creepy Crawlies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are able to move around the childminder's home safely and freely because a very high regard has been given to minimising any risks to their safety. They are cared for in a warm, clean and very well maintained environment. The play room is made extremely welcoming with photographs, posters and examples of the children's artwork. Good use is made of safety items such as stair gates to protect children and there is a well thought out evacuation procedure. Children know the emergency escape plan and they discuss potential hazards, for example, they know that they must not play with candles.

Children learn to keep themselves safe whilst out walking. They are encouraged to follow road safety instructions and learn about hazards in the environment. During organised outings they learn about the importance of wearing a cycle helmet. Emergency contingency arrangements are in place. The childminder always carries emergency contact numbers and there are clear procedures to follow in the event of a parent failing to collect a child or if a child goes missing.

Children use an excellent range of good quality toys and play materials. All equipment is checked regularly to ensure that it is safe and clean for children to use. Children are very carefully supervised at all times. They use tools such as scissors and play dough utensils carefully and in safety.

Children are safeguarded as the childminder has a very good understanding of child protection issues and is clear about her responsibilities to protect them from harm. She has attended relevant training and has obtained information with regard to the appropriate action to take if she has a concern. The childminder informs parents of her role in protecting children, reassuring them of their child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy and have great fun as they play and learn. They benefit greatly from the childminder's excellent knowledge and understanding of child development. Children have plenty of opportunities to use their own initiative when selecting toys and play materials. They learn new skills and acquire knowledge through taking part in an extensive range of activities and projects linked to themes.

Children enjoy excellent relationships with the childminder and each other. Their interaction is stimulating and the childminder uses effective questioning and listening skills to develop language and vocabulary. Plenty of praise and encouragement is given to acknowledge children's good attempts and accomplishments. This raises confidence and self-esteem and children show a great pride in their work. The childminder adapts her activities for children of all ages. She has attended training linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework so that she can effectively support and offer challenge to the younger children in her care.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The childminder has a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. The written short-term planning for focussed activities is excellent and provides very imaginative and innovative learning experiences for children. The learning environment is stimulating with interactive displays linked to projects and themes. Children can make choices and take decisions as they select resources. A good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities are offered. However, the childminder has not yet devised a long-term plan to evidence how she covers all aspects of each area of learning within her provision for nursery education.

An excellent range of outings are organised to enhance children's learning. Children visit the hairdresser's salon and when learning about people who help us, they find out what happens when you post a letter by visiting the post sorting office. Good use is made of local venues such as Marsh Farm and Tropical Wings to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the natural world.

Children's investigative and exploratory skills are used well as they observe what happens when chocolate melts. They feed the birds during the winter and practise technology skills using toy

computers and electronic games. Children keep busy and concentrate on their activities. They carefully practise pencil control by tracing pictures and write their names independently on their work. There are plenty of opportunities for children to demonstrate their creative skills by making greetings cards for Mother's Day and Easter and by sticking collages. However, the childminder does not yet evaluate the curriculum she provides and as a result there are missed opportunities within the daily routine to maximise children's learning. Children are not given the opportunity to pour their own drinks and resources are not always provided for children to practise emergent writing in role play, for example, by writing messages when using the telephone.

Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. The childminder observes and records the children's progress and achievements but is not yet using her observations to plan the next steps for each child's play, learning and development. The childminder uses photographs to record what children are doing and makes positive comments about their learning experiences. She shares this information with parents and also uses it to help children remember experiences and events.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very confident and have settled well into the family environment. They are valued as individuals and their needs are skilfully and sensitively supported by the childminder. Systems are in place to support children with additional needs because the childminder gives regard to the Code of Practice (2001) for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

Children behave generally well. They are aware of the house rules and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Children learn social skills such as sharing and turn taking and the childminder provides a positive role model with her calm and polite approach.

Children develop self-esteem and respect for others. They become aware of wider society by investigating and playing with an excellent range of artefacts and play materials that show positive images of diversity. Cultural festivals and traditions from around the world are celebrated. For example, children dress-up and take part in a dragon dance at the Chinese New Year. They taste food from India and create artwork linked to Diwali. Books are used so that children can explore the similarities and differences between themselves and others. Children learn to care for each other. They take part in charity events, for example, by contributing items for Christmas boxes for less fortunate children.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the friendly and helpful relationships. The parents are aware that they can see their child's records at any time. They are given wonderful scrapbooks with observations, photos and examples of artwork. Parents help the childminder by sourcing artefacts and items linked to themes and projects when they travel abroad on holiday. Verbal feedback is given each day and photographs of the activities are displayed in the playroom. Parents make very complementary comments in the thank you cards the childminder keeps on file. The childminder has already identified a need to update her prospectus and policies. Parents of funded children do not currently receive any information about the curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to help them become more involved

in their child's learning in meaningful ways. The childminder has not yet devised a method of recording complaints to meet the changes made to the National Standards in October 2005.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children play in a well organised environment where they can be active, rest and eat in comfort. Resources are within reach of children and are arranged so that they can access and choose toys and activities that are appropriate to their age, interest and ability. They are cared for by an experienced childminder that has achieved the Certificate in Childminding Practice. She also attends short courses and researches from childcare publications to keep up to date with current issues and trends. The daily routine is efficiently organised around taking children to and from school. The childminder has expressed an interest in her husband becoming an assistant.

All the essential documentation is in place to ensure that the childminding provision runs safely and efficiently. Paperwork is stored with a high regard for confidentiality. Contracts and consent forms are up to date. The childminder's good practice is underpinned by basic written policies and procedures that are shared with children's parents. She is committed to the improvement of nursery education and works closely with her network childminding development worker.

Overall the range of children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection one recommendation was made. The childminder now carries with her at all times, parental permission to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment. This improvement enhances the health and welfare of the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004.

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):

- devise a method of recording complaints, which can be shared with parents.

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):

- evaluate and develop the planning cycle to maximise children's learning. Consider how the daily routine and everyday resources can be used to enhance the learning opportunities and ensure that each child's next steps are identified and used to guide future planning
- continue to develop the partnership with parents by providing them with more information about the provision for nursery education and the Curriculum for the Foundation Stage so that they can become more involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways.

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