



## Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	402407
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 May 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Anne Daly
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since 1997 and works with two registered assistants. She lives with her husband and two children, aged four and eight years, in a residential area of Chelmsford, 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 five children at any one time and is currently minding three children aged under five years and two children aged over five years, part-time. In addition, she minds four children over eight years of age, all part-time. The childminder drives to the local nursery and school to take and collect children. She regularly attends the local childminders' and parent, carers and toddlers' groups with children. She takes children to the park, the shops, the library and local educational facilities. The family has a cat.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association. She is a member of an approved childminding network and is currently in receipt of funding for nursery education for three and four-year-olds.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children learn about health and hygiene, because the childminder has a secure knowledge of appropriate procedures. They are encouraged to be independent in their personal care and when using the toilet and have a good understanding of the need to wash their hands after using the toilet, because they know that their hands carry germs. Children are protected from the spread of infection by the childminder's simple written sickness policy being shared with parents, to ensure that they know when to keep their unwell children at home. They are fully protected as the childminder holds a first aid qualification and is able to act in their best interests if they are ill or have an accident as parents have given their written permission for her to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment. The childminder ensures that pets do not pose a health risk to children.

Children enjoy eating nutritious, balanced meals and snacks supplied by their parents or the childminder. Some children bring packed lunches, to be stored in the fridge if they contain perishable items. Children's individual dietary requirements are well understood and 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 and others bad for them. Children do not become dehydrated as they can help themselves to their drinks at any time.

Children have good opportunities to extend their physical development when playing indoors or in the garden. They can move freely between inside and garden, safely negotiating space for themselves when pushing their prams and riding their small sit-on toys. Children develop fine motor skills through the use of tools for cooking, while a range of manipulative toys help them to develop their hand to eye co-ordination. Younger children are developing their physical and emotional independence, acquiring control over their bodies, while learning new physical skills, when using chunky crayons.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are able to self-select activities from a wide range of good quality toys and equipment meeting required safety standards and their developmental needs. Toys are in clearly labelled boxes to enable children to have free access to choose their play activities. The conservatory is set out with different types of activities 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.

Daily visual risk assessments undertaken by the childminder help to safeguard children. They are cared for in a safe and secure home, because the main entrance door is locked, cannot be opened by children and all visitors are screened before entry, to protect children. Stair gates prevent younger children accessing the kitchen or stairs unsupervised. The garden is securely fenced and checked for hazards before use.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe, because the childminder encourages them to learn about safety, both within her home and on outings. They know to use the Green Cross Code before crossing the road. The childminder transports them in age-appropriate car restraints in a vehicle with appropriate documentation. Children learn about their own personal safety by occasionally practising emergency evacuation procedures to ensure that they know what to do if smoke alarms sound.

Children benefit from being cared for by a childminder who has attended training to acquire a wide knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse. The childminder shares her written child protection statement with parents and she explains her responsibility to them prior to their children attending. All relevant contact numbers are kept on file and the childminder is confident about taking forward any concerns.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for according to their individual needs and stages of development. The childminder is beginning to understand and implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children aged under three years are becoming confident learners, because the childminder supports them well in their play. They are becoming more skilful communicators as the childminder encourages their language skills and provides many opportunities for them to play and chat together. Younger children are acquiring social confidence and competence by the childminder providing many beneficial opportunities to mix with their peers at toddler groups. There is a plentiful supply of toys and equipment for children of all ages. School aged children enjoy a stimulating and balanced programme of activities, which they can help to decide. These activities include computer use, board games, arts and crafts activities and popular outdoor pursuits. The lively and friendly interaction is encouraged by the childminder and her assistants spending time joining in with children's activities.

The caring childminder shows an interest in what children are doing and saying, such as spending time with young children completing a puzzle. Children participate in a variety of creative activities and show pride in their achievements. They enjoy singing and are building a wide repertoire of nursery rhymes and are confident to sing to an audience without help.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The childminder is developing her knowledge of the Foundation Stage by gradually incorporating the stepping stones into her weekly planning to help children to make progress towards the early learning goals. She has mind maps for the whole year to ensure that she provides a varied range of activities linked to all areas of learning. Children are acquiring new knowledge and skills by completing tasks linked to themes and

topics. They are allowed to learn at their own pace by the childminder providing a balance between adult and child-led activities. Children are making satisfactory progress in all six areas of learning, of which the childminder has a sound understanding. However, her plans do not always include the learning intention of the activity. The childminder is beginning to record children's achievements to plan for their next steps, but such planning does not include the expectations of the learning outcome to challenge and support children to achieve.

Children confidently communicate with the childminder, visitors and each other. Their behaviour is good and they have a good understanding of taking turns when using outdoor toys. Children regularly see their names written as they can self-register and write their names on their pictures. However, there are limited opportunities in the imaginary role play area to enable children to write every day things, such as a shopping list. Children are beginning to recognise letters and to link them to make simple words.

Children count during every day activities, but the childminder misses opportunities to introduce them to simple calculation, such as addition and subtraction. Children recognise different shapes, such as squares, circles and rectangles. They solve problems across a range of practical activities, such as games and puzzles.

A good range of outings is organised to enhance children's learning. They explore through first hand experiences in a variety of interesting environments, such as the farm and zoo. They develop their understanding of the wider world through milking a cow and watching sheep being sheared. Children know what to wear in all types of weather and can recall stories about a monkey who lived in the rain forest.

Children enjoy cooking sessions to make edible gingerbread biscuits. They weigh and mix ingredients, observing the changes, before kneading the malleable dough. They learn to care for living things as they plant and grow cress heads. Children can choose from a varied range of small world play, including vehicles on a road layout and a doll's house with furniture and figures.

Inquisitive children take pleasure in developing their creative skills when making and flying kites. They thoroughly enjoy painting pasta shapes and developing fine motor skills when threading them to make a bracelet. Children particularly enjoy using tools for a purpose, such as scissors for cutting out pictures of transport for glueing in the different categories of sea, air, rail and road.

Children are making progress towards the early learning goals and the childminder is observing and beginning to record their achievements. However, she is not yet using these observations to plan for children's next steps in learning.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. They have a strong sense of belonging as the childminder makes them feel very welcome, which develops good self-esteem and confidence. They have a special space to hang their coats and their work is displayed on a wall. Children

learn about the wider world as they celebrate festivals, such as the Chinese New Year. Bilingual children are frequently encouraged to speak in both languages and the childminder praises them in both languages to develop their confidence. Dolls, toys and resources 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.

The childminder, parents and carers work together to share information to ensure that children's individual needs are well met. The childminder is developing her knowledge and understanding of the Code of Practice to enable her to support children with special needs.

Children are settled and secure at the childminder's home, with their good behaviour reflecting how confident and happy they feel. Their self-confidence is encouraged and fostered by the childminder having clear and consistent expectations and trust in their abilities. Their desirable behaviour is encouraged by the childminder giving plenty of praise and by responding positively to their good behaviour.

Children benefit from the childminder building friendly and helpful relationships with parents, who are kept informed of experiences and progress through informative daily diaries or verbal discussions. The childminder receives letters, cards and e-mails from parents expressing their appreciation and thanking her for her flexible and individually tailored childcare arrangements. Children benefit from their parents and carers receiving a prospectus detailing policies and procedures, although the written complaints procedure requires review to ensure that they are fully informed how to make a complaint to Ofsted.

The partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is satisfactory.

Parents and carers of funded children receive weekly information about their child's learning to enable them to be involved in their education and to discuss their achievements with them. The childminder is developing children's developmental records to share with parents. The three and four-year-olds' records contain satisfactory observations, weekly photographs and examples of their work to show progress and achievements.

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

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The childminder is aware of the need to inform Ofsted of changes or registration matters. She has attended all necessary training and keeps up to date with trends and developments by attending day courses and by reading specialist journals for information and ideas for activities.

Her current registration certificate is displayed in the entrance hall for perusal by parents. Children are kept safe and their parents reassured by all adults living or working on the premises being checked for suitability. Attendance registers are accurately maintained for children, but do not accurately reflect the times when her assistants are caring for them. The childminder is aware of the need to keep detailed paperwork and documentation to support the care and

welfare of the children. All records, consents and personal details are available and are regularly updated to ensure current information is stored confidentially in individual files.

The childminder organises her time to ensure that she spends most of her working day completely involved with the children, who all evidently enjoy each other's company and their time together. Her day is organised to give children the opportunity to experience a range of both inside and outside activities. They benefit from her assistants' offering additional support to both her and the children after school, for example frequently joining in with their play and activities while the childminder prepares their meals.

The childminder welcomes the support she receives from outside professionals and regularly meets another funded childminder when offering nursery education sessions. She is committed to improving nursery education by working closely with her network childminder development worker and by attending further training.

Overall, children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection, the childminder has improved children's safety by removing the ignition knob for the gas fire to prevent it being ignited by children.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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 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 satisfactory.

### **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):

- maintain an accurate attendance register, including the names of the persons looking after children, and review policies and procedures to ensure that they meet the revised National Standards and associated guidance.

## **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):

- continue to develop planning and assessment systems to ensure the effective implementation of the stepping stones, including clear learning intentions, in short term planning
- increase opportunities for children to use writing for a purpose and to develop calculation skills.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)