



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	202163
Inspection date	08 August 2006
Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 1993. She lives with her husband and two children aged 14 and 16 years. They live in a house in a residential area within walking distance of schools and shops on the outskirts of Billericay. All areas of the childminder's house are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding four children aged between four and eight years and four children aged over eight years, before and after school and during the holidays. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The family has no pets.

The childminder takes children on outings to the local parks. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive because they follow good hygiene procedures. They know to wash their hands prior to eating and after using the toilet as they know that this will remove germs. Food preparation areas are kept scrupulously clean. Children are protected from the risk of infection because the childminder has a written policy that covers the care of children who are unwell and includes exclusion periods and infectious illnesses. The childminder can deal with minor accidents because she holds a current first aid certificate. Appropriate records are kept regarding any accidents and when medication is administered. However, the childminder may not always be able to act in the children's best interests in the event of an emergency because her consent agreements do not cover all eventualities.

Children are well-nourished. They enjoy nutritious home-cooked meals and are encouraged to make healthy choices such as eating fruit for snacks. Drinks are freely available so that children do not become thirsty or dehydrated during very hot weather. The childminder is extremely well aware of any allergies or special dietary requirements and has had Epi-pen training to meet individual children's needs.

Children have opportunities for fresh air and exercise each day, which contributes to a healthy lifestyle. They play in the garden and during the holidays they have regular outings to various parks in the area. This gives them the opportunity to develop coordination and climbing and balancing skills. Children are protected in very hot weather when they play outside. They wear sun hats and a high factor sun lotion is applied.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very clean, safe and comfortable environment. The childminder carefully identifies and minimises any potential risks to children within the premises. Smoke alarms are tested each month. Children learn to keep themselves safe. They learn how to evacuate the premises in an emergency because they practise fire drills. Children know that they need to wear seat belts in the car. Well-established routines ensure that children learn about road safety. Each child has a 'walking home buddy' on the journey home from school. The older children partner the younger children so that they develop a sensible awareness of good road sense. Children are kept safe on outings. Consent is obtained from parents and all children are closely supervised by the childminder.

Children play with safe and suitable toys and play equipment. Children learn to use tools such as scissors carefully and in safety. All toys are checked regularly for cleanliness and breakages.

Children are safeguarded because the childminder is well aware of her child protection responsibilities. She has developed her knowledge of child protection through training and by reading the recommended literature. There is a written child protection policy and the childminder knows the procedures if she has concerns about a child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a broad range of planned and spontaneous activities in a welcoming environment. Interaction between the childminder and children is good. Effective use is made of carefully formed questions to make children think. Language development is promoted as children are encouraged to talk through their tasks and explain what they are doing.

Children acquire knowledge and skills as they bake cakes or bread or help to make the play dough. They take pleasure in helping with the gardening and watering the plants. Children relish taking part in art and craft activities. The childminder provides the materials and the children use their own ideas to design and create individual pieces of work. Children link the sounds of the letters of the alphabet as they spell out the names of siblings. They enjoy challenge and practice counting and calculation skills as they play with board games.

Children enjoy a range of interesting outings. Good use is made of local venues to extend children's learning and play experiences. They go on trips to Thorndon Park, Lake Meadows and Watt Tyler Park to learn about the local environment and the natural world.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and feel at home in the family environment. Their behaviour is exemplary. They are polite towards each other and always share toys and take turns, for example, as they play with electronic games. The childminder has a very clearly written behaviour management policy, which includes information about how she would deal with bullying. She has an equal opportunities policy and values and respects each individual child. Children learn about the wider world as they play with toys and look at books with positive images of diversity. The childminder is well aware that some children may have additional or special needs and knows the information she would need to gather to provide the best possible care. She offers support for children who speak English as an additional language and they enjoy teaching both the childminder and other children their own language.

Children benefit from the very friendly partnership with parents. The childminder offers flexible care to meet the parents varying working arrangements. She has now requested that she can offer overnight care and this has been agreed. Parents are very complementary about the care she provides. The childminder has a written complaints policy and is now aware of the need to keep a record of complaints that she can share with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are secure and confident as the childminder has a well-organised routine. Play space and resources are arranged to meet the children's needs effectively. Children are cared for by a motivated childminder who regularly attends training to keep up to date with current childcare issues and trends. Her sound understanding of children's development ensures that they are all well supported and protected.

All documentation is well-organised with a high regard for confidentiality. The childminder has written short policies and procedures to cover all aspects of her practice. This ensures the efficient and safe management of the provision.

Overall the range of children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to improve fire safety precautions by making a fire blanket accessible, make sure that the low-level glass panels are safe and keep an accurate record of school children's attendance. Children's safety has been enhanced because there is now a fire blanket within easy reach in the kitchen, the childminder has written evidence that the low-level glazing in her doors is safety glass and she now maintains an accurate record of all children's attendance.

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.

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.

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):

- review the consent agreements 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