



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY330637
Inspection date	25 October 2006
Inspector	Nicola Mary Eileen Matthews
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 2006. She lives with her husband and four children aged nine and the twins who are 12 years old and one adult child, in Sible Hedingham, Essex. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently minding four children under five on a part-time basis and two children over five after school. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local parent and toddler group. The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The family have a gerbil as a family pet. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted very well and cross infection minimised as the childminder follows good health and hygiene practices. They learn the importance of washing their hands before meals and after toileting by close supervision of the childminder. Children are cared for in a clean home where they are protected from infectious illness because there is a sick children's policy in place which is effectively shared with the parents. Their minor medical emergencies are cared for well as the childminder uses her knowledge of first aid and has obtained written permission from the parents to seek further advice or treatment when necessary.

Children are well nourished and can access drinks throughout the day. Their parents provide most of the food and the childminder supplements this with some healthy snacks such as, mini rice cakes. Children are learning about healthy eating as they participate in activities like making fruit salad for lunch and taking some home for later on. Children's individual dietary needs are effectively met by discussing with the parents special requirements before being left in the childminder's care.

Children's emotional needs are appropriately supported. They have built up an effective secure relationship with the childminder and are very confident to be left in her care. Young children have their home routines acknowledged, such as sleeping and eating.

Children enjoy physical activities to develop their balance and coordination. They enjoy going to the local park and using the large apparatus which provides a challenge. Children experience fresh air as they walk to and from the school in the afternoons and regularly visit the local amenities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment where hazards are minimised and the childminder's own children understand the need for safety measures to be implemented effectively such as, closing the stair gate. Children are able to freely and independently move around the downstairs, which helps to build their self-esteem. They are cared for in a secure home where they cannot leave the premises unsupervised. They are learning to keep themselves safe when out walking and crossing the roads. They discuss the emergency evacuation procedure but, do not practise it which compromises their safety.

Children independently and safely access toys from the good range of quality resources which are clean and well maintained. Play resources are stored in boxes in the shed and a good selection is brought into the lounge daily. Children safely access the equipment that is suitable for their age and stage of development; for example the young are able to investigate the good range of books and the plastic construction bricks safely as they are in boxes on the floor. Children use some equipment borrowed from other childminders, in the area, to support their care needs such as a bouncy chair.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted as the childminder has a sound knowledge of child protection issues. She has the required documentation from the Local Safeguarding Children's Board to ensure she follows the correct referral procedures should there be concerns about a child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well and are confident to be left at the childminder's house. They show good levels of interest in the varied activities and range of toys made available. Children's independence is developing as they choose from a selection of toys, books and activities which appeal to them. They enjoy going for walks and collecting natural materials to take back to the childminders and use for collages. Children are supported in their learning well by the childminder who builds on their natural curiosity for example, wanting to look at the fish on a stall on Fridays.

Children enjoy a close relationship with the childminder as they snuggle up when looking at books and enjoy lifting the flaps to see what is underneath. Younger children babble confidently and use gestures to the childminder and her own children making their needs known such as, wanting a different book to look at and a rice cake to eat. Children are developing their early counting and number recognition skills through daily routines, for example, as they go for walks they are encouraged to look at the numbers on the doors and sing number rhymes and songs such as, 'five speckled frogs sitting on a speckled log'.

Children are learning right from wrong as they play alongside each other and are encouraged to share and take turns amicably. They are developing good awareness of simple social competencies such as, saying please and thank you.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. Their daily routines are recognised after discussion with the parents. Children build up a good relationship with the childminder early on which develops their confidence and sense of belonging. They are learning about their local community as they walk to and from school, visit the library, local shops and park. Younger children are taken to toddler group where they are learning to interact with others. Children are developing awareness of similarities and differences in others as they handle some play resources with that show positive images of a multicultural society. They are encouraged to listen to others, of a different faith, describing how they celebrate their festivals such as Diwali and children participate in activities associated with their own culture.

Children's behaviour is good as the childminder has a clear understanding of the appropriate strategies to use to help children understand right from wrong. They are encouraged to make choices in their play and contribute to their own personal needs fostering their self-esteem. Children who have a learning difficulty or disability benefit from the childminder's past experience of special needs when working in group day care.

Children's individual needs are well met through the good partnership developed between the childminder and parents who speak very highly of her. The parents are informed about the day the children have experienced by informal conversations and reading a daily planning diary. Parents receive good information about the childminder's service prior to contracts being signed through reading and signing up to some basic policies and attending several informal meetings. They sign contracts to ensure everybody's expectations are clear. The childminder gathers feedback about her service as she informally chats to the parents. However, if parents have a complaint it is not recorded following current legislation guidelines.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's needs are effectively met as the childminder organises her practice well and works in partnership with the parents. The childminder effectively uses the space and resources to promote children's overall development. Children are provided with a stimulating environment appropriate to their needs as the childminder effectively uses her previous experience and underpinning knowledge of childcare. Children's safety takes high priority both indoors and outdoors in the garden and when out walking. There are basic policies in place to ensure children's safety and enjoyment whilst with the childminder. The parents are given very clear information about the childminder's practice, policies and procedures during several meetings prior to contracts being signed. However, they are unable to see a complaints file upon request.

The standard of records is good. This ensures each child is treated as an individual. Children's personal details are recorded and confidentially stored in a lockable file box. The childminder is currently attending the required training to support her registration. The first aid certificate is in date which ensures medical emergencies are dealt with appropriately. 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 actions 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 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):

- ensure the emergency evacuation procedure is practised
- keep a record of complaints relating to the National Standards and any action taken.

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