



## Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY229583
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 January 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Janette Elaina Lockwood
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<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

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 2003. She lives with her husband and two children aged six and thirteen years in a house in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex. The whole of the house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The garden contains a raised pond by the patio.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding one child under five and two children over the age of eight years. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and attends the local toddler group.

The childminder is a member of an approved childminding network.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

The childminder provides a very clean and hygienic environment for children. She has regular cleaning routines which actively help minimise the spread of germs between children. For example, she uses anti-bacterial cleaner around the home and has separate changing mats for each child to reduce the chance of cross-infection.

In the colder weather, the childminder uses her own supply of hats, gloves and blankets for children to use when out walking or in the pushchair. She has developed a 'cold weather' policy and obtains an agreement from parents so that she can ensure that children are kept sufficiently warm.

The childminder has an up-to-date first aid certificate and follows her clearly written accident policy. All accident records are completed properly, including permission to seek emergency advice and treatment for children. The childminder also talks to parents about her sickness policy and asks them to collect their children if they are taken ill. She is aware of children's individual health needs through her detailed record forms so children are cared for properly if they are ill.

The childminder is a trained chef and having qualified to work in both a hospital and a health spa, has an excellent understanding of food and nutrition. She provides a sample menu for parents to show the range of healthy and nutritious foods she provides, for example, crudité's and healthy dips or home made soups. The childminder is highly able to meet the needs of children with food allergies in consultation with parents. Children learn about healthy eating as the childminder teaches them about food groups and older children are able to help plan a menu to be cooked for dinner, which is nutritionally balanced. As a result, children begin to appreciate the importance of a healthy diet and how food affects our bodies.

Children walk home from school every day benefiting from the fresh air. They have regular opportunities to run in the park and the woods, enjoying the sense of space. Younger children attend toddler groups up to three times a week, using the apparatus and equipment to help develop their large muscle skills. In addition, the wide range of accessible equipment in the childminder's home encourages children to develop their fine motor skills, for example, puzzles and small world figures. In all, children have varied and enjoyable opportunities to develop all their physical skills.

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

The provision is good.

The whole of the house is registered, but children mainly use the downstairs rooms for play. The front room is very well-organised with toys and equipment all at a low level for children to reach. There is a table where children have meals and snacks or use for table top activities such as drawing and games. The kitchen is currently being refitted and there are materials and equipment being stored in the lounge area which may be a possible hazard to children. There

is a fully enclosed garden for children to use when closely supervised as there is a large pond which is not fully covered or entirely fenced. The childminder has a condition on her registration regarding the pond and she accompanies children past the pond onto the safer lawn area.

The childminder provides plenty of good quality books on a low bookshelf for children to help themselves. Toys are organised into boxes which are rotated regularly providing a good range of equipment from which children can independently choose.

The childminder is proactive, taking positive steps to help keep children safe in her home, for example, fixing the bookcase to the wall so children can use it safely. She skilfully teaches children how to make themselves safer in the home, explaining the importance of keeping their play space clear and tidying up after themselves to prevent tripping.

Attending a fire safety course, carrying out regular fire drills and having a clear fire safety policy ensure that children are kept safe in the event of any emergency. On outings and daily walks, the childminder talks to children about road safety so they learn some ways in which they can help keep themselves safe.

Children are safeguarded because the childminder is very aware of her responsibilities regarding child protection. She has undertaken a basic child protection course and is booked to do an advanced course shortly to further increase her knowledge of procedures. The new child protection booklet is available and the childminder has a well-written policy helping her access the information quickly and respond to any concerns properly.

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

The provision is good.

The childminder skilfully uses children's own interests to inspire activities, for example, if they have a particular interest in an animated television character. She uses this as a starting point to increase children's motivation and talks to children frequently, increasing their language and conversation skills and helping to build strong relationships.

Using everyday routines as learning opportunities helps the children to learn about their environment and keep children's interest. As an example, children play observational games with the childminder on the way to and from school such as 'I spy' helping them to be vigilant and use their time effectively.

Children are given sensible choices throughout the day so they can begin to develop their own preferences and individual taste. These choices include how they want to spend their time or what they would like to eat encouraging children to build their sense of trust and belonging in the setting.

The childminder understands the importance of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, has attended a workshop and plans suitable activities for children using this as a reference. During her current training, she has started to look at planning activities which has helped her identify the learning and development for children in everything she provides. In turn, children benefit from what she learns as she begins to implement these ideas into her practice. Children enjoy

a wide range of activities, for example, cooking, imaginative games and free play, in addition, the childminder plans trips to the castle, the beach and the farm to help children learn about the wider world.

The childminder has attended a vast number of courses helping her improve the range of activities she provides, this includes the use of small world toys, learning about challenges for older children, facilitating education through music and using computers to learn through play. The childminder is keen to begin focused observations on children following her training, however, she currently notes down new things children say and do to show parents ensuring they are aware of their child's development.

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

The provision is good.

The childminder has a well-written policy detailing how she promotes equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice in her setting and has attended an equal opportunities training. Through her practice, children are encouraged to develop a sense of their own identity and to learn about cultures that are different from their own. In addition, the childminder skilfully helps children to show positive attitudes towards people who are different from themselves, through socialising with others and discussion. The good quality books and toys positively reflect people with disabilities and special needs, for example, play figures with their aids such as wheelchairs.

Experience of minding children with learning difficulties or disabilities has given the childminder a good understanding of caring for children with different needs. She is keen to undertake special needs training and already knows the importance of working with parents to make sure children have the best possible opportunities. As a proactive measure, the childminder has undertaken a Makaton course up to level four so she is ready to mind children with communication difficulties. She also helps her current minded children to understand some Makaton signs so they can communicate with others.

The childminder encourages a high standard of behaviour with children, taking account of the way they speak, show respect and consider one another. Children are given some responsibility for their own behaviour and are encouraged to play together in harmony, taking turns and appreciating other children's needs. The childminder has attended a course in promoting positive behaviour and gives children praise at every opportunity helping them build their self-esteem and repeat good behaviour. As a result, children behave very well.

Parents are very pleased with the care that the childminder provides and in written appreciation of her practice, comment that they know their children are "safe, fully cared for and happy". They are pleased with the range of activities their children are offered and reiterate that food is "healthy and nutritious". Parents describe the childminder using words such as 'excellent, approachable, flexible and trustworthy'.

The childminder keeps an informative diary of what the youngest child has done during the day and this is very detailed, giving parents opportunities to talk to their children about their day. She offers all parents the chance to have a home to setting diary and allows parents all

the time they need to talk to her about their child's day. This helps children to feel safe in the knowledge that there is consistency between their home and setting. In addition, she takes photographs throughout the year and gives parents a disc of the photographs so they have a record of everything their children have done.

The childminder is fully aware of the requirement to address complaints properly and in a timely manner, understanding the need to record any complaints to show how she has dealt with them in line with the Addendum to the National Standards.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder is highly committed towards her own personal development and is almost finished the Extending Childminding Practice course. She thrives on training and regularly attends courses to improve her practice in delivering activities to different groups of children so their individual care and learning needs are met by her quality service. The childminder plans to undertake a level three course in childminding in the future and also attends the National Childminding Association conferences with colleagues around the country giving her a wider insight to home childcare.

The childminder organises herself extremely well, using space, resources and time effectively to take account of the differing needs of the children. She cleverly uses her routines of taking and collecting children from school as further opportunities for interaction and learning for children. Time spent in the childminder's home offers children a very good balance of free play with effective support when needed, as well as interesting, planned activities to facilitate their individual development.

The childminder keeps a wealth of information about her childminding and childcare practice. This includes all her records which are very well kept, meeting the National Standards and providing good quality information. The childminder has all the necessary signed permission slips from parents including routine outings and emergency treatment, as well as devising some of her own to reflect her good practice and the needs of the children attending. She keeps abreast of any new childcare thinking and adds it to her existing well-devised policies and procedures. This ensures the care given to children is delivered in a professional manner. Overall, children's needs are met.

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

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to make sure the bathroom locks are safe or inaccessible to children and to address this, the locks were altered so they cannot be used by children.

The childminder agreed at the last inspection to obtain written permission from parents for outings, transporting children in a vehicle and for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. These are now available.

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

Since the last inspection 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 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):

- assess the risks to children in relation to the refitting of the kitchen and the storage of building materials in the lounge and take action to minimise these.

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)