



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203081
Inspection date	15 March 2007
Inspector	Anita Bartram
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

the time of the inspection there were no children in receipt of nursery education. Ofsted judges that the provider remains suitable to provide nursery education.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 1996. She lives with her partner and two children aged 19 and 14 years in Hatfield Peverel which is near Chelmsford, Essex. The whole of the premises 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 six children at any one time when working alone. When working with an assistant is registered to care for a maximum of eight children at any one time. The childminder is registered to offer overnight care for a maximum of two children. Overall, the childminder is currently minding 22 children. Eight of these are under five, seven are between five and eight years and six are over eight years old. The

childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends the local toddler groups. The family has two dogs, two cats, two tortoises and three rabbits.

The childminder currently supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities. She is a member of an approved childminding network although is currently not in receipt of funding for early education for three and four-year-olds. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder is a sound role model in helping children to follow simple basic hygiene routines. For example, all children willingly wash their hands before eating and know that they have their own flannel in their bag to wash their face after eating. The childminder covers babies' mouths when they cough whilst sitting on her lap and wipes their noses vigilantly. The family pets are generally kept away from the children whilst they play although there are opportunities for the children to play and care for the rabbits and dogs under close supervision from the childminder and assistant. As a result, children can play in a suitably clean and hygienic environment and are appropriately protected from cross-infection.

Children are adequately nourished. The childminder provides all snacks and meals for the children and parents of babies provide their own. The menu is usefully displayed on the wall for parents and children to see what they are having for their main meal each day. Meals are varied each day although the content is not always sufficient in offering fresh foods such as fruit and vegetables to the children. Children have a choice of squash to drink and water is not always readily accessible to them. Children ask for biscuits to eat at snack time although do enjoy fruit when offered to them. Overall, children are not always sufficiently encouraged to develop healthy eating and drinking choices in order to encourage healthy eating tastes and habits.

Children's emotional well-being is fully promoted. The childminder and assistant are warm and responsive to babies' and children's needs. For example, babies are rocked soothingly on the childminder's lap to comfort them as they become tired and fractious. Toddlers and children are spoken to warmly and given opportunities to talk about feelings. Overall, babies are generally able to sleep peacefully and without disturbance. All children thoroughly enjoy going outside in the garden or for walks to local amenities. The childminder aims to take the children outside in the fresh air daily. Toddlers talk excitedly about what they do in the garden and there is a plentiful array of large equipment outside for them to play with. Opportunities for funded children to practise and develop their hand eye coordination are suitable through the everyday mix of resources children play with. As a result, children's physical skills are developing appropriately.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are secure and safe on the premises. The childminder informally assesses for any potential risks on the premises and all hazards have been minimised. For example, sockets are covered, cleaning materials are stored out of reach and toys are stored safely. The main exit door is kept locked to prevent any children from leaving unsupervised. Whilst on outings the childminder keeps babies strapped in buggies, uses reins for young toddlers or encourages older children to hold the buggy or hands. The childminder talks to children about road safety as they walk to local amenities. Consequently, children are learning actively to keep themselves safe through the routines they are encouraged to follow.

The environment is welcoming to the children through the wide variety of toys readily available to them and the bright displays of their creative work on the walls and ceilings. Babies and children are not currently able to play in the lounge, which is used for sleeping babies or to store children's coats and bags. This restricts babies and children to playing only in the playroom and hallway which, although a suitable place to play, offers little soft furnishings or enough space to extend their play. Due to the childminder's working arrangements with an assistant, space is not always adequate for the number of children being cared for. As a result, the atmosphere sometimes feels confined and restricting.

Children are appropriately protected from non-accidental harm. The childminder and assistant have completed introductory training in child protection and as a result, have literature and knowledge to refer to about their roles and responsibilities. They are adequately aware of who to go to should they have concerns about a child. Consequently, measures are suitably in place to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at the childminder's house and are developing warm relationships both with the childminder and her assistant. As a result, they are confident and able to develop their self-esteem. The childminder effectively uses the 'Birth to three matters' framework to help her assess the stage of development babies and children under three have reached. However, information gained through assessment is not yet always used sufficiently by the childminder to plan activities to help under threes to move swiftly onto the next steps in their development.

The range of activities children are able to enjoy are worthwhile and offer a sound balance of outside experiences. Consequently, under threes can regularly enjoy the benefits of fresh air and can develop their understanding of the world around them through first hand experiences. For example, younger toddlers and babies are taken for walks to local shops and amenities where they can appreciate nature or experience home from home activities such as shopping.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are currently no children in receipt of funding on roll. However, the childminder has a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and has begun to devise general planning ready to accommodate children's learning. She has an emerging appreciation that assessment is crucial to devising worthwhile planning. She provides satisfactory evidence through discussion and documentation about how she would use her resources to deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum appropriately.

The childminder has organised the playroom to enable all children to develop independence to move around and choose what toys or equipment they enjoy playing with. Activities in the planning show secure opportunities for children to experience the six areas of learning. The childminder provides all children with good opportunities to develop their creative and physical skills. For example, they enjoy role-play in the hallway or enjoy making cards to take home or pictures to put on the walls or ceilings. Children are able to play with sand and water and explore large pieces of play equipment in the garden. This demonstrates the childminder's sound knowledge of how to provide a balance of creative activities that allow children to express themselves freely and develop their understanding of the world around them. The childminder provides a secure environment for the children to develop their personal, social and emotional skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder employs very positive strategies to manage children's behaviour. For example, through a traffic light system displayed on the playroom wall children are able to see the consequences of their actions. Children are encouraged to think quietly about any unwanted behaviour and are supported fully by the childminder or assistant to appreciate right from wrong. As a result, children's behaviour is good. The childminder works closely with parents. She exchanges either written or verbal information with parents at the end of the day, encouraging high consistency of care for babies and children.

Children are able to become aware of their local environment around them through walks to and from local schools and amenities. There is a valuable range of toys and books for children to use, enabling them to build a balanced view of their wider world. Consequently, babies and children are learning to value and appreciate the differences and similarities between themselves and others. The childminder has good experience of supporting children with special educational needs and actively encourages all children to fully participate in all activities. The childminder's strong commitment to equal opportunities has a very positive impact on all children's understanding of disability.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive funded nursery education is satisfactory. The childminder demonstrates a commitment to sharing relevant information with parents about how their child is progressing through the Foundation Stage and how to use displays and notice boards to keep parents informed of the curriculum children are following.

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

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder has a sound regard for babies' and children's well-being in her care. She is appropriately aware of her responsibilities as a registered childminder and the required vetting procedures for those living or working in her house. The childminder has developed suitable policies and procedures and these are readily available to parents. This enables parents to be fully informed of the childminder's practice before they place their child with her and to refer to during their child's placement.

The childminder's leadership and management of funded nursery education is satisfactory. She demonstrates through documentation and training her commitment to developing her skills and knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The childminder organises her assistant appropriately to ensure the adult: child ratio positively supports children's care, learning and play. The organisation of the ground floor does not always offer children sufficient space to play, particularly in a quieter or more relaxed atmosphere.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, which was a care inspection only, the childminder agreed to; develop her knowledge and understanding of child protection issues; request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and devise and implement a system to record any incident of physical restraint.

The childminder has completed introductory child protection training, enabling her to have a greater awareness of how to safeguard children in her care. She has requested written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment and has a written system in place to record any significant incidents, including physical restraint. As a result, the childminder is able to seek appropriate action should she be concerned about a child's health and parents are fully informed of any significant incidents effecting their child.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the childminder or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The childminder 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):

- extend and encourage the children's learning and experiences of healthy eating and drinking by making water freely available to children and actively planning the availability of fresh foods such as fruit and vegetables at snack and meal times
- make better use of the lounge to provide children with more opportunity to relax and play quietly

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):

- develop the planning and assessment system to more accurately meet each child's stage of development.

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