



Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY229457
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 February 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Julie Ann Birkett
<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 2002. She lives with her partner and two children aged six and nine years in Little Dunmow. All areas of the property are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The family has a dog.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding six children all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder attends local early years groups.

She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children are protected from cross-infection and their good health is promoted because the childminder follows appropriate hygiene practices in order to prevent the spread of infection. For example, keeping kitchen surfaces clean. She has a good understanding of health and hygiene issues because she had attended various training courses such as Food Hygiene and Safety. Children effectively learn about their own personal hygiene and how to keep healthy through daily routines and well-planned experiences. For example, photographs in the bathroom give children visual clues to remind them to flush the toilet after use and to wash their hands.

All the required documentation to promote the children's good health is in place. In addition the childminder has an excellent range of well-written policies and procedures which underpin her working practices. For example, a clear sickness policy ensures children are protected from cross infection.

Children's parents and carers choose to provide food for their children so that they know what their children eat. The childminder has a good understanding of healthy eating which she demonstrates through a healthy eating policy. The childminder provides lots of practical first-hand experiences to help children learn about foods that are good for them and where food comes from. For example, they pick local blackberries and apples and then make a fruit crumble. They enjoy food tasting sessions where they feel, smell, taste foods and discover their likes and dislikes. Children have access to fresh drinking water throughout the day. Children's social skills are developed as they sit and eat together at the table.

Children experience physical activity and develop their skills because the childminder plans a good range of activities and play opportunities to develop the children's physical development. For example, they go for regular walks to open spaces and parks walking the dog. The garden is well-equipped and children enjoy good opportunities for physical play when they visit the soft play centres. Children benefit from fresh air and exercise in all weathers, for example, they wrap up warmly to go outside to experience the fun of playing in the snow. Inside they pretend to be gymnasts as they stretch, twirl and dance to music.

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

The provision is good.

The premises are welcoming and friendly which fosters the children's sense of security and belonging. Children have lots of space to play freely and to be active or rest as they choose. Children's safety is promoted well because the childminder takes good steps to ensure that hazards to children on the premises, both inside and outside, are minimised.

Children's development is effectively promoted because the childminder has a good range of suitable toys and play resources available for indoor and outdoor play. Children benefit from variety in their toys as they choose and exchange further equipment from the toy and book

libraries. Children's safety is promoted because the toys and equipment are in good repair and clean.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe because the childminder encourages the children to begin to understand about safety issues both within the setting and outside. She uses daily routines to remind children of everyday safety issues, such as holding hands when climbing the stairs and using scissors carefully so that they do not hurt themselves or others. Children also learn about keeping themselves safe when they take part in well-planned activities such as road safety awareness. They go for walks so they experience first-hand the safe way to cross the road and then play with the road mat, cars and play figures to reinforce what they learned when out and about.

The childminder has all the required documentation to promote the children's safety. In addition the childminder has considered further safety hazards and possible events and produced an excellent range of written policies and procedures for emergencies. For example, if a child is not collected or if the childminder becomes ill.

The childminder has a good understanding of her role and responsibility regarding safeguarding children.

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

The provision is good.

The children are confident because they are secure and settled. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement which helps them to feel good about themselves. Children are encouraged to talk about what they have done and their accomplishments which further promotes confidence. For example, they proudly twirl around in their dressing up clothes they have tried to put on themselves. Children's independence is promoted well because they have easy access to the toys and resources available to them. This enables them to make decisions about what they do and encourages effective play and learning because they are motivated by their own interests and ideas. For example, they find the dressing up clothes to wear and blankets to make beds inside their den.

Children's language development is promoted well as they talk constantly with the childminder. They snuggle among blankets in the pop-up tent looking at books and they enjoy listening to stories. Children's early mathematical skills are fostered very effectively as they play, counting and matching shapes and comparing size as they talk about big and small. Children use their imaginations as they engage in 'pretend' play and through a range of creative activities such as painting and modelling.

Children's natural curiosity is encouraged because the childminder asks them questions to help them think and reason, for example, children talk about how and why they make the bubbles as they soap their hands at the hand basin. Children take part in nature walks and treasure hunts where they explore and learn about their environment. Children are provided with opportunities to explore their senses through planned activities and resources such as play dough, art and crafts and food tasting. They enjoy delving into a small biscuit tin full of interesting household items such as rough pan scourers, a soft silky purse and a metal chain.

However, the opportunities for children to regularly and spontaneously explore and investigate a wider range of natural, household and recycled play materials are limited.

Children have a busy time at the childminder's home engaged in purposeful play. They are provided with a good range of play opportunities and experiences that promote their development and learning. Children have time for free play as well spending time on more adult-led activities such as arts and crafts. This is because the childminder understands that children learn through play and should enjoy their learning as this promotes positive attitudes to future learning.

The childminder provides good support for the children and she interacts with them well, playing along side them. She plans a good and wide range of activities and experiences to help the children make progress in their learning and development. For example, the colour of the week theme encourages children to learn the names and different shades of colours as they wear the appropriate colour clothing.

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

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in an environment where the childminder promotes equality of opportunity for all children. Children's individual needs are met because the childminder gets to know the children well. Children learn about the wider world and our differences and similarities through good everyday opportunities and discussion with the childminder. For example, dressing up in multicultural clothes, tasting different foods and sharing books. Children learn about a range of traditional and world festivals such as Chinese New Year and Diwali to increase their understanding of the wider world.

Children behave well because they are given clear and consistent boundaries by the childminder, for example, they are sensitively reminded not to climb on the furniture as they may hurt themselves. Children are beginning to share and take turns with the childminder's good support. The children are polite and helpful and learn to show consideration for others and their environment, for example, they know they have to tidy toys away, care for seeds and plants they grow and feed the birds in the garden.

The children feel a sense of belonging because the childminder makes them feel at home. Children develop good relationships with the childminder and the other children. Children are encouraged to think about their feelings when they look at and discuss a range of 'emotions' faces on the wall. This encourages children to talk about how they feel with the childminder.

The childminder works closely with parents and carers to enable the children to settle well and to ensure children are cared for with consistency. The childminder makes time each day to speak to parents and carers to share information about their child's day so that they are well informed. She keeps a daily journal on what the children have been doing so that parents and carers feel involved in their child's day. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to send in things from home to support the current learning themes and topics. This promotes good home links and further fosters parents and carers involvement in their child's learning. Scrapbooks of children's artwork and photographs of them at play reassures parents and carers that the

children enjoy a wide range of experiences and are having a good time in the childminder's care. The childminder's excellent portfolio ensures that parents and carers are fully informed about the childminder's working practices. Many references and thank you letters show that parents and carers greatly appreciate the childminder's positive input to their children's formative years.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The children are protected because the childminder and other adult household members have undergone the appropriate checks to ensure that they are suitable to look after or to have unsupervised access to children. Children are not left unsupervised with other persons.

The childminder meets required adult to child ratios. She demonstrates a very good understanding of the requirements of the National Standards both in her daily practices and through the excellent range of policies, procedures and information available to parents and carers.

The childminder has attended the required childminding course and in addition shows a strong commitment to further professional development. She has attended many short courses such as behaviour management, child protection, planning, observation and assessment and special needs. She is currently studying for a further childcare professional qualification. This commitment to developing her skills and knowledge has a positive impact on the children's care and learning opportunities. Children are protected because the childminder has attended first aid training which enables her to act appropriately in medical emergencies. Her current certificate has very recently expired but she is already booked on a refresher course to update her knowledge.

All of the records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe running of the provision, and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are efficiently maintained.

Overall children's needs are met.

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

At the last inspection the childminder was required to ensure a suitable fire blanket was readily accessible in the kitchen. This is now in place and further enhances the children's safety.

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to ensure the daily register was accurate, obtain written consent for the seeking of any emergency medical advice or treatment and to ensure hazards such as electrical sockets and cleaning materials were minimised. As previously outlined in this report, all documentation is in good order and the home is well-assessed for potential risks ensuring children's good health, safety and well-being.

The childminder was also asked to develop her understanding of supporting children with special needs. The childminder has since attended training in this area to develop her skills and knowledge in how to support children with special needs to promote inclusion for all children.

### **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):

- provide further opportunities and resources to enable children to explore and investigate a wider range of natural, household and clean recycled objects and materials

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)