

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY300991 |
| Inspection date | 24 April 2007 |
| 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 2005. She lives with her husband and two children aged 12 and four years. Her husband and friend both act as assistants. They live in a house in a residential area within walking distance of schools, shops and Maldon Promenade. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding two children aged under five on a part-time basis. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The family has a hamster as a pet.

The childminder attends the local carer and toddler group on a regular basis and takes children to the local park and library. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health and well-being is promoted effectively. The childminder has established routines for hand washing and keeps food preparation surfaces clean to minimise the spread of infection among children. Parents are informed about the childminder's sickness policy and understand that children are unable to attend if they are unwell. The childminder can act in the event of an emergency because she holds parental permission to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment. Both the childminder and her husband hold current first aid certificates and a first aid kit is readily accessible. Accident and medication records are diligently recorded.

Children benefit from a healthy diet supplied by parents and supported by the childminder. Babies are bottle-fed in comfort. They feed contentedly as they are held in the childminder's arms and plenty of eye contact is given. Information about weaning is shared so that the childminder is fully up-to-date with the babies' dietary needs. Older children are offered healthy snacks. Drinks are freely available so that children do not become thirsty or dehydrated. Information about allergies or special dietary requirements is gathered so that the childminder can meet individual children's needs.

Children have good opportunities for fresh air and physical play in the garden or when they visit nearby parks. Indoor physical activities are provided for babies, for example, they respond happily, waving their arms and legs as they play in the baby gym. Physical play equipment is hired from the toy library. Children develop their coordination as they walk along the balancing apparatus.

Young children sleep according to their needs. The childminder recognises the signs of tiredness in babies and children. She acts on this knowledge to plan and support appropriate periods of rest and activity. There are good arrangements to ensure that babies can sleep comfortably and peacefully as they rest undisturbed in a cot supplied with clean bedding.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a comfortable and safe indoor environment. The childminder has undertaken a risk assessment of her new home. Good use is made of safety items such as stairs gates to protect children from harm. The childminder removes any potential hazards so that they are inaccessible to the children. Smoke alarms are routinely tested and the childminder has arranged for a fire safety officer to visit her new home to check that the evacuation procedures are effective. Babies and children have choice in an environment kept safe by a knowledgeable childminder, who knows there should be a balance between freedom and safe limits. The childminder is vigilant about the security of the children. There are very clear collection procedures and contingency arrangements are in place in the event of an emergency. The childminder has started clearing and renovating her garden to allow children to play outdoors. However, potentially the children's safety is compromised as the fencing on one side of her garden does not provide a secure boundary. Children are kept safe on outings because they are always closely supervised by the childminder and parents have given written consent for them to be transported in a car.

Children have access to good quality equipment and furnishings so that they can eat, play and sleep in comfort. All toys are checked frequently for damage and cleanliness. Any toys within reach of babies are safe for them to explore using their mouth or hands. A great deal of thought is put into providing safe play materials that are stimulating and developmentally appropriate. The childminder makes good use of the local toy library.

Children are safeguarded as the childminder has a good understanding of her child protection responsibilities. She has the new child protection guidelines from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and has written a child protection policy, which she shares with parents. This ensures that she acts in the best interest of children at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and confident in the childminder's care. Interaction between the childminder and children is very warm and friendly. The childminder shares the fun of discovering language with very young children, which encourages them to respond and explore sounds by making cooing and babbling noises. Children are supported or offered appropriate challenge because the childminder adapts activities to suit the ages and stages of development of the children. The childminder researches ideas for activities that will inspire the children and uses good quality reference and resource books.

The childminder has the 'Birth to three matters' framework to help guide her activity planning for the youngest children. Weekly short-term written planning is undertaken to ensure that a broad range of activities are offered. The childminder provides stimulating play materials for very young children which encourages them to match, sort, classify and categorise.

Older children are kept busy and have great fun as they play. The varied activities ensure that children learn and progress in their development. Children have good opportunities to use their imagination. They enjoy dressing up and sometimes put on shows. They have good opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills as they learn to play musical instruments such as the piano or drums. Plenty of art and craft materials are offered and children enjoy creating greetings cards or collages. A very good range of books, both fiction and non-fiction are easily accessible so that children can read for pleasure. Children learn about the environment as they plant sunflowers and decorate flower pots.

Children are offered an interesting range of outings. They visit Maldon Promenade and go to the library. There are plenty of opportunities for social outings as the childminder visits toddler groups and meets regularly with other childminders.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are settled in the welcoming environment because the childminder gets to know the families well and works hard to meet each child's individual needs. She gathers information about any learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that she can provide the best possible care. Children become aware of wider society as they play with toys that reflect diversity. They enjoy dressing up in costumes from around the world and look at books that show positive images, so that they can observe differences and similarities between themselves and others. Dual language books and posters also allow children to develop an understanding of other languages such as Japanese.

Children learn about the need for responsible behaviour. The childminder promotes good behaviour and gives praise and encouragement to raise children's confidence and self-esteem. She has attended behaviour management training and is positive and consistent in her care of children.

Children benefit from the very friendly partnership with parents. Information is shared effectively and parents are kept fully informed about their child's day. Daily diaries are written, which include photographs, observations and information about children's sleep times, meals and nappy changes. Clearly written contracts relating to the business arrangements and all the relevant consent agreements are signed. Parents make very complementary comments about the care the childminder provides. They appreciate her reliability and her lovely attitude towards working with children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are relaxed and secure because the childminder organises her home to meet their needs, ensuring that they can play, rest and have their meals comfortably and safely. She has a well organised routine and offers stimulating childcare. Pre-school children are offered a high level of adult support and benefit from one-to-one contact during the day. The childminder is efficient and motivated and has attended the Introduction to Childminding Practice course. Children are protected because all adult members of the household and the assistants are checked and cleared through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).

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

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to improve fire safety precautions and to review the nappy changing procedures. There are smoke detectors fitted on each floor of the childminder's new home and these are regularly tested. The childminder now ensures that after changing a nappy she always washes her hands and cleans the nappy changing mat with anti-bacterial spray. Consequently, the children's health and safety has been enhanced.

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):

- ensure that the garden is safe and secure and children cannot leave unsupervised.

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