

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203116
Inspection date	29 May 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 1987. She lives with her husband, two adult children and child aged four years. Her husband acts as an assistant. They live in a house in a residential area within walking distance of schools, shops and the railway station in South Woodham Ferrers. All areas of the childminder's house are 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 three children aged nine months, two years and seven years. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The family has no pets.

The childminder meets with other childminders on a regular basis. She is a member of the National Childminding Association and an approved childminding network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because they play in a clean and hygienic environment. The childminder has well-established routines, for example, she uses an anti-bacterial spray to clean the kitchen work surfaces before preparing food. Children understand that they need to clean their hands before eating and individual wipes are used. They are protected from cross-infection because the childminder ensures that individual paper towels are accessible. The childminder can deal with minor injuries because she has first aid kits readily accessible in her kitchen and the car and she holds a current first aid certificate. Written parental permission to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment is obtained. The essential paperwork is in place to record any accidents or when medication is given.

Children benefit from a varied diet. The childminder provides all meals and snacks and ensures that children get their five portions of fruit or vegetables each day. At lunch time children are encouraged to be independent when they eat sandwiches and salad vegetables. Drinks are kept easily accessible so that children do not become thirsty or dehydrated. The childminder is knowledgeable about food allergies and special dietary requirements so that all children's individual needs are met.

Children have regular opportunities for exercise and fresh air, which contributes to their good health. The childminder has a variety of physical apparatus such as a small trampoline and a see-saw in her garden. This enables children to use a range of movements and develop their coordination as they play. Visits are made to nearby parks to allow children to run and play energetically. Children also enjoy exercising and dancing to music and follow the instructions on a children's activity DVD.

Children have the opportunity to sleep or relax according to their needs. A travel cot is used so that the childminder can keep children within hearing distance as they sleep undisturbed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have choice in an environment kept safe by an experienced childminder, who knows that there should be a balance between freedom and safe limits. Children play and investigate in a very comfortable environment. Their risk of accidental injury is minimised due to the strategies in place to protect them. For example, stair gates, electric socket covers and kitchen cupboard safety catches are used effectively. The childminder is vigilant about the security of the children. The front door is kept locked so that children cannot exit unnoticed. There are clearly written fire procedures that detail how the childminder and children would evacuate the premises in an emergency. Children learn to keep themselves safe. They know to wear their seat belts and sit on appropriate booster seats in the car. The childminder talks to children about road safety when they go on a walk. They know to hold hands with the childminder, look out for cars and safely cross the road when it is clear. Toddlers are safely supervised and are transported in buggies or walk wearing a wrist strap.

Children use a wide range of good quality, safe play materials, which are developmentally appropriate. All toys are checked frequently for damage and cleanliness and rotated to provide

added interest and stimulation. Play equipment is stored so that children can select items and can make decisions and choices about their play.

Children are safeguarded as the childminder has a sound awareness of her child protection responsibilities. She has shared her child protection policy with parents and holds the relevant contact numbers for the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). This ensures that the childminder acts in the best interests of children, if she has concerns about their welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children happily engage in a wide variety of activities. The living and dining rooms are attractively set out and invite children to play with a good selection of toys and resources. For example, toy boxes are stored at child height and space is created so that children can ride or push the wheeled trolley. They carefully manoeuvre the trolley around obstacles using pushing and pulling movements. Children enjoy mark making, colouring pictures and modelling with play dough. As they take part in creative activities the childminder talks to the children about colours and encourages them to think about their pictures. The childminder uses everyday experiences and routines well to help children count and focus on patterns and shapes. Children are very curious and show interest in what they do. They are fascinated by the telephones and hold imaginary conversations. They investigate using torches. Children use their imagination as they act out real life scenarios, for example, as they pretend to use clippers with the toy hairdressing equipment. The childminder has the 'Birth to three matters' framework pack to help her plan activities for the youngest children in her care.

Children have formed warm relationships with the childminder. They are affectionate and plenty of cuddles are shared. Praise and encouragement is given by the childminder to raise confidence and self-esteem. The childminder sensitively interprets meaning to young children's words which encourages them to be confident and competent language users.

Children acquire new knowledge and skills as they go on interesting outings each day. They visit nearby parks, the library and Marsh Farm. When they go out for lunch they enjoy playing actively with soft play equipment and ball ponds. There are regular opportunities to attend social gatherings and play with other children at coffee mornings and regular meetings with other childminders.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and feel at home in the family environment. They behave well as they learn to share toys and take turns. The childminder promotes politeness and good manners and the children are encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you' and ask when they are ready to get down from the table at mealtimes. The childminder recognises the need to set out reasonable and appropriate limits to help the behaviour of the children in her care. There are written statements regarding behaviour management, equal opportunities and special educational needs. This ensures that the childminder is consistent and gives each child equal concern.

Children learn about the wider world as they play with toys or look at books with positive images of diversity. The childminder is well aware that some children may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and knows the information she would need to gather to provide the best

possible care. The childminder has attended training relating to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and has also attended a course about Makaton sign language.

Children benefit from the very friendly partnership with parents. The childminder offers flexible care to meet the parents' varying working arrangements. The childminder has clear contract forms, however, these have not yet been signed by all the parents. The childminder has a written complaints policy and is now aware of the need to keep a record of complaints that she can share with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are secure and confident as the childminder has a well-organised routine. Play space and resources are arranged to meet the children's needs effectively. Children are cared for by a motivated childminder who holds the Extending Childminding Practice certificate and attends short training courses to keep up-to-date with current childcare issues and trends. Contingency arrangements are in place in the event of an emergency and the childminder has organised support from other childminders in the area.

Documentation is mostly well-organised. Each child has an individual file, which ensures confidentiality. The childminder has written short policy statements to cover aspects of her practice; this ensures the efficient and safe management of the childminding provision. However, the childminder does not always include the children's full names in her register or on the accident records.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to complete a first aid course. The children's well-being has been enhanced because the childminder now holds a current first aid certificate that includes training in first aid for infants and young children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 accident records and the register include the children's full names
- ensure that all parents sign written agreements which set out the expectations of both parties as to the activities provided and the business arrangements.

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