

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	590227
Inspection date	29 August 2007
Inspector	Jenny Howell
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 has been registered since 2001. She lives with her husband and two children aged nine and five years. They live in a house in Thundersley, Benfleet, within walking distance of shops, the park, school and pre-schools. The whole house is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The family has a dog.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children and is currently caring for 11 children, including those over the age of eight, on a full and part-time basis. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and is an accredited network childminder.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean environment where the childminder has taken appropriate steps to protect their health. Both children and the childminder wash their hands before preparing and eating snacks and meals. Children are helped to learn the reasons behind simple health routines, such as washing their hands after using the toilet or stroking the dog. This

helps them to develop an understanding of health and improve their self-care skills. Children are well cared for if they become ill. The childminder ensures that she has all relevant information about children which she can use to ensure they have appropriate care. She keeps a first aid kit close to hand and her first aid training is up to date. As a result of this the childminder is able to treat children in the event of an accident, although she has not yet obtained written parental permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment.

Children learn about making healthy choices as they enjoy a range of balanced and nutritious snacks and meals. Children talk about the benefit of eating healthily and exercising regularly, helping them to develop an understanding of healthy living. Children have free access to drinks, allowing them to regulate their own fluid intake. Children have a wide range of opportunities to exercise, which are effectively promoted by the childminder. They play freely in the garden and visit local parks, with access to equipment including balls and rackets. Children learn about the effect that exercising has on their body, as well as the need to drink regularly and rest. Children are able to rest and sleep according to their individual needs. Comfortable seating areas in the play-room and living room allow children to rest and relax while a cot is provided for babies and toddlers to sleep in safety and comfort.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. The childminder has a good understanding of the steps that she can take to protect children. Children play safely in the secure garden and the childminder makes good use of stairs gates to keep young children safe when playing inside. A fire blanket and smoke alarms are appropriately placed and children regularly practise an evacuation routine with the childminder, effectively helping to ensure that children are safe in the event of a fire. Children play with toys and equipment which are safe and in good condition. The childminder checks them on a regular basis and ensures that they are clean, regularly using anti-bacterial wipes.

Children are kept safe on trips and outings. Trips are thought through well in advance so that the childminder can make plans to ensure that children are safe at all times. She makes use of identity wrist bands if going somewhere busy and ensures that she has her mobile phone with her at all times. When on walks around the local area the childminder helps children to learn about crossing roads safely, effectively helping them to learn ways they can keep themselves safe. The childminder has attended training in child protection and has a written child protection statement which she shares with parents. She has a good understanding of her responsibility to protect the welfare of all children in her care and keeps useful guidance and information on file should she need to refer to it.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children feel very secure and settled at the childminder's home. Their efforts and achievements are supported and celebrated by the childminder, helping them to develop confidence and self-esteem. Children enjoy a wide variety of activities which are effectively matched to their ages and stages of development. They enjoy using their imagination as they play with dolls, puppets and dressing-up clothes. They develop physical and mathematical skills as they build with construction materials and complete puzzles. Role-play activities, such as shops, help children to develop social and communication skills while craft, painting and drawing activities

help children to explore their creativity. Regular outings provide interest and variety, with trips to a local sea-life centre, country park and windmill helping children to learn and enjoy in different environments.

Effective use of low-level storage allows children to choose resources and lead their own play. Toy boxes and shelves are labelled with photographs so that children can see what is available at a glance. This allows children of all ages to choose resources and develop independence. Children are free to explore the things which catch their interest. They confidently ask and answer questions, helping them to develop their knowledge and understanding of various subjects. Children develop positive relationships with each other and the childminder. They play co-operatively together and the excellent interactions of the childminder help children to develop further social and communication skills. Babies and children under three are very well cared for in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The childminder has a good understanding of the needs of young children and the activities and equipment which can help them to develop. Parents are kept well informed about the progress their children are making through the use of a daily, written log.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children welcomed and valued at the childminder's home. They are very well supported by the childminder, allowing them to develop a good sense of belonging. They see pictures of their art-work retained and displayed in project books, alongside photographs of past activities they have enjoyed. Children take part in a wide range of activities which help them to learn about different lives, traditions and religions. They enjoy tasting food from around the world and find out about celebrations, such as Chinese New Year. Children learn about difference and diversity as they freely access books, dolls and toys which reflect the varied society they are part of.

The childminder has an in-depth understanding of the individual needs of each child in her care. She seeks detailed information from parents and professionals to meet any special needs that children may have and attends relevant training where possible. This helps to ensure that all children receive a high level of care, in line with their differing needs. Children behave very well. They play and relax in a calm and positive atmosphere where the emphasis is on support and encouragement. Children have clear and simple boundaries which they understand and follow. For example, clearing up one activity before they start the next.

Parents receive good quality information about the care of their children. This includes a full range of written policies and procedures, demonstrating to parents the level of dedication the childminder puts into her care of all children. Verbal information is shared with all parents each day, with additional written information provided to the parents of babies and toddlers. The childminder is open with parents about what they should do if they have any questions and concerns and as a result of this develops positive relationships with parents. Parents are very happy with the care their children receive, commenting that the childminder is extremely reliable, very flexible, kind and considerate and does great things with the children, allowing children to develop physical, intellectual, emotional and social skills.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well cared for by the childminder who has appropriate childcare skills, training and experience. She is committed to keeping her skills up to date, attending further training where possible. The childminder organises her time, space and resources very well to provide children with a wide variety of play and learning opportunities as well as time to exercise, rest, relax and eat. Activities are well planned to allow children of different ages to play together or to follow their own interests, while the childminder ensures that each child receives individual attention.

A wide range of clear and well-written policies and procedures effectively support the care children receive and help to keep parents up to date with all relevant information. A wide range of parental permissions are in place, however, the childminder has not yet obtained written parental permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. As a result of this she is, potentially, unable to care for children in line with parent's wishes. Parents receive good quality information on a daily basis with accident and medication logs shared with them when appropriate and a notice board in the hall providing useful information on upcoming trips and menus.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to ensure that Ofsted is made aware of any significant changes or events and to obtain a copy of the Childminding Guidance to the National Standards; Revision to certain criteria: version 2.

The childminder is aware of the need to Ofsted informed of any significant changes, for example, letting Ofsted know when she had her conservatory built. She now has a copy of Childminding Guidance to the National Standards; Revision to certain criteria: version 2 on file. As a result of these the childminder is able to ensure that she is caring for children in line with the guidelines and requirements of the National Standards.

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):

- obtain written parental permission to seek emergency medical advice and treatment.

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