



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 560002
Inspection date 18 July 2005
Inspector Anne Daly

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 1995. She lives with her husband and 2 children, aged 13 and 11 years, in a residential area of Wickford, Essex. The whole of the childminder's home is used for childminding. The children are mainly cared for on the ground floor and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 5 children at any one time, currently caring for 10 children, part time. The childminder drives to the local primary school to deliver and collect the children. She takes children to carer and toddler groups, the local park, library and town centre.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and of the local childminding group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children understand good, simple hygiene practices as the childminder encourages them to wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet to prevent the spread of infection. The childminder takes positive action to prevent cross contamination and to encourage children's independence by ensuring that they know to use their individual towels hung at their height in the downstairs cloakroom.

The childminder's detailed written sickness policy is shared with parents to reduce the risk of spreading infections. She has obtained written parental permission to use sun cream to protect children from the sun's harmful rays. She has organised the management of medication issues so that she can act in children's best interests.

Children enjoy the food provided by their parents and the childminder's healthy supplements, such as fruit. The childminder ensures that she is aware of allergies and other special dietary requirements, so that children's individual needs are met, such as baby's milk being given at room temperature. Children are becoming aware of the ways activities affect their bodies, ensuring that they know when to have a rest or to have a drink. The childminder regularly offers drinks to the children, who can freely help themselves to water bottles of juice.

Children enjoy a range of worthwhile activities that contribute to the promotion of their health. A variety of daily activities help children enjoy the benefits of physical activity, such as playing garden games, regular visits to the park and Tumble Tots. Children are developing physical skills and enjoy using the climbing frame and slide as well as drawing and using scissors. Younger children are able, with the support of the childminder, to develop new skills, such as grasping a toy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have opportunities to make choices and to self select from a good range of age appropriate toys, while playing in a safe environment. Risks are minimised because the childminder regularly cleans and checks equipment and toys. Very young children are given good opportunities to practise what they can do in safe surroundings, for example confidently sitting and picking up toys, with no dangerous items within their reach.

Children's independence is encouraged by being able to safely move around the premises. The childminder is knowledgeable about safety issues and aware that there should be a balance between freedom and safety. She gives priority to helping children to understand what to do when the smoke alarm sounds by testing on

different days every six weeks throughout the year and ensuring that they find her quickly. Risks are identified and positive steps taken to reduce potential hazards, such as replacing a safety gate when the catch broke.

The childminder is aware of the need to safeguard children, who are only collected by authorised persons. She is aware of the need to implement appropriate procedures if she has concerns about a child's safety. However, the contact details for the child protection agencies are not readily available.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well at the childminder's home, where worthwhile activities allow many opportunities to play and learn independently. They can choose freely from the toys on offer and select from further play equipment and books in the dining area. Younger children are confident in their relationships with the childminder and they socialise with other children through regular attendance at carer and toddler groups. Children's individual needs are sensitively supported by the childminder listening to them, valuing what they say and talking with them about what they have done. Children explore with a wide range of creative materials, such as paint, sticking and drawing, to help them express their experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. Younger children regularly visit the library with the childminder, who uses books to encourage children to listen and to respond appropriately, such as by pressing buttons and making appropriate sounds. They are becoming creative through exploration and discovery, experimenting with sound and movement, such as with interactive toys and musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

A good range of play provision and books promotes a positive view of the wider world and increases children's knowledge of diversity and their understanding of others. For example, the childminder provides small play people showing positive images of different genders and cultural backgrounds.

Children are very confident and are kept busy and involved in their play. Their behaviour is managed positively and consistently. The childminder's clear and consistent expectations and trust in children's abilities help them to increase their self confidence. She responds in a positive way to children and reinforces their good behaviour with plenty of praise.

Children benefit as the childminder builds friendly and helpful relationships with parents to ensure that their individual requirements are met. The childminder shares children's days with parents and they have opportunities to exchange information on a daily basis. Parents of very young children receive a very detailed daily record book, including their feeds, sleeps, nappy changes and activities.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel at home with the childminder, who encourages them to develop their independence, with age appropriate resources, within ample indoor and outdoor space. They are able to explore safely, both inside and outside, and are sufficiently confident to initiate their own play. Children are protected and cared for by a childminder who never leaves them alone with persons who have not been vetted and ensures that they stay in the lounge when she opens the door to visitors.

Parents receive the childminder's written policies and procedures to ensure children's safety, health and well-being, although her child protection statement and complaints procedure require attention. Records are maintained for each child, enabling the childminder to act in their best interests. The childminder is committed to attend training to develop and support her childminding practice, planning to attend first aid training to update her knowledge and skills.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the childminder has developed her resources to help children to learn about diversity and to show them positive images of themselves and others. She now records her fire drills undertaken every six weeks to ensure that children are aware of the actions to be taken.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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):

- review and update the child protection statement and the complaints procedure.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk