

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	403966
Inspection date	13 August 2007
Inspector	Justine Leong
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 satisfactory. 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 1992. She lives with her husband and adult son in a house in Witham, Essex. The whole of the ground floor of the property is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding three children over five years and two children under five years on a part-time basis. She also minds one child under five full-time. The family have two small dogs.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning about the importance of good hygiene as the childminder regularly reminds them to wash their hands before eating or after using the toilet. Children are generally kept safe from illness and infection as the childminder discourages parents from bringing children

to the setting if they are unwell. An appropriately stocked first aid box is in place and the childminder has recently undertaken first aid training to ensure children would be well cared for in the event of a medical emergency.

Children benefit from regular opportunities to experience outdoor play as the childminder takes them to play on the nearby fields or on nature walks. They are developing physical skills including coordination and balance as they play with a range of toys such as bats, balls, large wheeled toys and skipping ropes.

Children are beginning to learn about healthy living and the importance of a balanced diet as the childminder generally provides a range of healthy foods at snack and meal times. The childminder provides a cooked meal including meat and vegetables every day and snacks such as fruit or biscuits are offered if children are hungry. Children can request drinks when they are thirsty, however, they do not have constant access to fresh drinking water to ensure they do not become dehydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and spacious location. Children's safety is considered and the risk of accidental injury is minimised within the setting as the childminder has taken some steps to reduce possible risks. For example, low-level cupboards have been fitted with locks and stair gates are in place to restrict access to potentially dangerous areas such as the stairs. However, children's safety is compromised when playing outside as the pond is accessible, presenting a potential hazard. Visitors to the setting are vetted and identification is checked before they are given entry. Fire safety precautions such as a fire blanket and smoke alarms are in place although the childminder does not have an emergency evacuation policy, potentially compromising children's safety in the event of an emergency.

Children have independent access to a range of suitable resources that conform to safety standards. These are regularly cleaned and checked for signs of damage. Children are learning to keep themselves safe on outings as the childminder teaches them about road safety and develops their awareness of hazards outside the home. Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted because the childminder has an understanding of child protection issues and is aware of the correct procedures to follow if she has a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled at the setting. The childminder follows children's interests when providing activities to ensure they remain motivated and focused. Flexible daily routines offer a variety of play activities often based on imaginative play. Children play with a range of small world toys such as dolls and prams and make connections to their own experiences. The childminder regularly encourages children to play with resources such as puzzles and dominoes, providing opportunities for development of intellectual capabilities. They also benefit from regular opportunities for creative play when painting, cooking or cutting and sticking. The childminder encourages children to think and to use their imagination through effective questioning. For instance, during a painting activity the childminder questions the child about the colours she has used and how she could create more colours by mixing the different coloured paints together.

Children are developing in confidence and self-esteem as the childminder listens attentively and values their responses. Children are increasingly independent as they are given ample time to complete activities themselves before being offered assistance. The childminder generally joins in with children's play, encouraging the children to take turns and share to further develop social skills. Children benefit from independent access to a range of fiction and non-fiction books and they enjoy sharing stories with the childminder.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy at the setting, having formed positive relationships with the childminder. Daily routines help children feel secure and assist in developing a sense of belonging. Children are beginning to become aware of diversity through access to resources such as dolls and books, although resources and activities are limited, potentially hindering development in this area. Children are beginning to manage their own behaviour as the childminder calmly and consistently reminds them of the rules and encourages them to consider their own actions.

Children are encouraged to play an active part in the setting as the childminder encourages them to tidy away toys themselves, helping to develop responsible attitudes. Children's well-being is promoted as the childminder and parents have developed a close working relationship. They share important information about the children's needs, likes and dislikes and daily discussions ensure that parents are generally kept up to date with any significant events or achievements. However, the childminder does not have any written policies and procedures to share with parents to ensure they are fully aware of her childcare practices. Parents are aware of the complaints procedure at the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder organises her home to provide a welcoming and child-friendly environment in which children take part in a range of activities to support their care, learning and play. The childminder generally follows sound procedures to promote children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. However, the pond in the garden is accessible to children, potentially compromising their safety. Space and resources are organised to provide children with a good balance of interesting activities.

The childminder has attended all the required training to support her registration and her registration certificate is clearly displayed. She remains within her registered numbers at all times and has an appropriate regard for the well-being of all children in her care. The childminder ensures that all persons having unsupervised access to children are suitable to do so. All required documentation is in place including written parental permission for emergency medical treatment or advice and permission to administer medication. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was recommended that the childminder ensure that low-level glass be made safe for children and that documentation be updated to include written parental consents for emergency medical treatment and to administer medication. These areas have now been appropriately addressed helping to ensure children remain safe at the setting.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- make the garden pond safe or inaccessible to children
- devise and practise an emergency evacuation plan
- ensure parents are fully informed of childcare routines and practices
- increase provision of resources and activities which reflect positive images of diversity.

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