

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY286143
Inspection date	13 August 2007
Inspector	Sandra Daniels
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 2004, although she had three years experience from a previous registration in 1998. She works with a registered assistant. She lives with her husband, two adult children and three children aged four, 12 and 13 years. They live in a residential area of Basildon, Essex. The whole of her home is used for childminding, with the exception of the third floor. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children under eight years at any one time and is currently minding five children aged ten months, one, two, five and seven years. Some children are cared for on a full-time basis and others attend part-time. The childminder walks or drives to a local school and a pre-school to take and collect children. The childminder takes the youngest children to parent and toddler groups.

The family has a dog, cat, and two hamsters as pets. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, warm and welcoming environment where they can relax and play. They are beginning to learn about personal hygiene through well organised daily routines and good practice from the childminder. They are encouraged to wash their hands before meals and use individual wipes to wipe their faces after they have eaten. The childminder helps children to learn about, and take pride in, personal hygiene as she explains to them about germs. The childminder implements effective procedures to ensure children are protected from cross infection. For example, the changing mat is cleaned with anti-bacterial spray after each nappy change, potties, when used, are cleaned immediately and toys and equipment are cleaned on a regular basis. The childminder clearly understands the importance of excluding sick children in order to prevent the spread of infection. The childminder is qualified to administer first aid to children and is confident in her ability to respond appropriately to minor accidents or medical emergencies.

The childminder keeps the home warm but well ventilated to ensure that children are playing in comfortable temperatures. They enjoy plenty of fresh air and exercise, which contributes to their good health. In the garden they have access to suitable equipment, such as small slides, sit and ride toys and a large trampoline with a full safety net. The childminder organises games and play activities which encourage children to be active and to use their bodies in different ways. They also regularly visit local parks, toddler groups and indoor play centres. At the childminder's home they have lots space to move around freely. Children who are learning to walk or crawl, confidently practise new skills as they move between rooms and explore their environment.

Children are starting to know when they are hungry and need a drink. The childminder offers regular drinks and children can ask for a drink when they need one. Children receive nutritious meals and snacks in accordance with parent's wishes, such as roast dinners, shepherd's pie, fresh vegetables and fruits. The childminder has a sound awareness of children's likes and dislikes, showing a good understanding of catering for allergies and cultural differences. She demonstrates a strong commitment to healthy eating and keeps parents well-informed as to what their children have eaten during the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is well promoted in an environment which is free from hazards. Positive steps are taken to ensure that children are safe as the childminder identifies and minimises risks. Safety equipment is readily in place to reduce any potential hazards or dangers to children, such as safety gates, a fire blanket and smoke alarms. There are procedures in place which childminder successfully implements to promote the children's well-being. For instance, the fire evacuation procedure is practised routinely with children to raise their awareness of how to deal with emergency situations. This is also accurately documented. Children are very well supervised during play and the childminder uses a sound and vision monitor when children are sleeping upstairs. Children use the large indoor space very well and are able to move around the home safely and independently.

A very extensive range of good quality, well maintained toys and age appropriate resources are stored at child height in toy boxes and low level shelves, from which children can safely select. Toys and equipment are regularly checked and cleaned to ensure that they are safe for children's use. Children are beginning to understand the importance of keeping themselves safe as the childminder regularly reminds them of any potential dangerous situations. For example, she explains to older children how to cross the road safely and always uses appropriate restraints for children when out walking or travelling in her car.

Children remain protected because the childminder has required procedures and documents in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded. She has a good understanding of child protection procedures, is aware of potential signs and symptoms and knows what action to take should she have any concerns for a child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the childminder's care. They share a warm and positive relationship with her, which helps them to feel secure. They gain confidence in themselves as she encourages them to explore and to practise new skills. She sits on the floor with the younger children, engaging their interest in resources, cuddling and talking to them. She extends their play by helping them to operate musical and interactive toys, showing them how to press buttons and to make shapes fit.

Children are enthusiastic and confident in a stimulating atmosphere where they develop good self-esteem because the childminder provides good levels of support and praise. The childminder's expectations of children are clear and realistic, allowing children to progress in their development. Children are able to choose from a wide variety of resources and are able to pursue their own interests. They are beginning to develop their independence and are curious and enthusiastic in their play as they are able to express their feelings and interest.

Children attend local toddler groups with the childminder, giving them opportunities to develop social skills and to interact with other children and adults. They enjoy fresh air every day, either in the childminder's garden, on trips to the local parks or walking to and from school or pre-school. The childminder is knowledgeable about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and uses this effectively to ensure that the needs of younger children are always met. Children under three years participate fully in the life of the setting. They enjoy cooking activities, play-dough and lots of creative activities such as drawing and painting. However, the childminder does not currently plan activities and use observations to further children's learning and development and ensure a full range of opportunities and experiences for them all.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. The childminder follows a well organised routine, which meets the needs of the children. Children feel at home and show a sense of belonging because they are familiar with routines and are at ease with each other and the childminder. Strategies used to manage children's behaviour are consistent and take into account children's level of understanding and maturity. This positive approach to behaviour management establishes clear and realistic boundaries for children and effectively promotes their welfare and development. Children are encouraged to be polite and considerate of others and older children love to help out and play with the younger ones.

The childminder is very attentive to children's individual needs. She gets to know children well so that she is familiar with their eating and sleeping patterns and the activities they enjoy. She is sensitive to signs of tiredness or anxiety and responds appropriately, staying close to children who need reassurance. Children are encouraged to make choices and to develop a sense of belonging.

Children have access to a selection of books and toys which reflect positive images of cultural differences and disability. The childminder makes use of opportunities as they arise to discuss issues and respond to children's queries. Although not currently caring for any children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the childminder is fully aware of the need to ensure that all children are equally included in everything they do.

Effective settling in procedures and discussions with parents before placement ensures that the childminder has all the information necessary to care effectively for the children. The childminder shares her parent file, which includes a number of written policies and procedures to ensure that parents are well informed about her service. Children benefit from the strong links between home and the childminder. For example, parents and children are encouraged to share ideas for activities that are interesting and valuable to them.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall children's needs are met. Children are very comfortable and at ease in this well-organised home environment provided by the childminder. Time, space and resources are all very well arranged and contribute towards the health and safety of children and this ensures they are relaxed as they enjoy their play. Children are happy, making good progress, gaining in confidence and independence as they make choices and decisions about their care and play. Children benefit from the childminder's knowledge of the regulatory requirements for childminding. The childminder is committed to further training in order to remain up to date with current childcare practice and to enable her to broaden the experiences and opportunities she offers to all children.

All necessary documentation is accurately maintained by the childminder and she ensures children's confidentiality is maintained. Paperwork is kept securely and remains easily accessible to the childminder at all times. This supports children's safety as the childminder can immediately access, for example, emergency contact details. The childminder maintains an accurate register of children's attendance, including their arrival and departure times, ensuring that she has a clear record of exactly who is on the premises at any given time. Effective partnership with parents ensures that they are fully informed and involved in their children's care and development.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to three recommendations which were related to children's safety and welfare; to ensure that all garden hazards are minimised, to renew her first aid certificate by completing an appropriate course that includes training in first aid for infants and young children and to update documentation to include: written agreements with parents setting out the expectations of both parties as to the care of the child, activities provided and business arrangements, written consents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment, for taking children on outings and in a vehicle and to obtain contact information for the local social services department.

Children's safety and welfare is clearly well-promoted in this setting. A secure gate has been installed in the garden and it is fully clear of hazards, making a secure environment in which children can play safely. The childminder has a current first aid certificate and is confident in her ability to respond appropriately to accidents or medical emergencies. Children's care is enhanced as detailed contracts are completed at the beginning of each placement, containing all the relevant and required information to enable the childminder to effectively meet each child's needs. All written parental consents are in place and the childminder has obtained contact details of the local Social Services department in addition to the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

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):

- further improve outcomes for children by planning activities and using observations to further their learning and development.

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