

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 202616  
**Inspection date** 07 March 2008  
**Inspector** Sarah Johnson

**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](http://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 1998. She lives with her husband and two children aged 11 and 14 years in Braintree, Essex. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The family has a pet dog and some fish in a tank and pond.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time and is currently minding 17 children, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and regularly attends local toddler and childminding drop-in groups with the minded children.

### THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

#### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very comfortable and clean environment. They benefit from the good procedures the childminder follows to ensure their health is promoted. This includes respecting younger children's routines by offering them quiet areas to sleep comfortably in their pushchairs

and ensuring their nappies are changed hygienically. Children develop good personal hygiene routines which protect them from the risk of cross-infection. For example, they consistently use wipes to clean their hands before having a snack and are encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet. They confidently take responsibility for caring for their bodies as they independently ask for tissues to wipe their noses. Children's welfare is further promoted as the childminder follows good practices in relation to treating minor accidents and administering medication. This includes maintaining an up-to-date first aid certificate and ensuring any medication administered and accidents are consistently recorded and shared with parents. Although the childminder has considered an action plan to follow should a medical emergency occur, she has not requested written permission from parents to enable her to seek emergency medical advice or treatment for children at the earliest opportunity.

Children's dietary needs are well catered for and they enjoy a healthy diet. The nutritious menu consists of light snacks including fresh fruit and breadsticks and freshly prepared hot meals including roast chicken with vegetables and pasta with meatballs. A sample menu is shared with parents so they are aware of what their children are eating and the childminder ensures she gathers information about children's individual dietary needs before they join her setting. This ensures children's allergies, cultural and religious dietary requirements can be fully met. All children are offered drinks frequently throughout the day to ensure they do not become dehydrated.

Children have good opportunities to be active and to benefit from the fresh air. They frequently access the enclosed garden, enjoying a range of outdoor activities. These include a variety of ride-on toys, a trampoline, bats, balls and parachute games. Children experience a wider range of physical activities through regular walks out in the local area, trips to the park and soft play centres.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a child-friendly and secure environment. The childminder organises her home effectively to create a welcoming atmosphere with colourful posters, comfortable areas to relax and ample space for children to move around freely and spread out in their play. Children play mainly in the light and airy living room and can independently access clean toilet facilities on the ground floor. They access a well-maintained garden with well-kept grass areas and a pond, which is fully sectioned off with fencing to keep children safe. Children freely and confidently choose from a good range of toys and activities that are well-presented by the childminder. Resources available are clean, safe and meet the developmental stages and interests of the children using them. The good range provided offers children a variety of play experiences and enhances their enjoyment whilst at the setting.

Children are kept safe whilst in the care of the childminder. The risk of accidental injury is minimised because good steps have been taken to reduce possible risks. For example, household cleaning chemicals and dangerous utensils are stored out of children's reach and a safety gate is used to restrict children's unsupervised access to the kitchen. Effective fire safety precautions are in place and the childminder has carefully considered the emergency evacuation procedures she would follow from different locations in the house. Children's safety is promoted further as access to the premises is monitored and any visitors are recorded in a visitor book. Children are encouraged to think about how to keep themselves safe, as they are involved in practising fire drills on a regular basis and the childminder talks to them about different emergency

scenarios. In addition, the childminder gets involved in the children's role play to remind them not to burn themselves as they pretend to use an imaginary kettle and pan of hot water.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because the childminder has completed relevant training to enable her to develop good understanding of issues relating to safeguarding children. As a result, the childminder is aware of the correct procedures to follow if she has a concern about children's welfare and they are protected from harm.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and the well-organised daily routines ensure that their care needs are met. For example, time is organised to ensure young babies sleep peacefully, whilst older children enjoy some quality individual time with the childminder. Strong caring relationships are evident. For example, children feel secure as the childminder responds enthusiastically to their spontaneous requests for cuddles and they are happy to try new things due to the support and encouragement they receive. Children confidently make choices in their play, are active and interested in experiencing a wide range of activities in the home and garden. They develop their imagination when accessing a good variety of role play resources such as a selection of quality dressing up clothes and realistic household utensils in the imaginary kitchen. They play at making food and drinks for the childminder and she gladly gets involved. Children are introduced to new ideas as they talk about skeletons and ask questions to find out more. Weekly opportunities are planned for children to meet up with other children at local toddler and childminder drop-in groups, helping to support their social development. In addition, they enjoy trips to the local park, beach, zoo and train journeys to London.

The childminder takes time to get to know babies and younger children very well. Younger children benefit as the childminder has completed training relating to the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which has widened her understanding of their development. Younger babies develop their physical skills as they freely explore the safe and suitable environment and stimulating toys provided for them. They are given appropriate time to follow their interests as they enjoy watching the fish swimming in the tank and are supported to become skilful communicators as they vocalise to join in with songs and rhymes.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are secure in their surroundings, helping them to feel comfortable in making choices and voicing their wishes. They benefit from being cared for by a childminder who respects their individuality and ensures they are all treated equally. A good range of toys and activities are provided that promote a positive view of the wider world and these help children to learn about the lives of others. For example, they complete puzzles and look at books showing people from different cultures and have many opportunities to meet different people in their local community. They talk about Chinese New Year as they make lanterns and enjoy a feast of traditional Chinese foods. The childminder implements an equal opportunities policy which reflects her positive approach to promoting anti-discriminatory practice. For example, she ensures that stereotypical views of gender roles are positively discouraged in children's play so all children are supported to access any of the resources. The childminder also has a positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. She would ensure that her setting is inclusive for all children by making reasonable adaptations to activities and the physical

environment. She understands the value of working alongside parents and is willing to undertake further training to improve on her knowledge of meeting children's additional needs.

Children behave very well as they willingly share toys and the childminder's attention. Their self-esteem is promoted as the childminder is calm and positive, offering good amounts of praise and encouragement. For example, children are very polite and consistently say 'please' and 'thank you', as the childminder praises them and responds by being a good role model.

Children benefit from the childminder's ability to work in partnership with their parents. Most of the required documentation and consents are in place to ensure children are cared for according to their parents' wishes. Parents are welcomed in when they bring and collect their children. This is when information is exchanged about children's eating, sleeping, nappy routines and any significant issues. Parents feel comfortable when discussing their children's needs and concerns as the childminder spends time getting to know them very well. Parents are kept well informed from the beginning as they are provided with a good range of information about the setting in a welcome folder including copies of the policies and procedures, training certificates and a number of positive references from other parents. This communication continues throughout children's time at the setting, as they share scrapbooks of photographs of the children and the childminder takes time to complete daily diaries for each child. The childminder understands the requirement to log complaints, should she ever receive any and there is a written complaints policy in place. However, this includes the incorrect address and telephone number for Ofsted as the regulator, which potentially prevents parents from raising a complaint.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the effective organisation of the provision. They are cared for by an experienced childminder who has continued to update her professional development. For example, she has completed training courses relating to working with parents, effective assessment in the Foundation Stage and is currently working towards a Level 3 diploma in childcare. Children's care and enjoyment at the setting continues to improve as the childminder meets regularly with other childminders to share good practice ideas, many of which she incorporates into her own provision.

Children experience good levels of direct support and attention as the childminder organises her time well and has an appropriate number of children present during each day. Children's safety and welfare is maintained as they are well supervised and the required regulations are followed to ensure they are not left alone with adults who have not been appropriately vetted. The childminder maintains required records and documentation. For example, children's personal information is recorded in sufficient detail and there are a good range of written policies and procedures which reflect the childminder's practice. There are secure contingency procedures in place should there be an emergency, as the childminder has agreed emergency care arrangements with other registered childminders who are familiar to the children and live nearby. This arrangement has been trialled to ensure it is effective and written permission has been obtained from parents.

Overall, children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the childminder was asked to: complete an appropriate first aid course; obtain written parental permission to seek medical attention in an emergency; update the medication records and to practise the fire escape procedure regularly with the children.

The childminder has addressed most of these recommendations appropriately to ensure children's health and safety are no longer compromised. She has completed a first aid course to update her knowledge of providing appropriate care to children when they have an accident and the medication records include all the required information. However, children's health is not fully promoted as there is not an effective system in place for obtaining permission from parents to allow the childminder to seek emergency medical advice or treatment for children. Children are now involved in talking about and practising regular drills, which helps them to develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

## **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):

- request written parental permission to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future
- update the written complaints procedure to include the correct address and telephone number for Ofsted as the regulator.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)