

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	118637
Inspection date	28 January 2008
Inspector	Sarer Marcia Tarling

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 outstanding. 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 1993. She lives with her husband and two children aged 19 and 17 years. The family live in a house in Elm Park, which is within walking distance of local schools, pre-schools, shops, parks, bus routes and Elm Park Station. All areas of the property are suitable to be used for childminding although children are generally based on the ground floor in the play room and living room. A toilet is situated on the ground floor and so children only need to go upstairs if they require a sleep. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder collects children from local schools, regularly attends carer and toddler groups and a childminding group on a regular basis. She is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA) and the treasurer for the Greater London branch of the NCMA.

The childminder is registered to care for up to six children under eight and currently has three children under eight on roll. The childminder also provides care for children over the age of eight and currently has one child on roll. On the day of inspection three children were present. The childminder is registered to work with an assistant who may, at times agreed and confirmed in writing by parents, leave an assistant in sole charge of the children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a child friendly and hygienic environment. Cleaning routines ensure all play resources and nursery furniture are closely monitored for their suitability and cleanliness. The childminder takes positive steps to protect children's health and prevent the spread of infection. For example, older children are encouraged to be independent in their personal care as a step stool ensures they can easily reach to wash their hands with anti-bacterial soap and then dry their hands on disposable paper hand towels. Children understand the importance of washing their hands after going to the toilet and before eating. Stringent nappy changing routines protect children from cross infection. The childminder gently helps the younger children to wash their hands and faces, to wipe their noses and reminds them to cover their mouth whilst coughing or sneezing. Parents are asked to provide appropriate clothing for cold and rainy weather, along with hats and sun cream, in order that children may be comfortable and be protected in all weather conditions.

The childminder has a written sickness policy and does not accept children into her care if suffering from an infectious illness, thus protecting other minded children from cross infection. However, should a child become unwell they benefit from her warm and caring approach as they wait to be collected by their parent. The childminder's paediatric first aid certificate is up-to-date and she routinely checks her first aid kits, for use in the home and on outings, to ensure they are appropriately stocked. Detailed accident and medication records are completed and routinely shared with parents. This together with parents consent allowing her to seek emergency advice and/or treatment ensures that children receive prompt and appropriate care in the event of an emergency. These practices ensure that children's health is protected.

Children's nutritional health is extremely well promoted. Individual dietary needs, including any special requirements, are catered for and accurate records are maintained. Young children benefit as the childminder fully discusses weaning with parents and ensures their individual feeding routines are followed. The childminder refers to a food hygiene handbook to ensure that where parents provide jars, or their own home made food, that these are stored and heated up safely and correctly. During the day children are offered fresh fruit and bread sticks as a snack and water, or very diluted sugar free juice, to drink. Older children delight in using the juicer to make themselves apple and carrot smoothies and flavoured milkshakes. Written menus show that at breakfast children are offered wholemeal toast, scrambled egg and porridge. They enjoy a simple nutritious lunch and after school can have a hot, home made meal, which includes a selection of dishes from around the world. For example, couscous, chilli, casseroles, shepherd's pie, gammon steaks all of which are served with a variety of vegetables. Mealtimes are a chatty sociable occasion and the childminder uses a 'Five A day' poster and activities, such as using cress seeds to grow a Mr Potato Head, to encourage the children to learn about the benefits of eating a healthy diet.

Children are developing a very positive attitude toward being physically active and this contributes to their good health. Daily routines ensure there is an excellent balance of active and quiet times. There are many opportunities for children to be in the fresh air and exercise as the childminder encourages them to take part in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor physical activities. For example, children have great fun climbing and exploring at soft play centres, swimming with the childminder, running and playing with balls whilst visiting local parks and playing in the garden on bikes, push along cars and in a tent. Children are able to rest and relax

comfortably and enjoy a cuddle on the settee as they watch a favourite video. Travel cots and clean linen are available for young children and individual sleep patterns are followed. Babies are closely monitored whilst they sleep.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder has attended training on home safety and risk assessment and records her findings quarterly. In addition to this she is extremely vigilant as she conducts a daily safety check which ensures any potential hazards are removed or minimised. For example, safety gates prevent unsupervised access to the kitchen, utility room and stairs and any potentially hazardous items in the kitchen and bathroom have been made inaccessible. As a result children are able to freely explore and play in a secure and safe environment. Children play in an extremely welcoming and well presented play room and the childminder is careful to ensure that children only play with high quality toys which are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Play resources are changed regularly and children can easily and independently select their own toys from the stackable boxes on the floor and the storage cupboard. Activities and games can be set out on a child size table in the kitchen to prevent young babies getting hold of small parts. After playing children are encouraged to help clear away toys to keep play space free from tripping hazards.

Children are protected in the event of a fire as the childminder arranged for her home to be checked by a local fire safety officer and ensures a fire blanket is in position and all smoke detectors are in working order. The childminder regularly discusses different types of emergency situations with the children, has drawn up a fire escape plan and ensures children have opportunities to regularly practise the carefully considered emergency evacuation procedures.

Children are kept safe when on outings. For example, the childminder ensures she carries her mobile phone and emergency contact details at all times. Written consent is obtained for children to go on outings, travel in the car and on public transport. Young children are strapped securely in their buggy and whilst walking they wear reins or hold the childminder's hand. Children are encouraged to practise their road safely skills using the 'Arrive Alive' highway code and, when travelling in the childminder's car, always sit in an appropriate car safety seat and wear a seatbelt. The childminder has an excellent selection of safety leaflets and activity booklets which she skilfully uses to help the older children learn how to remain safe when visiting farms and warn about the potential hazards of playing near water, railways and building sites. At home children know they must ask permission to use the laptop computer and the childminder ensures she closely supervises its use.

The childminder has a very secure knowledge of the procedures she must follow in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures should she have a concern about the welfare of a child in her care. The childminder ensures she has up-to-date information and refers to guidance kept in her childminding file. Excellent arrival and collection procedures ensure that children are safe and protected and that only authorised people are able to collect them. The childminder's emergency procedures ensure children are only ever left with people who have been vetted and are suitable. As a result children are safeguarded and protected from potential harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

A highly effective settling in procedure ensures there is time to find out from parents about children's individual needs and to discuss the expectations of both parties. The childminder is experienced, understands how children learn and skilfully uses her knowledge to support children. For example she takes time to observe, talk and listen carefully to the children in order that she can plan activities which present them with appropriate challenge. The childminder has attended training on observing and recording children's progress and routinely shares information regarding their achievements and general disposition with parents. As a result, children show a sense of belonging and have formed very close and caring relationships with the childminder and each other. For example, the older children like to help care for the younger ones and snuggle next to each other on the settee as they enjoy a stroking and tickling game.

Flexible routines incorporate a balance of child and adult-led activities. School age children are well supported with their homework, they like to practise their times tables, write stories, draw and colour. They particularly enjoy biscuit making and using the Usborne activity books for inspiration for their painting and sticking activities. For example, collecting twigs and leaves to create a nature collage. Children greatly enjoy their time with the childminder as she routinely joins in with their play and encourages them to use their imaginations as they play with the wide range of dressing up clothes and play food. Careful planning ensures the older children get individual attention when the babies sleep such as, playing snap cards and completing puzzles. Children benefit as the childminder ensures there are opportunities for them to play individually and mix with their peers during outings with other childminders. For example, older children enjoy trips to the cinema, visiting Madame Tussauds, the Cuttys Ark, a local fire station, watching the fish at an aquarium and taking a river boat trip.

Babies and young children explore the excellent selection of interactive activity toys. They pretend to chat on the musical mobile phones, push play buses on the road map, use the stacking rings and build with bricks. Children feel a real sense of achievement and their self esteem is developing as the childminder routinely praises their efforts. They have great fun looking at books and educational posters with the childminder who uses knowledge from the 'Introduction to Early Reading' training to introduce even the youngest children to letters and sounds. As a result children are developing a love for books. Younger children benefit from the interaction and activities organised by the childminder at a toddler group. They have tremendous fun playing sleeping lions, dashing under the large parachute and having their faces painted and particularly enjoy trips to the beach, donkey rides and feeding the ducks at local parks.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are polite, friendly, play together extremely well and are learning to take turns. The childminder acts as a very good role model as she listens attentively and speaks with respect. Children are gently reminded to say please and thank you. The childminder uses knowledge gained through training and literature from the NSPCC, such as 'Not Naughty, But Normal', to influence her behavioural strategies to ensure they are appropriate to a child's age and level of understanding. For example, she uses simple explanations, separation and distraction to good effect. Good behaviour is rewarded with praise, attention and appreciation. The childminder prevents disputes over toys by ensuring there are sufficient play resources and even purchases more than one of the most popular items. A written behavioural management policy

demonstrates the childminder's consistent approach and outlines her strategies. Any significant incidents are recorded appropriately and shared with parents.

Children learn to value and respect each other because the childminder values each child as an individual. They are learning about history and how to care for their environment as they visit places of interest such as Tilbury Fort, help to plant bulbs and re-cycle glass at the bottle bank. The childminder involves herself in local authority 'Diversity Days' where good quality information and resources can be found. Children gain a balanced picture of the world as they play with excellent resources which reflect the wider community such as, an extensive range of dressing up clothes from different countries, dolls, play food and by looking at books together such as 'All kinds of Bodies' and 'Why are all families different?'.

The childminder demonstrates an extremely positive attitude towards inclusion and caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The home has been adapted and as a result children with mobility difficulties have full access to the playroom and garden. Good quality toys and books such as, 'Why do some people have wheelchairs?' help children understand about disability. Training such as, a singing and signing workshop and learning Makaton enables the childminder to support children with communication problems. Each child's needs are fully discussed prior to them starting which helps ensure appropriate information is gathered in order to meet their needs effectively. The childminder works closely with parents and outside agencies to encourage all children to reach their full learning potential.

Partnership with parents is excellent as time is spent clarifying issues by reading through all of the childminder's policies and procedures together. Written agreements, consent forms and records are routinely shared with parents and the childminder clearly displays relevant information regarding her registered numbers, insurance details and information about the complaints procedure on a cupboard in the playroom. Written references from parents show they are very happy with the service. In particular they commend the childminder's supportive and understanding attitude and say the childminder works hard to support their children's physical and emotional development. Another parent says the childminder provides a very safe and secure environment with lots of activities and fun outings. The childminder makes good use of a digital camera to share pictures with parents of what their children have been doing.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides. Children benefit from being cared for by an experienced and professional childminder who has an excellent knowledge and understanding of their needs and development. She strives to improve her own professional understanding and keep in touch with current thinking and best practice by meeting regularly with other childminders, reading relevant child care articles and frameworks such as Birth to three matters and by attending conferences and training workshops. For example, Policy writing and Portfolio building, the CACHE Level III Certificate in Childminding Practice (this includes the Introducing Childminding Practice (ICP), Developing Childminding Practice (DCP) and Extending Childminding Practice (ECP), the National Childminding Association (NCMA) Quality First training and is scheduled to attend training on the new Early Years Foundation Stage. The childminder is currently Treasurer of the Greater London NCMA and helps to run a childminding toddler group.

Children thrive and their self esteem is high as a result of the quality time they spend with the childminder. She organises her time and home environment to maximise opportunities for

children. For example, children are developing their independence and own interests as they move around independently, self selecting resources and choosing activities to take part in. Flexible routines ensure there is a balance of vigorous and quiet activities, both at home and when out and about. Children are closely supervised whilst they play in the setting although the childminder encourages them to develop their independence. Children rest according to their needs and the childminder ensures all children have some quality individual time with her. As a result children feel settled as they are cared for in a safe and stimulating environment.

The childminder demonstrates an excellent understanding of the requirements of the National Standards and maintains all regulatory documentation to a high standard. The childminder complies with her certificate of registration as adult to child ratios are adhered to and the attendance register consolidates this. The clear and informative policies and procedures provide valuable information for parents and effectively support children's health, safety and well-being. These are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they are in line with current legislation, regulations and guidance.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection the childminder was set one recommendation. As a result resources are well organised and children can now independently select their own toys.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection one complaint has been made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards. The complaint related to National Standard 1: suitable person and National Standard 6: safety. Concerns were raised over the fact that the childminder was incapacitated and that care was being provided by her daughter, who was unregistered. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to investigate and as a result three actions were set under National Standard 1 and National Standard 6. A response was received from the provider outlining the action taken. Ofsted was satisfied that by meeting these actions the provider remained qualified for registration and the investigation was closed.

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 outstanding. 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

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

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