

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	504361
Inspection date	14 March 2008
Inspector	Amanda Gill
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 has been registered since 1997. She lives with her husband, adult daughter and 15-year-old son in Dagenham. The house is within walking distance of local shops, parks and schools. The whole of the ground floor and the upstairs bathroom are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under the age of eight years at any one time. The childminder currently has seven children on roll, but only two of these are under eight years of age. One child was present at the inspection.

The family have a pet cat, fish, and keep canaries in an aviary in the garden.

The childminder takes children to local carer and toddler groups on a regular basis. She is a member of the National Child Minding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are happy in the childminder's very clean and well-maintained home. Children are kept safe from cross-infection and illness because the childminder has excellent routines and procedures in place to maintain their health and well-being. Children are encouraged to wash their hands after eating, after using the toilet or having their nappies changed, and after stroking and feeding the family pets. Children have their own named towels in the bathroom to ensure the risk of cross-infection is minimised. Children's welfare is very well promoted because the daily routine is based around the needs of the children, for example, to ensure the younger children can have a sleep if they need one.

Children are protected and nurtured as the childminder prioritises their well-being and follows comprehensive written procedures relating to sickness, accidents and medication. These have been discussed and agreed with parents. The childminder has clear procedures in place to follow in the event that a child needs hospital treatment. Children's health is well promoted.

Children benefit from the healthy and nutritious diet provided by the childminder. Children and parents are provided with a detailed menu of breakfast and lunch selections that the childminder has chosen, and this can be discussed to ensure that any personal likes or dislikes are taken into account. This allows children to feel involved and increases their independence. Food provided includes spaghetti on toast, beans on toast, jacket potatoes, sandwiches, eggs, salad and a selection of vegetables, as well as fruit and healthy snacks at appropriate times. Drinks are made available throughout the day. The childminder ensures that she is aware of allergies and other special dietary requirements so that children's individual needs are met.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities that contribute to their good health. Children benefit from opportunities to play outdoors in the fresh air and develop their physical skills. For example, they walk to and from school every day, walk to the local museum and library, and make good use of the nearby parks. Children also have access to the childminder's enclosed garden, where they enjoy bouncing on the trampoline, playing with bats and balls, and feeding the canaries and fish.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and well-maintained environment. The childminder provides an environment that is warm, friendly and homely. Children are at ease and well settled. Children are able to freely access the toys and resources available. Resources on offer are in good repair and the childminder washes the toys regularly to ensure that they are hygienic. They are stimulating, fun and provide sufficient challenge. The childminder rotates toys to maintain the children's interest.

Children use a wide range of safe and developmentally suitable resources. These are well organised and stored in easily accessible, low-level boxes in the lounge to encourage children's independence. The childminder has a comprehensive knowledge of health and safety. She carries out a visual risk assessment of her home each day to ensure it is free from potential hazards before children arrive. This means that children are able to move around safely, freely and independently. However, during the inspection, the door to the kitchen was left open,

where the childminder keeps hazardous chemicals and substances in unlocked, low-level cupboards. The childminder stated that that this was a one off; the door is normally locked, and she uses the conservatory entrance to the kitchen. The childminder helps children to learn about road safety and emergency evacuation procedures as part of their daily routines. Effective fire safety precautions are implemented. These include having smoke alarms on both levels of the home, an accessible fire blanket in the kitchen, and a clear fire evacuation procedure that is practised every month with the children and evaluated.

The childminder safeguards and promotes children's welfare well and has all the required procedures and documents in place. However, the child protection policy does not include what the childminder must do if an allegation is made against her. The childminder has an excellent knowledge and understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse, and knows what procedures to follow if she is concerned about a child's welfare. These are discussed with parents prior to minding to ensure that they are aware of the childminder's role and responsibilities in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop extremely close and caring relationships with the childminder and her family. Children's vocabulary and language develop exceptionally well through her continuous interaction. The childminder uses open-ended questions and takes an interest in what children have to say, maintaining eye contact with them and answering them fully at all times. The childminder has a good understanding of the importance of play in children's development and provides a good selection of activities supported by a wide range of resources. Children's vocabulary and language is enriched by the childminder's interaction, and through the use of books, puzzles, games and other objects. For example, children enjoy wearing a blind fold to taste and guess the name of different fruits, which means they begin to understand how their different senses work.

Children feel good about themselves, as they receive praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements. They show a real interest in what they are doing as the activities provided by the childminder are varied and stimulating. For example, younger children enjoy touching and feeling pictures in a story book and using the toy telephone to speak to family and friends.

Younger children benefit from the childminder's good understanding of their specific needs. They enjoy many activities and experiences to support their play and learning. This is supported by the childminder's knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework.

The childminder also takes children to a number of local groups, so that they can interact with others from outside the setting. Children particularly enjoy attending the local children's centre support groups.

Children respond enthusiastically to the wide range of activities provided, such as games, role play, dressing up, Lego, play dough, puzzles, trains, and construction, kitchen, and physical activities. There are lots of opportunities for children to be imaginative. They regularly use glue, scissors, glitter, tape and a wide range of art and craft materials. Children also benefit greatly from opportunities to home bake, when they measure and weigh the ingredients for recipes such as cous cous cakes, pies and a selection of fruit smoothies.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel valued because they are treated with lots of respect. The childminder provides a meaningful range of activities and resources that promote a positive view of the wider world to increase children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others. Children begin to recognise and respect diversity as they use resources such as dolls reflecting different skin tones, or celebrate different festivals. For example, the children's hands were painted with henna to celebrate Eid, and they made pancakes on Pancake Day. The childminder has a good selection of resources that represent positive images of individuals with a disability and an appropriate equal opportunities policy. She teaches children to care for one another and not discriminate against others.

There are very good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the childminder demonstrates a very positive attitude to meeting the needs of all children. Children's needs are well met because the childminder obtains detailed information from parents about each child's individual needs and background.

Children benefit from spending time at the childminder's home because they are cared for in accordance with their parents' wishes. This is achieved through the positive and professional partnerships that the childminder has established with parents. Children's individual needs are met as there is an effective verbal and written communication system in place. All parents receive a comprehensive handbook when they enrol for the childminder's service. This includes a well-written complaints procedure that includes contact details of the regulator. The childminder takes time at the end of each day to discuss children's daily routines with parents, for example, what they have eaten or drunk, nappy changes, sleep patterns and activities. Parents value the service provided by the childminder. They have access to the childminder's policies and procedures, so they have a good understanding of her work.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a very motivated and committed childminder, who is well qualified in the field of early years. Children are well supervised by the childminder, who ensures only suitable people have contact with them. This contributes to keeping them safe. The range and quality of activities and opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, is suitable for all children. The setting is homely and very well organised to support children in their play. Appropriate storage of toys and resources ensures children of all ages are able to access these independently.

The childminder has completed first aid training and has attended an extensive number of other relevant courses, such as behaviour management, language and literacy, celebrating diversity and fire safety. She has also attended further specific training to ensure that she is up-to-date with current legislation and methods of working, such the new Early Years Foundation Stage.

The childminder efficiently uses policies and procedures to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. She shares them regularly with parents to keep them well informed about their child's activities and the service she provides. Daily routines contribute to continuity in the children's care. The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder was asked to devise and implement a complaints procedure which informs parents of the name, address, and telephone number of the regulator. A well-written and comprehensive complaints procedure, which includes contact details for the regulator, is now in place.

The childminder was also asked to ensure gas appliances conform to safety requirements. The childminder has an annual gas safety check carried out on her property. During the inspection, she provided documentation to prove that the gas appliances in the property were maintained to a high safety standard.

Finally, the childminder was asked to increase the opportunities for children to appreciate and value one another's similarities and differences, and to value diversity. The childminder has purchased a wide range of toys and resources to promote diversity and children's awareness of the wider world. She also has a range of posters, puzzles and books that encourage children to value one another's similarities and differences.

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):

- update the child protection policy to include what the childminder must do if an allegation is made against her
- ensure all harmful chemicals and substances are kept out of children's reach

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