

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY226952
Inspection date	08 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 2002. She lives with her husband and daughter aged 17 years. The family live in a two bedroom mid-terraced house in Dagenham, Essex within walking distance to the local shops, park and schools. All areas of the property are suitable to be used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The family have one cat.

The childminder offers full and part-time places and is registered to care for up to six children under eight. She currently has four children under eight years on roll. The childminder also provides care for children over the age of eight and currently has two children on roll. The childminder is registered to work with an assistant, her daughter, who may at times agreed and confirmed in writing by parents, be left in sole charge of the children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder has fulfilled her obligation to register as a food business with the local Environmental Health Department. She has completed a food hygiene course and refers to leaflets and books on food safety to help ensure all food is stored, prepared and cooked in line with recommended guidelines. Regular discussion with parents, along with accurate record keeping, regarding individual feeding routines and special diets ensure children's individual dietary needs are catered for. Children choose from a selection of cereals, toast and fruit for breakfast. They have access to water, juice or milk and healthy snacks throughout the day. At lunch time children are offered a choice of dishes such as, macaroni cheese, a variety of sandwiches, soups and pasta. During the inspection children chose to have ham sandwiches and tucked into a selection of fresh salad, gherkins and pickled onions. Mealtimes are a sociable occasion with lots of chat and opportunities to try new foods. For example, the childminder introduces lots of different vegetables and now a favourite of the children is spinach. Children are learning what foods are good for them because the childminder talks to them about the benefits of a healthy diet. Meals are nutritious and well balanced and after school the children are offered a dinner such as, fish cakes, chicken curry, lasagne, shepherds pie and roasts.

Children are able to rest comfortably and enjoy a cuddle on the settee when they are tired. A travel cot and clean linen is available for young children and babies individual sleep patterns are followed. The childminder ensures children are kept out of the sun when it is at its hottest and there is a policy in place which asks parents to provide sun cream and a hat, in order that children may be comfortable and protected. The childminder provides a wide variety of indoor and outdoor physical activities, and children benefit from the fresh air and exercise as they walk to and from school. The childminder demonstrates an excellent understanding regarding the appropriate levels of support for different ages and stages of children, giving them opportunities to play safely together. As a result, children have great fun jumping on the bouncy castle and splashing about in the paddling pool in the childminder's garden. They are developing their co-ordination skills as they enjoy the freedom of running and exploring the large equipment at local parks and toddler groups. As a result children are developing a positive attitude toward being physically active and this contributes to their good health.

Children are cared for in a very hygienic and well organised environment. Thorough cleaning routines ensure all areas of the home are meticulously clean. Highchairs and tables are wiped down with an anti-bacterial solution before and after each use and toys are routinely washed and disinfected. The childminder ensures her cat is in good health and that it is kept away from the children during meal times. Positive steps are taken to protect children's health and prevent the spread of infection. The childminder gently helps children to blow their noses and reminds them to cover their mouth whilst coughing or sneezing explaining to them that, 'coughs and sneezes spread diseases'. Children know to wash their hands after visiting the bathroom and before eating, and to help prevent cross infection each child can easily identify their individual hand towel as each has a different colour and character on the front. As a result, children are developing an excellent understanding of the importance of good hygiene and how to help keep themselves healthy.

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. Prior consent is obtained for the administration of any medication, and detailed accident and

medication records are completed and carbon copies given to parents. The childminder has an exclusion table and shares a written policy regarding sick children that asks parents to keep their child at home if they are contagious. However, should a child become unwell, or have an accident when with the childminder, they benefit from her calm and caring approach. In addition, she ensures children have good continuity of care by working closely with another childminder so that if ever she is unwell parents may choose to send their child to the other childminder. As a result children benefit from the childminder's highly effective procedures and practices which help meet their nutritional, physical and health needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder is extremely careful to ensure her home and garden are safe before children arrive. The home is well organised and uncluttered which helps children to be able to move around safely. The childminder is extremely vigilant, and has taken steps to remove/minimise any potential hazards. For example, safety gates prevent unsupervised access to the kitchen and stairs, locks on cupboards prevent children having access to any potentially hazardous items in the kitchen and bathroom, electric sockets have covers, garden tools are locked away, fences are secure and gates locked. As a result, risk of accidental injury to children is minimised and children can freely explore and play in a secure and safe environment. Children's safety has been further considered as games with small pieces are stored separately. This enables even the youngest children to safely and independently select their own toys and activities from the storage boxes in the living room. The childminder ensures all resources are spotlessly clean and well maintained. She regularly rotates the boxes of toys so that children are provided with a variety of age appropriate and stimulating resources.

The childminder has a fire blanket positioned in the kitchen and ensures the smoke detectors are in working order by testing them on a monthly basis. The childminder has attended a course on fire safety and as a result has carefully considered her evacuation plan. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe as the childminder regularly discusses, and practises with the children, a procedure to follow in the event of a fire or emergency in the home. Children know they must listen carefully to the childminder and go straight to the nearest exit and shout 'help!'.

Children are safeguarded and protected from potential harm because the childminder demonstrates that she is able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and/or neglect. The childminder ensures she has up-to-date information and refers to guidance kept in her childminding file. As a result she has a very secure knowledge of the procedures she must follow in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures should she have a concern about the welfare of a child in her care. The childminder works closely with another registered childminder and so emergency procedures ensure children are only ever left with people who have been vetted and are suitable. The childminder has a collection policy which asks parents to inform her if someone else is to collect their child and to provide a full description of the individual.

Children are kept safe whilst out and about. For example, as the childminder does not drive permission has been obtained from parents to take children on public transport. The childminder ensures she carries her mobile phone and emergency contact details at all times. When visiting parks the childminder carefully checks for any unsupervised dogs and hazards such as glass. Children are learning the importance of simple rules to help keep them safe. For example, on the school run they are learning how to cross the road safely as they know to always hold the

childminders hand, to press the button and to wait for the green man before crossing. Children are reminded about the dangers of water and know they may only play in the paddling pool when the childminder is watching them and that they must not throw toys as it could hurt someone. The childminder ensures use of the lap top is closely monitored.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are settled and very confident. They show a sense of belonging as the childminder, and her family, make them very welcome. The childminder takes the time to find out from parents about their child's individual needs and has a highly effective settling in procedure which means children arrive at the childminder's full of enthusiasm and settle very quickly. The childminder shares information with parents about children's progress and achievements through daily discussion and the use of a contact book for younger children. The childminder has a warm and friendly approach and as a result children have formed very close and caring relationships with her. For example, children routinely enjoy a cuddle and a young child says to the childminder, 'Thanks sweetheart, you're a good girl' and a school age child writes, 'I love coming, she's the best childminder'.

The childminder has attended training on the Birth to three matters framework and skilfully uses her knowledge to support children. She understands how children learn and ensures routines are based around the needs of the children with an excellent balance between child and adult-led activities. Children enjoy having stories read to them and know how to handle books. Young children are gaining in confidence as the childminder encourages them and builds on their interests and develops their learning. For example, whilst children pretend to shop using play food and the till the childminder uses the opportunity to talk to the children about all of the different types of fruit and vegetables. She encourages the children to make a list, work out how much things might cost and to count out the money. Children's self esteem is developing as they routinely receive praise and encouragement from the childminder as they play. For example, as a child struggles to build a car with some construction the childminder gives encouragement saying, 'Yes, go on, that's right, see you can do it, well done'.

Children's imagination is developing as they greatly enjoy imitating every day experiences such as, playing with dolls, dressing, undressing, ironing and hanging up the dolls clothes. The childminder is involved in their play and engages children in discussion by asking open-ended questions like 'I wonder why...?' and 'How do you think that..?'. Children have great fun with the childminder as when it snows she helps them build a snow man and throw snow balls in the garden. Children enjoy to model with dough, paint and take part in activities such as, making Easter chicks, Christmas crackers and decorations for a children's Halloween party held at the childminder's house. Children benefit as the childminder ensures there are opportunities for them to play individually and as part of a group, both at home, at toddler groups and when on outings. For example, children enjoy outings to see the sights in London, visit local parks to feed the ducks and squirrels, play on the sand and paddle in the sea, and watch the animals in Paradise Park and Colchester zoo.

Children are developing good skills in using technology as they have opportunities to use the lap top, DVD and CD player and games console. School age children are offered help with their homework, learn to take turns whilst playing board games such as, Operation and Frustration, and particularly enjoy singing along to songs on a play station game. The childminder involves herself in the children's school events such as, watching them in plays and at sports days. As a result the children feel valued and supported.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder knows the children and their families extremely well. As a result children share news about themselves and their families, helping to develop a strong sense of belonging and being valued. For example, they talk about the birth of a sibling and act out aspects of their home life during role play. Each child is encouraged to decorate a frame to hold their photograph. Children are actively learning about each other, different cultures, religions and the wider world around them as the childminder provides appropriate resources which show positive images of diversity and different people taking responsible roles in society. For example, children play imaginatively with a dolls house using small world figures depicting people from different ethnic backgrounds and those with disabilities. Good quality books are read to children and they enjoy playing with felt figure, finger puppets, depicting both men and women in a variety of responsible roles. Children take part in simple craft and cooking activities such as, making Easter bonnets, decorating Chinese lanterns, cooking noodles and making pizza.

The childminder takes the time to get to know children's individual personalities and stages of development extremely well. Boys and girls are actively encouraged to take part in all activities and the childminder carefully considers how she can make her practice and home inclusive and welcoming to all ages and abilities. The childminder demonstrates a positive and caring approach to caring for a child with a learning difficulty and/or a disability. The childminder is happy to work in partnership with parents, professionals and outside agencies and has learnt Makaton, in order that she can support children with language and communication difficulties.

Partnership with parents is excellent. For example, written agreements with parents help to establish the expectations of both parties and as a result children's needs are identified and their individual care arrangements clarified and agreed. The childminder is committed to the children and views childminding as a shared responsibility with the parents. For example, she says they have laughed and cried together during school plays and worked as a team so a child mastered potty training. Numerous written comments from parents are extremely positive and glowing in their praise. In particular they commend the childminder's compassion and understanding of their child's needs, say she has excellent standards and maintains a safe environment. Another parent says the childminder is a credit to the job and that she has played a major role in the development of her child.

Children show care and concern for each other and have become close friends. The childminder acts as a very good role model as she listens attentively and speaks with respect. Children are developing an awareness of what is right and wrong as the childminder has realistic expectations and sets appropriate boundaries. She uses positive methods to manage children's behaviour and is able to distract them promptly from negative behaviour. Good behaviour is rewarded with praise, attention and appreciation. Children are provided with a wide range of interesting activities and experiences, and as a result are well occupied and do not become bored or restless. The childminder's expectations are flexible and adjusted according to the age and stage of development of each child. As a result children are extremely well behaved and polite.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides care. She demonstrates an excellent understanding of the requirements of the National Standards and ensures that all regulatory documentation is in place and maintained 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 childminder has excellent arrangements in place to ensure that children are safe and secure whilst in her care. For example, children are always under her direct supervision and never left with un-vetted adults. Record keeping is very well organised, stored in files and information is easily accessible whilst maintaining confidentiality in all areas as each child has a separate section in a file. A set of informative policies and procedures provide valuable information for parents and effectively promote children's health, safety and well-being. These have been recently reviewed and updated to ensure they are in line with current legislation, regulations and guidance. For example, the complaints procedure and safeguarding children policy.

Children's self esteem is high and they thrive as a result of the quality time they spend with the childminder. She organises her home and garden to maximise opportunities for children. For example, children can move around independently, self select resources and rest according to their needs. As a consequence they are developing their independence and own interests. Daily routines are organised around nursery and school runs, and the childminder ensures children have a good balance of outdoor, indoor, quiet and vigorous activities. As a consequence, children feel confident and settled as they are cared for in a safe, stimulating and loving environment.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association. She strives to improve her own professional understanding and keep in touch with current thinking and best practice by meeting with other childminders, reading relevant child care articles and by attending training. For example, Policy Writing and the CACHE Level III Certificate in Childminding Practice including the Introduction, Developing and Extending Childminding Practice and she is scheduled to attend training on the new Early Years Foundation Stage.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection the childminder was set three recommendations.

As a result children are provided with an appropriate range of activities and resources which help to promote diversity.

Parents are provided with a policy which covers the procedure to be followed should they wish to make a complaint.

The childminder has carefully considered her behaviour management policy and strategies to take account of children's level of understanding and maturity and as a result children's behaviour is managed extremely well.

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 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