

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY278984
Inspection date	16 January 2008
Inspector	Lara Hickson
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 February 2004. She lives with her husband and two children aged nine and four years. The family lives in a three-bedroom end of terrace house, situated in a residential area of Rush Green, Essex. The premises are within walking distance of local schools, shops, parks, bus routes and a short journey to Romford town centre. All areas situated on the ground floor of the property are used for childminding; a fully enclosed garden is available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of three children under eight years and is currently minding four children on a part time basis. The childminder is available to drop off, and pick up children from the local primary school. She is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA).

The family do not have any pets.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder demonstrates a clear understanding of how children's health is promoted. She encourages children to develop independent hygiene practices from an early age and role models appropriate practices throughout the inspection. For example, she washes her hands thoroughly prior to preparing snacks and meals and encourages children to follow these practices. The childminder also reminds children of appropriate practice where required, for example, she encourages children to wipe their noses and cover their mouths and noses when coughing or sneezing. This actively prevents the spread of infection.

The childminder has effective, comprehensive policies in place regarding sickness to prevent the spread of infection, for example, the childminder does not care for children who have a contagious or infectious illness. The procedures in place for administering medication and for dealing with any accidents are appropriate and effectively safeguard children's health and welfare. The childminder also clearly records any existing injuries and clearly specifies in her Health and Safety policy that parents must inform her of any accidents occurring to their children at home causing significant injury or marks. Ofsted is informed of any injuries requiring treatment by a General Practitioner or hospital that have occurred whilst children are in the care of the childminder. The childminder has an up to date first aid certificate and is able to provide appropriate care in the event of an accident/emergency. She clearly understands the need to maintain an up-to-date first aid qualification and is to attend a first aid course prior to her certificate expiring. The childminder has obtained written parental permission in relation to emergency treatment and to administer medication. A well stocked first aid box is in place and is replenished where required. The childminder has excellent systems in place to gather appropriate information from parents regarding medical needs, dietary requirements and allergies. All information is clearly and confidentially recorded on child record forms.

Children are actively encouraged to take part in daily outside activities including walking to and from school on a regular basis and trips to local parks and libraries. They also have regular access to a secure, well maintained garden area with a wide range of toys and resources to develop and enhance their physical skills. The childminder demonstrates a clear understanding of the benefits of fresh air and exercise and is aware that regular physical exercise contributes to keeping children fit and healthy.

Children benefit from being offered a wide range of healthy, nutritious meals and snacks, including plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day as well as diluted low sugar fruit juice and milk. The childminder discusses each child's individual dietary needs with their parents at the beginning of the placement and ensures that she is aware of and records specific details of any special requirements. This ensures that she is able to effectively meet all of the children's dietary needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, warm and welcoming environment, where any risks have been assessed and minimised effectively by the childminder, ensuring that children's safety is fully promoted. An extremely comprehensive health and safety policy is in operation and the measures outlined in this ensure the on-going safety of the children. For example, the childminder ensures

that the home setting is well maintained and there is ample space for the children to play, rest and enjoy the safe, appropriate resources and activities. Children are able to independently choose from a wide range of toys and activities, which the childminder ensures are suitable for their individual age and stage of development. The childminder closely supervises the children whilst also encouraging their independence. She also demonstrates an excellent awareness of safety for example, she reminds the children to sit still when eating their snack and explains that if they walk around with food they may choke. As a result of the childminder's risk assessments and safety measures children are able to move safely around the setting.

Appropriate arrival and collection procedures are in operation to promote children's safety for example, a password system is used if someone else other than a parent/carer arrives to collect child. The childminder will not allow children to be collected by anyone other than their parent/carer unless changes had been discussed in advance. Emergency contact details are kept for all children.

The childminder has suitable fire safety arrangements in place, including the smoke alarms on each floor and a fire blanket. An emergency evacuation plan is in place, although it is not practised with the minded children regularly and details of fire drills are not currently recorded. Although the childminder rarely uses her car for childminding purposes she demonstrates a clear understanding of the new legislation requirements regarding car seat regulations and has appropriate business use car insurance in place.

The childminder has a sound understanding of child protection issues and knows the correct procedures to follow if she has any concerns about a child in her care. She has recently updated her training in child protection issues and has local safeguarding children board procedures at hand for easy reference if required. Children are effectively safeguarded in relation to child protection issues because the childminder is aware of her role and responsibilities with regards to recording and reporting any concerns. The childminder protects children from unsuitable and/or unvetted adults.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Childminder spends time with children playing and encouraging their learning through play. Children have developed very close relationships with the childminder, who is extremely responsive to their moods and needs. Children receive praise and affection from the childminder which enhances their confidence and self esteem and fosters their sense of belonging.

The childminder demonstrates a clear understanding of the need to provide a range of age appropriate resources and activities for the children in her care and of meeting their individual needs. She provides a broad range of challenging, stimulating activities and play experiences for the children and these are easily accessible promoting choice and independence. The childminder ensures that resources are age and stage appropriate and that younger children cannot access toys or dangerous items, such as scissors. Children are appropriately supervised by the childminder throughout the inspection although she does not hinder their independent learning. The childminder has attended training in the Birth to three Matters framework and uses this training to provide stimulating experiences for children under three years.

The childminder spends her day talking to and playing with the children and actively encourages their development in all areas, particularly their language development. She discusses what will happen next throughout the daily routine preparing children for any changes, such as walking

up to collect children from school. Excellent relationships are observed between the childminder and the children and the childminder clearly understands the children's individual characters. She encourages excellent manners for example, when she gives children a fruit snack she encourages them to say 'thank you' at their own level. Children's emotional needs are met through praise, encouragement, comfort and reassurance from the childminder. For example, the childminder offers reassurance to one child at the start of the inspection as the child is a little unsure of the unfamiliar adult on premises.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children and parent/carers are welcome into the setting. The childminder has an Equal Opportunities policy in operation and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for everyone. She values each child as an individual and ensures that she has appropriate information recorded in their files to meet their individual needs. This includes information on each child's dietary, medical, cultural and religious requirements. The childminder listens and responds well to the children's individual needs, characters and daily moods which ensures their safety and enjoyment in her setting. The children enjoy a range of different resources and toys which promote diversity and positive images of culture, race, disability and religion, such as puppets, dolls, books, puzzles and posters.

Although the childminder has no previous experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, she demonstrates a very positive, realistic approach towards caring for a child with any additional needs. The childminder is happy to work closely with parents and outside professionals as required and would discuss any concerns with parents in a sensitive, informative and non judgemental way.

The childminder endeavours to promote positive behaviour within her setting and values cooperation and caring attitudes. She feels that children need to know what the behaviour boundaries and expectations are in order to behave appropriately. The childminder is an excellent role model for children and is observed thanking them for any help and treating them with respect and courtesy. The childminder promotes desirable behaviour, such as kindness and sharing and tries to avoid situations where children only receive attention for undesirable behaviour. Time out is used occasionally but generally distraction and age appropriate explanations are used.

The childminder demonstrates an excellent understanding of the benefits of working in partnership with parents. She has a partnership with parents policy in operation in which she recognises that parents are the first educators of their children. Parents are welcome into the childminder's home setting and are encouraged to share relevant information about their children with her. This enables the childminder to effectively meet the children's needs and respect parental preferences. The close working relationships that have been established between the childminder and the parents help to ensure the children receive continuity of care. Parents receive both verbal and written feedback each day which ensures that they are kept well informed about their child's care and enjoyment. Parents are glowing in their assessment of the childminder's care of their children and one parent writes in a reference 'everyday I go to work knowing my children are being cared for in a fun, safe and loving family atmosphere'. All parents are made aware of the childminder's policies and procedures. The childminder is aware of changes in legal requirements in relation to complaints and investigations and has a written procedure for parents to follow if they have any cause for concern regarding the care of their children or about the service they receive.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder has an extremely well organised, professional approach towards her role as a childminder. She ensures that she maintains a valid first aid certificate at all times. This ensures that she has up to date knowledge of current first aid practices and can take the most appropriate action in the event of an accident or emergency to a child in her care. The childminder demonstrates a positive, professional approach towards updating her knowledge and understanding and attends training on a regular basis which underpins her work with minded children. The childminder demonstrates an excellent understanding of the requirements of the National Standards and has an extensive portfolio to complement this. She shares her portfolio and procedures with parents and this provides a valuable insight into the service she provides.

Documentation is maintained to a very high standard and effectively promotes the health, safety and welfare of the children. All of the children's records are up to date and include all of the necessary details and parental consents required. Records are stored confidentially in separate folders for each minded child and are stored in a way which promotes confidentiality. Policies and procedures relating to all of the outcomes for children are in place and effectively promoted. However, although a fire safety procedure is in place children have not practised the emergency evacuation procedures recently and this may have an affect on the children's understanding of the procedures to follow in an emergency.

The childminder demonstrates a clear understanding of her role in supporting minded children in their play, development and learning. The home setting is organised appropriately with space for play, meals and rest and children are able to move freely and confidently around the home because effective safety precautions are in place.

The childminder meets the needs of the range of children for whom she provides care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection one recommendation was made to continue to supplement play materials with items that reflect positive images of the wider world. The childminder has a wide range of resources available for the children to enjoy that enhance their understanding of positive images and diversity, these include books, dolls, posters, puzzles and puppets. This improvement encourages children's understanding of diversity and helps to promote respect and consideration for others.

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):

- practise the emergency evacuation procedure regularly with minded children and record appropriate details

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