

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY291826
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Sandra Daniels
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder has been registered since 2004. She is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time and is currently caring for six children under eight years, who attend for a variety of sessions. Three of these children are in receipt of funded nursery education. The childminder works alongside a co-minder and also with an assistant; they share responsibility for care of all the children.

The childminder lives with her parents and two adult siblings. They live in a residential area of Brentwood, close to the High Street, schools, pre-schools and park. The whole of the property is used for childminding except the basement room. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder takes children to and collects them from the local pre school and attends carer and toddler groups with them. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding

Association. She is also a member of the childminding network and is accredited to receive funding for nursery education.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well cared for in a home which is cleaned and checked daily and maintained to a high level of hygiene. Food is prepared in a clean area and there is provision for the sterilisation of babies' feeding equipment. Children develop an excellent understanding of simple health practices as, for example, they learn about washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. They talk about the reasons for doing this which helps to reinforce their understanding. The childminder demonstrates to younger children how to wash their hands properly and teaches them about personal hygiene through their daily routine. Children and the childminder talk together about getting washed, cleaning their teeth and brushing their hair. Children use a step to reach the hand basin so that they can begin to be independent and there is always a clean towel for them to use. Children are extremely well cared for if they become ill. The childminder has all necessary information to hand so that she can contact parents or medical professionals quickly to discuss the action to take. Unwell children are made comfortable and are closely monitored. Parental consent to administer medication is in place for each child and the childminder has a clear sickness policy which is shared with parents. This indicates sensible suggested exclusion periods for children who may have an infectious illness. The childminder and her co-minder have current training in first aid and this allows them to act appropriately in the event of illness or accident.

Children are positively encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle because the childminder provides extremely healthy snacks and meals and promotes children's knowledge and understanding of nutritional issues through discussion, activities and reading. She uses themes such as 'Healthy Living' to further children's understanding of why it is important to eat healthy foods. She always ensures that fresh fruit and vegetables are available for children. Children develop an increased awareness of the benefits of a healthy diet as they enjoy home cooked food from fresh ingredients. They sometimes go shopping with the childminder and enjoy choosing something healthy for a snack. Children also love to help to prepare meals and snacks, for example, they had great fun making their own pizzas. The childminder meets specific dietary needs within the varied menu available to the children and respects parental wishes and preferences. Children have regular opportunities to help create a menu that they will enjoy eating and which contain all the ingredients for a healthy diet. For example, the childminder ensures foods contain a balanced amount of protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals. Younger children enjoy tasting new and familiar foods which are prepared to the appropriate texture for their individual stage of development. The childminder follows the 'safer food, better business' guide and keeps meticulous records in this regard. Children always sit at the table to eat, learn good manners and social rules, and respond to one another with courtesy and care. Children are positively encouraged to drink water which is freely and constantly available from dedicated cups.

Children enjoy a wide variety of activities which contribute to good health. They have daily access to outdoor activities including walks and visits to the local park. They have an enclosed garden where they have large equipment and also participate in planting and growing strawberries, using child-sized tools and gardening gloves. Children love to create an obstacle course in the garden and develop skills of control and co-ordination as they roll hoops and go through tunnels. They develop fine motor skill through using crayons, pencils, threading beads and playing with small world figures. Younger children join in the activities enthusiastically because the childminder makes very good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Her clear understanding and knowledge of individual children ensures they have excellent levels of support and encouragement to develop new skills. Children have the freedom to sleep, rest or be active as they choose. Younger children sleep in a quiet area of the house and there is always a clean blanket for each child.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very well cared for in an exceptionally welcoming, clean, safe and secure home environment. The childminder uses space in a highly creative manner enabling children to access toys independently and safely. Children have a clear understanding of the areas to which they have free access, and those which they require the childminder's agreement to access, for example, the kitchen where they are always supervised closely. All cleaning products and dangerous kitchen equipment is out of the reach of children in cupboards which are locked.

Children independently select activities from an easily accessible, exceptionally wide range of stimulating resources, which are of very good quality and are age appropriate. The childminder uses detailed planning programmes to identify the potential learning supported by each item of equipment in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage. She carefully monitors and supervises children's choice of toys, to ensure they are appropriate for their age and stage of development and played with in a safe manner. The childminder is meticulous in ensuring that babies do not have access to toys with small parts.

The childminder is highly proactive in promoting safety. Children are unable to leave unsupervised and the childminder can monitor visitors to the premises at all times. The childminder takes great care to ensure that effective procedures are in place to protect children's safety. For example, children learn how to evacuate the house and this routine is regularly practised with them. A fire blanket is in place in the kitchen and smoke alarms are appropriately placed throughout the house. Children play in an extremely safe nursery area which is free from hazards and used exclusively by them. Comprehensive health and safety checks are carried out daily and accurately recorded. In addition, children's safety and security is further promoted and ensured as the childminder carries out regular detailed risk assessments in line with procedures from the childminding network and in conjunction with a network supervisor.

Children successfully learn about road safety as they walk around the local area and follow simple safety procedures such as walking in pairs and looking for safe places to cross. When travelling by car they are correctly restrained in seats and straps which are appropriate to their age. They also learn about safety in the home as they contribute towards devising the simple house rules which are in place. Comprehensive and clear written policies effectively support

children's safety. The childminder carefully ensures that any assistants working with children have undergone thorough vetting and safety checks before they are able to have any unsupervised contact with children. The childminder has a very clear understanding of her responsibility to protect children and explains this openly to parents. She has attended training in child protection and has accurate written guidance and support to close to hand should she need it.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy with the childminder and enthusiastically settle to play as they and their parents are warmly welcomed into the home. They quickly become involved in a wide range of stimulating activities which are carefully tailored to their interests, needs and stages of development. Children develop highly positive relationships with each other, enjoying playing, learning and eating together. This, combined with effective interaction with the childminder and her co-workers, helps children to build confidence and self-esteem. Children initiate their own play, accessing toys independently and allowing their imagination to take the lead. They suggest games and play these with the childminder, providing opportunities for them to learn about sharing and taking turns. Children are actively involved in contributing to the setting as they help to develop house rules and produce pictures and craft for display from walls and ceilings.

All areas of children's development is significantly enhanced by the exceptional quality of the childminder's interactions. Children are listened to and their communication skills are well promoted as the childminder positively responds to their gestures, sounds and questions. She has a very good understanding of how children learn and uses 'Birth to three matters' to meet young children's individual needs. Activities are adapted to ensure that all children can participate. Children are totally absorbed and interested in everything they do and are confident to try new experiences. Children are inquisitive and eager to learn and listen intently as the childminder talks about what they are doing.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children make excellent progress because the childminder has a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The childminder plans a vast range of activities and experiences that cover all areas of learning. She is very aware of children's individual progress and through observations, monitoring and recording of children's achievements, she plans experiences that ensure children are fully challenged and take the next step in their learning. Children's knowledge is extended through purposeful questioning which encourages them to think and work things out for themselves. This inspires them to ask questions of their own. Children's communication skills are superb and they are given time to talk individually and listen to each other. Children speak confidently to share their experiences of home, their families and any special news such as birthdays. Discussions play a major part of the children's daily routine and this enhances their language. Their vocabulary is extended due to the exceptionally high quality interactions they have with the childminder and others at the setting.

The childminder knows the children very well and continually provides children with challenge. She is very perceptive of children's needs and is very aware of the different rates at which

children learn. Children are given time to explore and complete activities. She provides help and support where necessary so children's confidence and self-esteem is increased. Children are happy, confident and enthusiastic learners who are eager to join in with new activities. They respond well to adult expectations of behaviour, showing the ability to negotiate and co-operate with each other. They are friendly and show care and concern for each other. Older children will help the younger ones and invite them to join in their games. In a topic on healthy eating, children discuss which foods they like as they play imaginatively in the pretend shop or café. The childminder introduces new vocabulary such as sweet and savoury and children go on to practise counting and sorting as they group foods into the sweet or savoury category. Children learn about where different foods come from and enjoy cooking activities following a trip to a café and the local shops.

Children develop a love for books and frequently select one for the childminder to read. They have fun making up their own stories deciding whether it should have a happy, sad or funny ending. Children use puppets to animate their stories. Children have excellent opportunities for mark making and to develop early writing skills. They write letters as they play, make shopping lists and write their names on their own work. They hold pencils correctly and learn letter formation as they write. Some children are able to do this unaided. When out on walks, children look out for signs such as road names and traffic signs, and are often able to sound out the words from recognition of the letters.

Children use mathematical language such as more and less when they play number games or do number puzzles with the childminder. Children can be truly creative as they explore paints, mixing colours to make new ones. They make collages and models using recycled materials and thoroughly enjoy musical activities where they play various instruments and join in with familiar songs and rhymes. Numerous opportunities and activities develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Role play opportunities are particularly well planned. Topic themes ensure that children learn about themselves, other people and their environment. Children celebrate a variety of different festivals such as Easter and learn about the culture and customs. Children are encouraged to question how things work. They look at fruit from trees and vegetables that grow underground such as onions and potatoes and discuss their texture, smell, appearance and taste.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Special attention is paid to ensure that all children are cared for as individuals. The childminder is extremely sensitive to the needs and interests of each child and works hard to make sure that their care and education are adapted accordingly. Children feel highly valued and included as they have their birthdays celebrated and have abundant opportunities to share and talk about items of interest they have brought with them from home. They develop a strong sense of belonging as they have their pictures and craft work displayed from the walls and ceiling around them, helping to create a rich and vibrant environment. Children learn about differences and diversity as they find out about life in different countries and learn about the festivals and celebrations of different world cultures and religions. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Although not currently caring for any children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the childminder had highly effective systems in place to ensure that all children take part in appropriate activities to help them enjoy and make progress. Children hold a strong awareness and understanding of others because the childminder actively provides opportunities for children to mix with individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds on a regular basis. For example, the childminder takes the children to local toddler groups, childminding network groups and activity centres. She actively strives to keep her service accessible to all. She provides an extensive range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world and of different faiths. Children establish a robust understanding of their local community as they travel to and from toddler groups and other local amenities and join the childminder on frequent trips to places of interest where they can explore aspects of the themes which they are currently using.

All children are highly valued and respected as individuals and are fully included in all activities. Children sit together at the table to eat meals, enabled by a cushion, booster seat or high chair as appropriate. Children are highly confident individuals. They have positive levels of self-esteem and respect the opinions and actions of others because the childminder consistently praises their efforts. She reaffirms their achievements, guiding their social and moral values. Children receive excellent support according to their individual needs.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They demonstrate high levels of understanding about responsible behaviour and know, for instance, to seek permission out of courtesy for specific activities such as use of the play equipment outside. Children show care and concern for each other when playing and play together co-operatively, sharing, taking turns and assisting one another. Parents are very happy with the care and education their children receive, writing many letters of thanks and commenting that the childminder is patient, warm, understanding and reliable with excellent communication, interpersonal and organisational skills.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. The parents of children in receipt of funding for nursery education receive good quality information about the Foundation Stage and the progress their child is making towards achieving the early learning goals. They have an open invitation to see what their child is doing and have a look at their assessment and progress records. The childminder has taken the time and effort to provide all parents with a copy of the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' and explains this to them.

Parents receive detailed and clear information on their initial visit and have time to talk and find out as much as possible about the care their children will receive. Parents of younger children receive a copy of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The childminder obtains all relevant information, including all necessary written parental permissions, to allow her to provide a high level of care and uses this well to provide appropriate food, activities and medical attention. Parents are encouraged to talk to the childminder at any time should they have any worries or concerns and are also told how to make more formal complaints should they wish to do so. They know they are always welcome to put forward ideas and suggestions and know that they will be listened to and valued. As a result of this parents feel fully involved and included in all elements of the care and education their children receive.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Overall children's needs are met. Children benefit from an exceptionally well-organised routine and stimulating programme of activities. Children are very happy, comfortable and settled in a warm and caring environment where their individual needs are met. The children spend their time purposefully and all activities are planned to maximise play, learning and development opportunities for the children, taking into account each child's individual needs. The purpose-built playroom is both classroom and play area and is well-organised and decorated with posters and children's work.

Children are cared for in a child-centred environment. The childminder has a high regard for the well-being of all children. Time, space and resources are thoughtfully organised to allow children to feel secure, play freely and enjoy learning. The childminder is dedicated to improving her skills, attending regular training including areas such as the Early Years Foundation Stage, food hygiene, first aid and child protection. Assistants are carefully chosen for their ability to work well with children and undergo relevant police and vetting checks. All relevant documents are in place. These are very well organised and effectively contribute to the high level of care provided to all children.

The childminder has a clear focus on providing children in receipt of funding with high quality educational opportunities. She works very well with her childminding network, receiving regular support visits which help her to reflect upon and constantly improve the care and education she provides to all children. The childminder ensures that her assistants clearly understand the role they can play in helping children to learn and achieve and involves them in developing planning and assessment records. She completes regular self-evaluations and as a result of this is able to make effective improvements to the care and education she provides.

The outstanding organisation of the setting ensures that children are extremely well cared for. Carers ensure that children are developing positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning. All children are highly supported appropriately to achieve their potential by knowing their starting points and working closely with parents and carers to support this progress.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the childminder agreed to ensure that documentation and record keeping were in line with the National Standards. There is a comprehensive set of policies and procedures which is shared with parents and which work well in practice to underpin children's safety and well-being. All parental consents are in place and the childminder keeps a list of relevant telephone numbers, including that of social services.

## **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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### 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.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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