

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY278545
Inspection date	20 November 2007
Inspector	Anne Daly
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 was registered in 2004. She lives with her husband and four-year-old child in a residential area of Benfleet, Essex. The whole of the childminder's home is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time, and is currently minding two children under five and three children over five part-time. In addition, two children over eight are minded. The childminder walks or drives to the local pre-school and school to take and collect children. She attends a parent and toddler group with children and also takes them to local educational and recreational facilities. The family has a budgerigar.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children stay very healthy because the childminder has an excellent understanding of how to promote their good health by providing good quality food, a clean and hygienic environment and fun opportunities to develop their physical skills. Children are being made aware of very positive hygiene practices through the childminder's extremely effective hygiene routines. The childminder has a downstairs cloakroom, where the children have access to individual paper towels for drying their hands, before disposing of them in a lidded bin. The older children make notices to remind the younger children and themselves of the need to wash their hands before eating food and after using the toilet. There is ongoing monitoring of equipment and toys, especially for the younger children, to ensure that they are kept clean. There are clear procedures for the care and exclusion of sick and ill children and the childminder has a significant amount of health information leaflets for easy reference. Babies and younger children are being effectively protected from cross-infection during nappy changing by the childminder following very good procedures, such as wearing disposable aprons and gloves and disinfecting the changing mat after each child. Toddlers at the stage of exploring their bodies with their hands during nappy changing are being introduced to hand washing to prevent possible illness from germs on their skin. All these very effective procedures are helping to protect children from cross-infection.

Children's accidental injuries are being effectively managed by a childminder who holds a current first aid qualification. Robust systems are in place to record all accidents and the administration of all medications. Children are being well safeguarded if they require medication during their stay with the childminder by effective procedures to support their individual medical needs, such as any medication only being administered following pre-authorisation by parents or carers.

Children have splendid opportunities to learn about healthy options and which food is good for them. They grow food from seeds in the garden, whilst picking apples and blackberries from the growers. They enjoy cooking activities when making hot and cold dishes, such as apple and blackberry crumble or sandwiches, in a safe environment. Older children have very good access to drinking water through being able to help themselves from the water dispenser at any time, while younger children are offered regular drinks to avoid dehydration. The childminder offers the children a very wide variety of regular healthy and nutritious meals and snacks. Older children are being given very regular opportunities to sample unusual fruits and vegetables. The childminder encourages them to discuss what the fruit and vegetables feel like, before actively preparing them to be eaten, after which they record their findings. Meal and snack times are made very social occasions by children and adults sitting together around the table to enjoy their food and each other's company. The childminder works very closely with parents and carers to ensure that individual children's likes, dislikes and dietary needs are being very well met.

Children are being provided with an excellent range of activities, both inside and outside, promoting their well-being. They thoroughly enjoy outdoor play by being able to regularly use the all weather garden throughout the year. When outside, they are able to bounce enthusiastically on the trampoline or enjoy exploring in the ball pool. The childminder has a very good knowledge and understanding of each child's stages of development, for example

the youngest children are sufficiently confident to try out new skills, asking for help when needed, whilst setting their own limits.

The childminder has attended 'Birth to three matters' training and displays the relevant information for parents. Toddlers' physical well-being is very well-supported through being able to rest or sleep very peacefully and undisturbed in designated air-conditioned areas when extremely hot. They have very good support from a sensitive childminder, who becomes very involved when toddlers try out their developing skills by enabling them to gain control of their bodies, for example when balancing to independently put on their Wellington boots.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are being cared for in an environment offering well-planned areas and good facilities to actively meet their needs in a positive manner. The childminder has instigated many safety precautions within her home to safeguard children, such as safety gates and by ensuring that her front door is always locked to prevent unsupervised access to the very busy main road. However, potentially children are not being fully safeguarded as the childminder has not considered the dangers of all blind cords within her home or her rotary clothes line in the garden.

Children are being cared for in a bright, welcoming and child-centred environment, where good use is being made of all areas of the home. Furniture and equipment are well-organised to provide plenty of clear floor space for children's play, for example the spacious lounge for laying out a large train track. Children are being encouraged to develop their independence through accessing toys and activities and by exploring their surroundings. In addition, children wishing to play with different toys can choose toys and games from the childminder's pictorial equipment list. The quality and range of toys are extremely good and appropriate to the ages and levels of all children's development. The garden is very well utilised to extend the children's available learning opportunities.

Children have very good opportunities to learn how they can keep themselves safe, for example by older children learning about fire safety. They look at pictures and circle situations which may cause fires. They complete floor plans of the childminder's home, highlighting areas where a fire may start, before devising the best routes to exit the premises in a variety of situations.

The childminder ensures that her vehicle is appropriately maintained and insured and that she has all parents' or carers' written permission for their children to be taken in her vehicle and on outings. She further enhances children's safety by ensuring that the fitting of all her car seats has been checked by professionals.

Children are being protected through the childminder having a good understanding of her role in child protection and having sound procedures to follow if she has concerns for children's welfare. Parents and carers are well-informed by a clear policy about the childminder's responsibility to report concerns, by inclusion in her prospectus and by being displayed on her notice board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy and relaxed when thoroughly enjoying their time with the childminder and her family. Children relate well to each other and are able to extend their social, physical and learning skills through regular visits to groups within the community and further a field. They visit the local parks, the library and other childminders and their minded children, in addition to visiting numerous educational facilities during school holidays. These outings are providing the children with an excellent range of experiences and challenges in interesting settings.

The childminder is sensitive to children's individual needs by offering a flexible child-led approach to the activities and resources they wish to access and with which they are eager to participate. She skilfully adapts what she offers to children to ensure that all can participate. This enables younger children to be involved in a variety of creative resources, such as water, sand, paint and play dough. Children sit with the childminder as she talks to them about what they are doing and introducing new words to them, such as relating to play dough. This fosters children's very good listening and communication skills and helps them to recognise familiar things.

Children are developing confidence and self-esteem through the childminder ensuring that she provides ample time and space for them to focus on activities and experiences to develop their own interests. They become playfully engaged and very involved in all their activities, such as when making wooden spoon puppets. They are acquiring a very good range of new knowledge and skills, for example learning how grain is made into flour by visiting a windmill. Children have numerous opportunities to use their imagination and are making positive relationships with their peers, for example when making healthy pretend food from play dough and when devising skipping games in pairs or groups. They are being encouraged by the childminder to try new things through being offered investigation opportunities by the provision of suitable activities, such as creating a variety of patterns from leaf rubbing.

The childminder observes and assesses children's different activities and achievements to enable her to plan a very varied range of exciting and stimulating activities based on what they know and can do to ensure that all their individual needs are being very effectively challenged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The childminder has developed extremely effective partnerships with parents and carers to contribute greatly to the well-being of their children. She gives them regular questionnaires to ascertain their points of view under the 14 National Standards regarding the care of their children. She has also encouraged parents to put their comments in writing in preparation for her inspection. Parents' replies are exemplary, demonstrating their high regard for the care being provided for their children by the childminder. Parents and carers receive daily feedback about all aspects of their children's day and also receive very detailed information about all proposed activities prior to each school holiday. A prospectus details the childminder's numerous policies and procedures to ensure that parents and carers are aware of her role and responsibilities, especially regarding how she will meet children's individual needs and handle complaints. Parents and carers can also access the childminder's website to gain important and useful information to help all parties to promote a very consistent approach to children's care and education.

The childminder liaises very effectively with parents and carers to ensure that children's records contain sufficient information to enable good quality care to be provided for individual children. She ensures that there is no bias in her practice in relation to gender, race or disability. She understands her obligations under the Early Years and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and maintains the relevant documentation to help parents and carers to know about the five stages approach and how this applies to children under five years with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This demonstrates that the childminder has a very good understanding of how to seek support to meet an individual child's additional needs.

Children's awareness of our similarities and differences is being very well fostered through the use of resources reflecting diversity, such as dolls and books, being readily available within the home. They are learning sign language through the childminder displaying notices around her home to encourage them to sign their individual needs. Through project work, they are participating in countless different types of activities to gain a wider understanding of the world. They celebrate many different cultural festivals, such as Chinese New Year, by making masks, writing in Chinese and learning about different zodiac signs.

Children actively participate in devising the ground rules for when they are in the care of their childminder, such as helping to make both written and pictorial notices for the home to remind them what they can and cannot do. Children feel valued through their good behaviour always being noticed and rewarded by praise and a kind word from their childminder to further promote their positive behaviour. They have very good opportunities to play turn-taking games, where they are learning about losing and winning. As a result, they have a valuable understanding of right and wrong and how their behaviour impacts on others around them when they do not appropriately play board games.

Children have a very good sense of belonging through the childminder involving them in completing questionnaires to enable her to ascertain their views about her care practices.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is being enhanced by the childminder's good organisation enabling them to develop their skills in a relaxed and caring environment. Their well-being is actively promoted by the childminder's excellent knowledge and understanding of the National Standards. She is fully committed to ongoing professional development to enable her to continue to provide a highly successful range of activities for the minded children.

Children are being protected because the childminder and other adults living on the premises have undergone checks to ensure that they are suitable to be in contact with children. Comprehensive policies and procedures support the childminder's successful practice and ensure that parents and carers have a very good understanding of the provision. Children are generally safe and are benefiting from secure and established routines to ensure that they are happy and content. Up to date and well-organised records contribute to the health, safety and well-being of the children.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the childminder was given three recommendations; to complete an appropriate first aid course including training in first aid for infants and young children; to ensure that medicines are made inaccessible to children and to request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

Since the last inspection, children's health and safety issues are now being fully considered by the childminder holding a current first aid qualification, by medications being made inaccessible to children and by the childminder holding parental written permissions for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

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):

- take reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children on the premises, both inside and outside, are minimised (this refers to the blind cords and the rotary clothes line).

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