

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY256994
Inspection date	30 June 2008
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 2003. She lives with her husband and three children, aged 14, 12 and one year, in a residential area of Chelmsford, Essex. The childminder's husband is her registered assistant and sometimes works with her. The whole of the ground floor of the premises is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time, currently minding six children under eight on a part-time basis. In addition, she cares for two children over eight. The childminder takes and collects children from the local school and attends the local parent and toddler groups. The family has one guinea pig and a rabbit.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted through the childminder taking positive steps to encourage their good health by ensuring that they effectively learn the importance of regular personal hygiene. They follow established routines, such as washing their hands after using the toilet and touching animals and before preparing or eating food. Very young children are being introduced to hand washing after nappy changing through the childminder always wiping their hands with wipes after every change. Babies and younger children are also being protected from cross-infection during nappy changing by the childminder following sound procedures, such as washing her hands and disinfecting the changing mat after each child. Children have individual towels to protect them from cross-infection, while the sharing of the written sickness policy with their parents helps to prevent the spread of any infections.

Children's welfare is being protected through the childminder holding a first aid qualification to enable her to act in their best interests if they are ill or have an accident. She has a well-stocked first aid box and parents or carers have given written permission to enable her to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment. She is very sensitive to parents' and carers' individual needs if their children require medication by ensuring that she treats each case on an individual basis. She does however ensure that she meets all children's best interests by not caring for any children with a contagious illness and by ensuring that pets do not pose a health risk to them.

Children enjoy eating nutritious, balanced meals and snacks supplied by their parents or childminder. Children are beginning to understand the importance of a healthy diet through their childminder talking to them about what they have eaten and that they should have five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. They do not become dehydrated as they can ask for drinks at any time, while very young children are offered frequent drinks, for example, when waking from rests.

Children take part in daily physical exercise to contribute to their good health. They regularly play or exercise in the fresh air in the park or the garden. They enjoy a varied range of physical activities to help them to develop their confidence and to refine their skills when using both large and small equipment. Younger children use small ride-on toys on the paved area, while older children play basketball on the grassed area.

The childminder has attended 'Birth to three matters' training and she ensures that toddlers' physical well-being is well supported through being able to rest or sleep when tired. They receive good support from the sensitive childminder, who becomes involved when they are trying out their developing skills. This involvement enables toddlers to gain control of their bodies, for example, when practising walking around her home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and child-friendly home, where they enjoy using a varied and rotated range of toys and equipment appropriate for their stages of development. The childminder regularly cleans and checks equipment and toys to ensure that they remain safe for children's use. Children are benefiting from having plenty of space to freely move

around and to play. Their independence is being encouraged through being able to self-select activities from a range of toys and equipment meeting safety standards. They are being encouraged to develop their independence through freely accessing toys and activities and by exploring their surroundings.

Regular visual risk assessments undertaken by the childminder help to safeguard children from potential hazards, for example, the front door is kept locked to prevent young children leaving the premises unnoticed, while a barrier prevents them accessing the stairs.

Children have a good understanding how they can keep themselves safe through the childminder encouraging them to learn about safety, both within her home and on outings. They learn that they must use the 'Green Cross Code' when crossing roads and that they must use the zebra crossing when crossing the main road. They learn about fire safety through the childminder practising her emergency evacuation plan with them to ensure that they know the procedures when her smoke alarms sound. The childminder regularly checks her smoke alarms to ensure that they remain in working order and that there is a suitable kitchen fire blanket for the protection of children.

The childminder ensures that her vehicle is appropriately maintained, although her vehicle insurance certificate was not available, which may potentially compromise children's welfare. All parents or carers have given their written permission for their children to be taken in the vehicle and on outings, when children are being transported in age and stage appropriate car restraints to enhance their safety.

Children are being protected through the childminder having a good understanding of her role in child protection and following sound procedures if she has concerns for children's welfare. Parents and carers are well informed by countersigning the clear statement about the childminder's responsibility to report concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very settled in the childminder's care and home, where activities allow them many opportunities to play and learn. The childminder has a secure knowledge of child development and provides children with a varied range of activities. School aged children talk to her about their learning at school, which enables her to follow through by researching information for their projects from the computer. The childminder provides first hand experiences to allow children to build on their natural curiosity as learners, for example, by folding paper to create different types of paper aeroplanes. Children are acquiring new knowledge and skills when independently buttering their bread. They show a great deal of interest in what they are doing and respond well to challenges, for example, watching age-appropriate cookery programmes with the childminder before preparing and cooking some of the dishes. Children engage in many imaginative opportunities to explore materials using their senses, for example, when creating pictures. They develop confidence and self-esteem through the childminder displaying their pictures on the playroom walls.

Toddlers are using movement and sensory exploration to link up with their immediate environment by exploring sounds, for example, when pushing their interactive toys. They are learning social skills and thoroughly enjoy being with the childminder, who responds to their sounds to encourage their communication skills. They enjoy story times at the library and have many opportunities to look at books within the childminder's home. Children have their individual

needs well met through the childminder setting out a good, varied range of toys and books to motivate and to stimulate interest.

Toddlers and pre-school aged children are able to make positive relationships and are learning that experiences can be shared through the childminder planning activities to enable them to be members of a social group, such as by taking them to a parent and toddler group.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are benefiting from the childminder building very friendly and helpful relationships with their parents and carers, who are kept well informed of their children's experiences and progress through daily diaries and discussions to promote consistency of care. They are provided with good information packs, including copies of the childminder's policies and procedures, to keep them well informed about the child care that she offers. Personal details, parental consents and contracts are maintained for each child, setting out the expectations of all parties to ensure that children's well-being is not being compromised. The childminder consults with parents and carers about their need for any special services or equipment for their children to ensure that she is able to meet children's development needs.

Children have a good sense of belonging and a sense of achievement at their childminder's home through seeing their creative work being displayed on the playroom walls. The childminder also praises them to further develop their self-esteem. Children are beginning to learn about the wider world through everyday activities and experiences, such as trips to the local library and by celebrating some cultural festivals. They are beginning to appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences through discussions with their childminder, but there are only a few items showing positive images of people from a variety of cultural backgrounds and with varying needs.

Children play harmoniously with each other through the childminder setting clear boundaries for expected behaviour, which are shared with children and their parents and carers, to help them to understand the house rules. She has consistent strategies regarding behaviour management to help children to learn right from wrong, including when to negotiate. She uses a popular sticker system and plenty of descriptive praise and encouragement to raise children's confidence and self-esteem.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are protected because the childminder and the other adult living on the premises have undergone checks to ensure that they are suitable to be in contact with them. Detailed policies and procedures support the childminder's successful care practices and ensure that parents and carers have a good understanding of the provision. The health, safety and well-being of the children are being protected by confidential, up-to-date and generally well-organised records.

The childminder has attended training courses to develop and support her childminding practices. She has recently renewed her first aid qualification to enable her to confidently deal with children's accidental injuries.

She spends her working day completely involved with the children, who all evidently enjoy each other's company and their time together. They are made to feel at home by the childminder encouraging them to develop their independence.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the childminder agreed to comply with three actions; to attend an appropriate first aid course as prescribed by the local authority; to provide a first aid box, with the contents determined on her first aid training course and checked frequently and replaced as necessary; to ensure the provision of a kitchen fire safety blanket conforming to BS EN safety standards and to devise and practise an emergency escape plan.

Since the last inspection, the childminder has successfully gained a first aid certificate and has provided a first aid box to enable her to ensure children's well-being is not being compromised following an accident. The childminder is now able to act in children's best interests in emergency situations through the provision of a kitchen fire blanket and children now regularly practise the fire evacuation procedures to ensure that they know what to do in an emergency.

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

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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):

- ensure that records are always available for inspection (this refers to the car insurance certificate)
- provide play materials reflecting diversity to illustrate the positive images of people from a variety of cultural backgrounds and with varying needs.

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