



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	199331
Inspection date	22 December 2005
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.
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WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 1994. She lives with her partner and two children, aged eight years and two months, in Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex. The whole of the childminder's home is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children aged under eight years at any one time, currently minding one child under five and four school aged children, part time. The childminder walks to local schools and a nursery to take and collect children. The childminder takes children to the local shops, schools, beach,

library, parks and other local educational amenities. The family has a cat, a rabbit, a guinea pig and tropical fish.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and of the Southend-on-Sea Network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children take part in daily physical exercise to contribute to their good health by walking to and from school. They play in the garden and regularly visit the park to play in the fresh air, when they have opportunities to jump, climb and balance using a range of equipment. Children are allowed to rest and sleep according to their individual needs.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through daily routines and by following the childminder's sound hygiene procedures, such as washing their hands regularly to avoid cross-infection. The childminder's very simple sickness policy is shared with parents to prevent the spread of infection by ensuring that they know when to keep their unwell children at home. Children are appropriately cared for and made comfortable when they are unwell. The childminder can deal with children's minor injuries because she is trained in administering first aid. However, children cannot be fully protected as she has not yet requested parental written agreements for her to seek medical advice. She ensures that pets do not pose a health risk to children.

Children enjoy eating balanced meals supplied by the childminder. They are encouraged to make healthy choices, such as eating fruit at snack times. Drinks are freely available on request during the day. The childminder gathers information from parents about any allergies or dietary requirements to ensure that she effectively meets children's individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are able to self select activities from a varied range of toys and equipment meeting required safety standards and children's developmental needs. Space is organised with a range of activities to enable children to freely choose whether to play inside or in the garden.

Regular risk assessments undertaken by the childminder help to safeguard children from some potential risks. Steps have been taken to minimise some hazards by the use of safety equipment, such as safety gates and socket covers. However, when children move around, insufficient steps have been taken to minimise potential garden risks, such as the accessible garden tools and bricks.

Children's safety is paramount when taken out of the home, because the childminder visually assesses dangers and helps children to understand about personal safety when walking or being transported in her car. Children learn to keep themselves safe by the childminder practising fire drills with them, to ensure that they know the evacuation procedures when smoke alarms sound.

The childminder is aware of the need to safeguard children, who are only collected by authorised persons. She is aware of the need to implement appropriate procedures if she has concerns for a child's safety. She has not yet produced a written child protection statement reflecting current Government guidance, such as 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused', to ensure that parents are made fully aware of her child protection role and responsibility.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle at the childminder's home, where worthwhile activities allow them opportunities to play and learn independently. They are able to make decisions about their play and learning by freely choosing from a range of active or relaxing activities.

Children enjoy working with a varied range of creative materials, such as drawing, painting and play dough, to help them express their experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. The childminder frequently talks to them and listens to their questions and ideas. She adapts activities to meet all children's needs, such as providing paint for some to hand paint, while others using brushes and stencils. Children use their initiatives when using glue and glitter, such as designing a diamond tree on a paper plate. They enjoy acquiring new knowledge and skills, particularly baking and icing cakes.

Children learn through their experiences, because the childminder purposely asks them questions about what they are doing, listening to what they say, to find out what they know. She extends their understanding by talking about activities and by reinforcing their knowledge and understanding of colours and numbers.

Children enjoy being close to and interacting with the childminder through sharing books and singing songs. Children's achievements are regularly praised by the childminder to develop their confidence and to maintain their self-esteem. Older children respond to her challenges, such as when using a computer drawing programme to develop the skill of mouse control.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. Their needs are well met as the childminder follows their normal routines as discussed with parents. She fully understands their individual needs and treats them with equal concern when undertaking physical activities.

Children are learning a great deal about the wider world through everyday activities and experiences, such as recycling materials, visiting a farm and regularly using the library. They are learning to appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences by the provision of books and some resources.

Children's self-confidence is encouraged and fostered by the childminder having clear and consistent expectations and trust in their abilities. Their desirable behaviour is encouraged by the childminder giving plenty of praise and by responding positively to their good behaviour. She negotiates with them if any minor disagreements develop and has consistent strategies regarding behaviour management to help them learn right from wrong.

Children benefit from the childminder building friendly and helpful relationships with parents. They are kept well informed of their children's experiences and progress through verbal discussion and by the sharing of her written daily records.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel at home and enjoy the space to move freely between the downstairs living accommodation and the garden. They have adequate indoor and outdoor space, with appropriate resources for their ages. The childminder organises her time to ensure that she spends most of her working day completely involved with the children.

The childminder is committed to providing quality care and to improving her knowledge of current child care trends. She has attended many child care courses and first aid training, but is still committed to further training to influence her child care practice for the benefit of the children.

The childminder works in partnership with parents to ensure good care for their children. Records are maintained for each child to enable the childminder to act in their best interests. She has produced folders about her services, so that parents are aware of her policies and procedures. However, some of the required policies and satisfactory procedures require review to ensure the promotion of children's health, safety and well-being.

Overall the range of children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the previous inspection, the childminder has improved the children's physical environment. She has purchased a large storage unit to ensure that play provision not in use is appropriately stored and that older children can freely access the toys and creative materials from the drawers.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- assess the garden risks to children and take action to minimise these
- review and continue to develop policies and procedures in line with both the National Standards and associated guidance.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk