



Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY336714
Inspection date	23 November 2006
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.

At the time of the inspection there were no children on roll. Ofsted judges that the provider remains suitable to provide care.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 2006 and works with a registered assistant. She lives with her husband and two children, aged 10 months and three years, 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 three children at any one time. There are currently no children on roll. The childminder walks or drives to the local school and drives to the pre-school to take and collect children. She takes children to the park, woods, shops, library and local educational facilities.

She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The childminder shows a clear understanding of the importance of a healthy, balanced diet including plenty of nutritious home-cooked fresh foods. She demonstrated how she encourages children to eat healthy by raising their awareness of healthy eating through topic work. She uses fresh bananas when baking banana cake and encourages children to eat five portions of fruit or vegetables a day by completing a chart with stickers. From discussion, sample menus and daily records, the childminder demonstrated a good understanding of healthy eating, including the need to have drinks accessible at all times. From discussion, the childminder respects parents' wishes regarding food given to their children and takes time to learn about children's preferences, while also encouraging them to try out new foods. She indicates that she follows parents' wishes as to how children are encouraged to eat vegetables. She has recorded details of children's allergies, likes and dislikes and preferences to ensure that she meets their individual needs.

The environment is very clean and well maintained. The childminder demonstrated a good knowledge of how to promote children's good health. She protects them from infectious diseases by ensuring parents fully understand her written sickness policy stating when she will not care for their unwell children. She holds a Foundation Certificate in Food Hygiene and has completed a detailed written risk assessment of her home to prevent cross-infection. She describes how she talks with children about the need for good hygiene practices to ensure that they remember to wash their hands before meals, after playing in the garden and after using the toilet. Her health and safety policy describes the hygiene procedures to be followed when changing babies' nappies. She has established appropriate records and procedures for attending to accidents and for administering medication.

The childminder demonstrated a clear awareness of the importance of promoting plenty of opportunity for healthy exercise for children. Her garden is organised with good quality equipment for children to jump, climb and slide. She regularly plans visits to the local parks and woods to provide good opportunities for children to develop their physical skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder promotes emphasis on safety, for example by fitting safety corners to sharp edged furniture. However, the ranch style landing guarding is a potential hazard to climbing children. Documentation evidences that she practises a monthly fire drill with children to ensure that they learn about their own safety when having to evacuate the premises in the event of fire. She introduces road safety awareness, showing children how to safely cross roads. She ensures children hold hands, walk close to her and stay away from the kerb. Her vehicle is appropriately insured and she has all the relevant documentation prepared to obtain parental written consents for taking children in her vehicle and on outings.

Through observation and discussion, it was evident that a very good range of play resources is organised in a manner to promote children's free choice. The childminder ensures that older children's toys are stored safely away from babies in lidded boxes to eliminate the risk of small toy pieces being swallowed. Her policies clearly state that toys are regularly washed in hot soapy water or with anti-bacterial wipes.

The childminder demonstrated a good knowledge of safeguarding children through attending a training course. Her practice is underpinned by good, up-to-date knowledge of possible signs and symptoms of abuse and she will follow correct procedures if she has any concerns. She has a detailed written statement of her role, which is shared with parents, to ensure that they understand her responsibility to record and report any concerns to the Essex Safeguarding Children Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The childminder's detailed records evidence the ways in which she plans activities linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Documents evidence that she prepares monthly plans linked to the four aspects. Activity sheets detail the four aspects, the learning intentions and the required materials. The childminder observes and notes what children say, do and learn, using this information to inform her future activity plans.

The childminder demonstrated clearly how she encourages children to use their initiative and imagination when playing with a train track, cars and small play people. She described how they learn new skills when baking. She encourages them to weigh the ingredients, to sieve flour and to watch the changes when mixing together the ingredients. Her long term planning linked to a 'skilful communicator' indicates how she encourages children's communication skills through reading stories to them and by singing nursery rhymes and action songs. She encourages children to suggest play ideas and they frequently choose craft, play dough and drawing activities.

The childminder described how she encourages children to behave well by being very clear about expectations, while offering plenty of praise and encouragement. She aims to offer a warm and caring environment to ensure that children are happy and secure in her care. She encourages children to share, to take turns and to be considerate to each other's needs. She involves herself with their play, encouraging them to take turns when making 'treasure rocks.' She described how excited children became when following a treasure map to find rocks containing dinosaurs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Discussion with the childminder suggests that children are very much valued and respected as individuals. The daily routine is flexibly responsive to their individual needs and the childminder effectively considers parents' wishes within her planning, for example regarding meals. She offers a variety of opportunities for children to learn about their local community by visiting

the library, local shops, park and woods. She described how she engages children in the wider world when taking them to Marsh Farm and how she encourages them to learn a little about a different country each month. The childminder has a varied range of resources promoting children's awareness of other cultures and disabilities. She explained how she consults parents about the need for any special services and equipment for their children in her care.

The childminder showed a sound knowledge of behaviour management, giving good examples of how she will approach a variety of situations. She shares her written behaviour management policy with parents and carers. She places strong emphasis on being a good role model, believing that children take more notice of what she does. She talks quietly with children when their behaviour is not acceptable to ensure that they begin to understand right from wrong through her clear expectations and consistent approach. She frequently praises children's good behaviour and uses a popular sticker system.

The childminder described that, when a parent initially enquires about child care, she sends a copy of her prospectus. If they are interested in her caring for their children, she provides them with her policy booklet. She has pre-prepared all the required documentation for parents and carers to complete before any child is received into her care to ensure that she can act in their children's best interests. She demonstrated how she informs parents and carers by providing them with a monthly plan of their child's activities. She encourages a two way flow of information by completing a detailed daily diary of what children have been doing, in which parents can comment.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The childminder has attended a range of training courses to develop and support her childminding practice. She has used this knowledge to enhance her planning of activities for younger children. She demonstrated that she is well organised and has a very professional approach to her childminding role. She showed that she effectively supports children's individual needs by her flexible planning taking account of their interests.

The required documentation and record keeping systems are in place, available for inspection and stored confidentially. She has developed clear systems for ensuring parents and carers understand her policies, responsibilities and overall child care practice, such as activities, sickness, behaviour management and child protection. Children will be kept safe and their welfare safeguarded by her good understanding of required policies and procedures.

Overall, the evidence suggests that the provision would meet the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- take reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children on the premises are minimised (this refers to the landing ranch style guarding)

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