

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 110631
Inspection date 22 June 2007
Inspector Sarah Johnson

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 1996. She lives with her husband and two children aged nine and 13 years. They live in a house in Colchester. The whole of the property is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder does not have any pets.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time and is currently minding four children, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and attends local toddler groups with the minded children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are kept very healthy whilst in the care of the childminder as they follow sound hygiene procedures. Children learn the importance of good health and hygiene practices through the daily routine. They are prompted to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and

after having their nappy changed. Children are provided with liquid soap, antibacterial hand gel and individual towels which are washed daily to prevent the spread of infection. Nappy changing procedures are effective in maintaining children's health as the childminder cleans the changing mat with antibacterial spray between changes and disposes nappies appropriately.

Children are well cared for if they are ill or have an accident because most of the required documentation and consents with regard to sickness, medication and accidents are in place to support this. However, children's care is potentially compromised as the childminder has not requested written permission from parents to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment. The childminder maintains a well stocked first aid kit that is easily accessible and has completed training in first aid for babies and young children. The accident book is completed accurately and signed by parents when they collect their children. Children's well-being is promoted further as the childminder makes a record of any pre-existing injuries and monitors these records for any patterns or concerns.

Children's dietary needs are well met as the childminder actively gathers information about children's individual dietary requirements from their parents. They enjoy a balanced and nutritious diet, including fruit on a daily basis, which is prepared in a very clean and hygienic kitchen. Children are learning about healthy eating as they understand that they should eat their fruit before eating other foods such as crisps. Regular access to fresh drinking water and sugar-free juice ensures that children remain well-hydrated.

Whatever the weather, children enjoy daily access to the outdoors as the childminder encourages the children to play indoor activities out in the fresh air. Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills, including coordination, movement and balance as they enjoy regular trips to the local park, where they climb and balance on the climbing frame and play on swings and slides.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a warm and child-friendly environment which is well-organised to provide maximum space for them to move around freely. Children enjoy a balanced range of safe and stimulating toys and resources, which are stored in ground level plastic boxes to allow them to self-select and initiate their own play. Equipment is washed and checked regularly to ensure children are safe when using them. Ample floor space provides scope for children to play games on a large scale, such as, constructing large train tracks and playing a hopscotch game. Children relax on comfortable sofas with large cushions and use a table and chairs for table-top activities.

Children play in safe surroundings as the childminder gives priority to protecting children and carries out daily visual risk assessments. However, the children's safety is potentially compromised due to the storage of a washing line in the garden. All the required precautions are in place to ensure children are protected in the event of a fire, including a fire blanket in the kitchen, fire alarms on each level and a clear evacuation plan. Children are protected further by security procedures, including monitoring of visitors and ensuring external doors and gates are locked. Children travel safely in the childminder's vehicle as parental consent is obtained and good quality car seats are used.

Children's welfare is paramount. The childminder is very well aware of her responsibilities regarding child protection and has a good understanding of the possible signs of abuse. There is a clear written procedure for reporting concerns, which protects children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and they settle immediately when they arrive as they are familiar with the routine. The childminder listens attentively to what the children say and responds positively, which clearly makes them feel valued. The children genuinely enjoy the time they spend with the childminder as they have developed secure and trusting relationships with each other. They respond well when the childminder gets down to their level to play alongside them and feel secure in the knowledge that support is always on hand if needed.

Children confidently choose from a good selection of resources, which are suitable for their developmental stages. For example, the children know exactly where to find a train set and books when they choose to play with them. Children are given sufficient time to complete activities and follow their interests without the pressure of a highly structured routine. For example, children play with a tea set for some time, pretending to pour drinks from a realistic kettle. Children enjoy sharing stories with the childminder. They independently access familiar books from baskets and sit comfortably as the childminder fully involves them in the stories and encourages their interest in books. Children's imaginative skills and creativity are fostered through activities, such as play dough, singing, dancing, colouring books, small world play and puppets. They enjoy regular opportunities to get out into the local community and interact socially with other adults and children, including visits to local toddler groups and the library.

Younger children receive supportive care as the childminder draws on her experience and effectively reflects the 'Birth to three matters' framework in her practice. Younger children receive full attention when they are communicating their feelings and ideas. As a result, they are very confident when communicating verbal requests, such as, requesting a drink when thirsty.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The childminder clearly knows the children and their families very well, which enables her to meet their individual needs and ensure all children are fully included and treated with equal concern. Children's differences are valued and they are treated as individuals, with sensitive and equal regard for their needs and preferences. The childminder demonstrates a positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a commitment to providing an inclusive setting. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive sensitive care as the childminder works closely with parents and outside professionals if needed.

Children's behaviour is good. They learn right from wrong as the childminder uses a number of positive strategies, such as praising good behaviour, using stickers as rewards and being a good role model. The childminder understands that a calm and relaxed environment is important to support children's behaviour. Children's behaviour is supported further as the childminder discusses concerns with parents to enable them to determine any possible causes and decide on the best way to support the children together.

Children benefit from the childminder's commitment to working in partnership with parents. Well thought out, quality written and verbal information is available for parents when children first start, including a daily activities list which outlines the routine and activities planned for each day. Parents are welcomed in when they collect their children, which is when information is exchanged about eating, sleeping and nappy routines. Parents value the relationship they

have with the childminder and feel confident that their children are being cared for in line with their wishes. Any concerns can be dealt with appropriately as a clear complaints procedure is shared with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are well cared for as the childminder approaches childminding with a highly professional manner and demonstrates unquestionable dedication to providing high quality care for children. Children benefit as the childminder is very experienced in caring for children. She is committed to updating her skills and knowledge by completing further training and sourcing relevant literature to keep up-to-date. The childminder is aware of the importance of ensuring that children are never left alone with people who have not been suitably vetted.

The childminder has a thorough understanding of the National Standards and is vigilant in meeting these and the conditions of her registration. Children experience good levels of supervision and individual attention as the childminder complies with the ratios defined in her conditions of registration. The childminder has a clear sense of purpose and shows a commitment to ongoing improvement. For example, she seeks views from parents and has identified clear achievable areas for improvement.

Children's welfare is highly regarded and supported by the high quality paperwork and documentation which exceeds requirements. This includes a comprehensive set of policies and procedures, which clearly set out the childminder's approach and ethos. All consent forms and children's personal records are maintained and updated regularly, ensuring children are cared for in line with their parent's wishes. Emergency contingency plans have been well thought out, with the children's needs always central. The childminder is fully aware that she needs to notify Ofsted of any significant events or changes, in order to protect children.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to continue to develop the range of resources which reflect equal opportunities. There are sufficient resources and activities to help children learn about a diverse society through their play, including positive images of culture and disability in books and on colouring sheets.

The childminder was also asked to obtain the most recent written information on local child protection procedures. There is now a clear written statement on child protection. This is consistent with guidance outlined in relevant up-to-date literature, including a handbook from the Local Safeguarding Children Board. As a result, the childminder understands the correct procedure to follow if she has a concern and children are protected from harm.

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):

- request written permission from parents to seek any necessary emergency advice or treatment
- ensure the outdoor play space is safe for children, this refers to storage of the washing line in the garden.

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