

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	123487
Inspection date	17/12/2008
Inspector	Susan Tuffnell
Type of setting	Childminder

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the childminding

The childminder was registered in 1995. She lives with her husband and three children aged 15, 20 and 22 years in St Albans, Hertfordshire. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. Two of the bedrooms may be used for children to have undisturbed sleep. The first floor bedroom is sometimes used for sleeping a minded child. The premises are accessible by a low step at the front entrance and there is also access to the garden from the side entrance.

The childminder provides care weekdays during term-time and school holidays. She is registered on the Early Years Register and compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She is registered to care for three children on the Early Years Register and four children currently attend on part-time and flexible arrangements. One of these children also attends the reception unit of the local primary school. The childminder currently provides care for one child on the Compulsory Childcare Register (CCR) and all the children share the same facilities.

The childminder has a Nursery Nursing Examination Board (NNEB) qualification and is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA)

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the childminder provides very well for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are valued at the setting because the childminder has a clear and sensitive understanding of diversity and equal opportunities. She uses effective procedures for evaluating her practice and has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. Her self-evaluation shows that she continuously strives to provide the very best care and education for the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure that children's identified learning needs are carried forward, implemented into future planning and evaluated to give a clear picture of progress
- extend the risk assessments to include access to the conservatory and access from the conservatory to the garden. This refers to the steep steps.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder effectively manages the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. She demonstrates a positive attitude to continuous improvement and has carried out a very comprehensive and reflective evaluation of her practice. The childminder's impressive training log shows very good attention to enhancing her

professional knowledge and understanding which has a positive impact on the children. Children are protected because the childminder takes necessary steps to promote their welfare through robust safeguarding procedures. She has a very good understanding of this area and has recently updated her knowledge through training.

The childminder provides a strong inclusive service that sensitively promotes children's welfare requirements. She understands and engages in reflective practice respecting diversity and valuing each child as a unique individual. She effectively engages with parents and carers who are fully involved in promoting children's learning and development. For example, settling-in procedures are clearly focussed on the individual needs of the children with several visits to the setting and a visit to the children's home to ensure children feel secure with the arrangements. Parents are kept informed of their child's achievements through excellent policies and procedures and the sharing of a daily diary and assessment records. The childminder works closely with parents to ensure that information is shared regularly. For example, any concerns about the children's general welfare are discussed and strategies implemented by both parties to ensure continuity. Parents greatly appreciate these close links and feel they are kept well informed of their children's progress. Excellent compliments are received both verbally and written regarding the major contribution the childminder gives to the children's development.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children receive an enjoyable and challenging experience across all the areas of learning. They are helped to learn and develop with effective planning that takes into account children's individual development needs. Children are supported well as they access an excellent range of interesting and challenging play materials and equipment. They are able to take the lead in activities and experience excellent free play opportunities as they explore and experiment to extend their imagination and ideas. Children's interests are successfully implemented into future planning through careful observations by the childminder and regular information from parents. The childminder models a positive attitude to learning and through her enthusiasm she encourages the children to be spontaneous and to help plan the next steps to learning. Planning is linked to observations and assessments through the children's individual Learning Journeys. For example, they show how the activity supports a child's learning and identifies the next steps. However, identified needs are not carried forward and therefore not evaluated effectively for future planning or included in subsequent activities to give a clear picture of progress.

The imaginative planning ensures that children enjoy stimulating activities. For example, they are encouraged to explore the natural environment as they collect leaves for craft work and show fascination when discovering rabbit burrows and identifying trees and plants as they walk in the woods. Children help grow vegetables as part of their understanding about healthy eating and to help them eat a wide range of different foods. They learn about growth cycles as they plant seeds, nurture them as they grow and then harvest, wash, cook and eat them. Children enjoy making dough for homemade pizzas and creating the topping

themselves from a range of ingredients.

The childminder makes sure that her house and resources are interesting, attractive and accessible to every child. Low storage units ensure that even the youngest children are able to see the toys and make choices. The bright and stimulating play area is decorated with some attractive displays of children's art and craft work. Children are positively encouraged to be active in their learning, to reason and to work together. For example, children are inspired by the 'fishing' activity. They make their own fish and fishing rods and show interest in the use of the magnets attached to the rod and the fish. They practise the technique of lining up the magnets to 'catch' the fish. The childminder extends the experience by encouraging the children to express what they know about the sea. This leads to a lively conversation as children name sea creatures, talk about holidays by the sea and explain films they have seen. Children show confidence as they explain the use of the split pin in their models and demonstrate to adults how it works. The consistent support from the childminder gives children the confidence to express their ideas, explore further and share their thoughts.

The inspirational environment and sensitive support enable children to develop their independence and ideas. For example, children are encouraged to be creative as they design boats and rockets using large cardboard boxes. This supplies the children with endless opportunities to extend their ideas and link play with past experiences. For example, children talk about personal experiences such as holiday flights. Children are encouraged to participate in regular physical activities. Active play in the garden and walking in the park and woods helps children to enjoy physical activity. Indoor activities for example, an egg and spoon walk, soft ball or bean bag throwing, rolling and balancing or an indoor assault course involve the children in practising many different skills.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure environment because the childminder has a good knowledge of this area. She has completed thorough risk assessments of most areas of the home, garden and outings. However, the steep steps from the kitchen to the conservatory and the steep steps from the conservatory to the garden have not been risk assessed and present a hazard to young children. A very well recorded fire evacuation procedure and regular fire drills help children understand about taking care of themselves and others. They learn and practise road safety as they walk with the childminder. The childminder is a good role model for the children. She encourages positive behaviour through praise and example. This ensures that children feel secure with the consistent boundaries that are appropriate for their stage of development and individual needs.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made 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.