

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY370655
Inspection date	09/12/2008
Inspector	Hilary Preece
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 registered in 2008. She lives with her husband and two children aged 12 and two years in St Albans, Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house and one bedroom upstairs is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. A cabin in the garden has been converted into additional play space for children. There is level access to the front of the property and the garden cabin is accessed via one step. The children's bathroom is on the first floor. The family has a pet rabbit, which is kept in the garden.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory part of the Childcare Register to provide care for a maximum of five children under eight years at any one time. She is currently minding two children in the early years age group. The childminder's husband works as an assistant alongside the childminder at various times of the week. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and attends local groups for children. She holds a Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Childcare and Education.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The setting has a bright and welcoming appeal because the environment is well equipped and set up with attractive resources, displays of information and children's photographs. Parents are encouraged to bring photographs of family members and important people in their children's lives and share their home language with the childminder so that all children and families are included and feel valued. Knowledge of children's individual needs and backgrounds is used effectively to promote their learning and development. Most policies and procedures to promote children's welfare and safety are comprehensive and implemented effectively. Regular self-evaluation that involves seeking the views of parents using the service ensures the childminder continually strives for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the procedure for carrying out risk assessments so they show when and by whom particular aspects of safety have been checked; review at regular intervals to ensure additional hazards are identified; and ensure risk assessments for each type of outing are dated and reviewed
- maintain rooms at a temperature that ensures the comfort of the children and staff (this refers to the garden room during extreme weather)
- review how the records of learning and development for each child are organised to ensure progress can be tracked more easily and parents can add to the records.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder has made considerable efforts to set up a good quality environment and resources in which she can support children to make progress in their learning and development. She is focused on making further improvements through ongoing self-evaluation and seeking the views of parents. This allows her to set achievable targets to further enhance the provision. For example, she continues to improve the outside environment by developing designated safe areas for play apparatus and has plans for a large decked area which will increase opportunities for children to play outside.

The childminder appreciates the importance of good communication with parents, carers and outside agencies where appropriate. She has developed some effective links with children's families and readily shares information with them through daily two-way communication books, newsletters and notice and planning boards. They are encouraged to view their children's records and are kept informed about how they can work together to support the children's development. This helps build professional working relationships.

Procedures for safeguarding children are mostly effective. The childminder ensures she has appropriate skills and qualifications to care for children and offers clear guidance to her assistant to enable him to help effectively and keep children safe. There are many comprehensive policies and procedures to promote children's welfare and safety which are backed up by generally efficient records. These include well documented sickness procedures and child protection procedures. However, the childminder's understanding of how to carry out and manage effective risk assessments is not yet fully secure. As a result, systems for monitoring safety and comfort have not identified the cold floor in the garden room or furniture corners that could present risks if children fall into them when playing.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The childminder's good knowledge of the Early Years Foundations Stage's learning and development requirements means she is confident in helping children learn through play. She plans a variety of play opportunities, activities and outings that stimulate children's interests and desire to learn. For example, the educational room in the garden is very well equipped with resources and set up to encourage children to explore and be independent in their play. The childminder supports them throughout their play to become confident in communicating, literacy and numeracy. Babies listen to number rhymes and counting songs and practise hand control movements when experimenting with finger painting which helps later with pencil control. The childminder plans exciting outings to the local and wider community so children can begin to make sense of the world. Children enjoy using their imaginations in the role play area and help themselves to books from low-level shelves in the cosy book corner. Plans are flexible enough to respond to children's level of interest or mood, so a Christmas card-making activity was not pursued because the children preferred to initiate their own play. The childminder

ensures she finds out as much as possible about the children by talking to parents about their home life and carrying out observations of children during their play. These are assessed effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning and development. However, written records and evidence of children's achievements is stored in a number of different places which can make it difficult to view the continued progress that children make.

Children develop some useful skills and habits that set the foundations for later learning and promote their welfare. They develop good awareness of leading healthy lifestyles. They are offered nutritious meals and fresh fruit for snacks, they learn about washing their hands and brushing their teeth and enjoy physical activity and movement. Encouragement is given to assist children with crawling and walking, and a wide range of physical apparatus in the garden supports their confidence in climbing and balancing. Children begin to learn how to keep themselves safe because the childminder gives consistent reminders about safe behaviour when children are playing at home or on outings. Appropriate safety measures within the home allow children to play in a generally safe and secure environment where most hazards have been identified. Children begin to understand the needs of others through being reminded to be kind and share. They generally respond positively to expectations, such as helping to tidy away the toys, because of the high levels of praise and encouragement they receive.

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?	2
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?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	3

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?	3
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 has been one complaint made to Ofsted since registration that required the provider to take action. This related to supervision and safety of children on outings. We carried out a visit on 13/10/2008 and set two actions for the provider to carry out risk assessments of the premises and each type of outing children are taken on, and to ensure the daily record of attendance is accurately maintained. Following the complaint an inspection was carried out on 09/12/2008 where it was found the records of children's attendance are being accurately maintained. Written risk assessments of outings have been introduced and daily risk assessments are maintained although these would still benefit from review to make them more effective. The provider remains suitable for registration.

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.