

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	300124
Inspection date	02/02/2009
Inspector	Jill Lee
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 1997. She lives with her husband and three sons in Sheffield. Schools, shops and parks are within walking distance. The home is accessed by steps.

Only the downstairs of the home is used for childminding. Children have access to a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for six children under eight years. She offers a full time service, including after school and school holiday care. She is currently caring for five children of pre-school age and 11 school aged children, four of whom are aged over eight years. She is a member of the National Childminding Association and helps at a local playgroup.

The childminder is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. The childminder provides a stimulating play environment with lots of activities based on children's interests. She observes children closely and is working on improved ways to link her observations more actively to planning next steps, to enhance the challenge and opportunity for new learning in the daily environment. Strong partnerships with parents and clear focus on developing closer liaison with other providers are helping her to support individual needs with skill and sensitivity. All children are fully included and well planned activities raise their awareness of difference and diversity. The childminder evaluates her practice effectively and demonstrates a strong commitment to continuous improvement, clearly identifying where updating of training may enhance her practice. Children's safety and well-being are promoted consistently well.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhance the links between observations and planning next steps in children's learning, to ensure they are fully challenged in the daily play environment
- continue to develop effective ways to link with other early years providers to enhance planning to meet individual needs
- update awareness of safeguarding issues and the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder has a very professional approach to her responsibilities and strives actively to provide high quality care. Her practice has been enhanced by her attendance at a wide range of training opportunities, as she is keen to develop her skills further. Support for children's additional needs is a key strength and the childminder places emphasis on planning for inclusion. She responds quickly to any identified concerns. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed well, with a positive impact on the outcomes for children. She is beginning to make good use of self-evaluation to target areas for improvement in her practice. For example, she is aware that she has not recently updated her awareness of child protection practice and local procedures, although she feels confident to respond appropriately to any identified concerns.

The childminder fully understands her responsibility to safeguard children and has all required policies and procedures in place. These are shared effectively with parents, helping to ensure that children's welfare is promoted at all times. Thorough risk assessments are conducted and action is taken to maintain children's safety, both in the home and on the many varied outings they enjoy. Children are always fully supervised in their play whilst being actively encouraged to develop safe levels of independence, for example, when using the large play equipment in the park or playing outdoors in the garden. Awareness of risk and safety is raised very well in everyday routines. Children learn safe practices as they walk to and from school, take care to mop up spilt water or sand in the play room and understand why they need to tidy toys away regularly so that nobody falls over them. Planned activities help to extend their awareness. Children talk about the risks of fire, although emergency evacuation procedures are not practised with them very regularly.

The childminder prioritises spending lots of time with parents, as children are settling, so that she is fully informed about their starting points and can support children to feel secure and settled in her care. There is an ongoing dialogue with parents, helping to ensure that information is clearly shared about daily events and children's progress. Very positive comments in references and thank you letters value the 'loving environment' and that the childminder 'listens to parents' and that their child is part of an 'extended family'. They appreciate the daily communication and feel that care is shared fully with them, helping to promote consistency and continuity. There is clear recognition of the importance of partnerships with other settings involved in children's care. The childminder liaises closely with pre-schools and schools attended, but feels a little uncertain about what is required and how to prompt fully effective information sharing.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are very happily settled in the childminder's care. They make friends and love spending time with children of different ages. The daily environment reflects children's observed interests well, as the childminder takes account of which activities children prefer. They enjoy a well balanced range of enjoyable and

stimulating play experiences, both indoors and out, and can mostly select resources freely to support their own independent play. They readily request resources they cannot reach. Warm interactions support children's learning, as the childminder plays and talks with children constantly. She is fully attentive to their conversations, effectively promoting language and social skills. She listens closely to their ideas and encourages their suggestions for activities. Lots of resources promote children's creative and imaginative play very well, for example, they love building dens under the table. Often, extended imaginary games, involving all ages of children, develop after school. They also enjoy lots of painting, collage and model making.

Planning is very informal but clearly reflects the childminder's awareness of children's individual needs and interests. She constantly observes children and shows a clear understanding of their stages of development. Assessment systems are being developed to reflect the Early Years Foundation Stage and the childminder is using guidance materials appropriately to help her differentiate planned activities. The childminder does not yet feel she is confidently linking her many detailed observations to systematic planning for next steps, so that fresh challenge and focussed new learning is not consistently introduced into the daily environment. Photographs are used very effectively to reflect and share with parents the wide range of experiences enjoyed by children.

Children are able to play and explore freely, developing their own ideas in all areas of learning. They are totally relaxed in their play and confident of the childminder's support. The childminder knows them very well, giving them confidence to express their individuality. Children receive lots of praise, as the childminder warmly values their achievements, for example, helping to prepare the table for snack. She skilfully helps children be proud of their own unique qualities and to value the different characteristics of others. For example, with caring and sensitivity, she helps them develop awareness of the frustration of not being able to communicate easily if speech is limited. The childminder diligently seeks out new books, for example about bullying, to help her talk with children about different feelings and the impact of their behaviour on others. This helps all children to be more respectful to each other and to recognise the importance of helping everyone to join in. Older children are very supportive and caring towards younger ones.

Children love reading stories and choose books to share. They read lots of factual books and the childminder uses books consistently to broaden children's understanding of the wider world and other cultures. She spontaneously introduces mathematics language into everyday play, as children fit together jigsaw pieces and learn to recognise the numbers needed to make the crocodile. They observe the numbers on doors as they walk to school, checking out which are even and which are odd. Children have lots of opportunity to explore shape and size and to solve problems in their construction, creative and imaginary play. They explore volume and weight in their water play and have great fun blowing bubbles and splashing.

The local community is used daily as a very rich source of new and spontaneous experiences. Children regularly travel by public transport to visit local museums and soft play centres. They visit different restaurants and try out foods from

different countries. They sometimes even have lunch at the nearby elderly persons' luncheon club. They help to feed the hens at St Marie's school and enjoy visits to Whitepost Farm and Butterfly World. They develop awareness of the natural world and changing seasons as they enjoy nature walks and have fun in the park. They love planting flowers and smelling herbs in the garden.

The childminder offers gentle, consistent support so that children learn to manage their own needs, think of others and respect their environment, for example, cooperating to tidy away toys. They participate confidently, learning how to share and take turns. Children make friends and become active, independent learners. They think about how to keep themselves healthy and stay safe within everyday routines, enjoying lots of fresh air each day. Even the youngest children know why they wash their hands before they eat snack and after touching animals. They begin to understand the importance of lots of exercise and the older girls plan acrobatics and keep fit routines for everyone. Children enjoy healthy, nutritious meals and lots of fruit snacks, learning about which foods are good for them. They understand expectations and begin to take responsibility for their own behaviour, learning to keep themselves safe as they talk about the rules and consider why they are needed. The childminder puts individual needs first, so that children develop high levels of self-esteem.

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?	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.