

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	300606
Inspection date	14/10/2008
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 1999. She lives with her young son in Sheffield. The home is accessed by one low step at the front door. The downstairs only of the home is used for childminding. Children have access to a large 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 six children of pre-school age and eight school aged children. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

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

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Close links established with families help the childminder to value their diverse backgrounds and enable children to actively share their home culture and experiences. Regular and ongoing communication with parents and other providers effectively enables her to be clearly aware of each child's individual needs, so that their welfare is fully promoted. Close observation of children helps the childminder plan for their good progress, although she is not yet fully confident of her skills in this process. Through insightful evaluation of her practice, the childminder appropriately identifies areas for development, like how effectively she adds enhancements to the ongoing play provision to increase challenge and promote the outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- consolidate the links between observations of children and planning next steps in their learning
- extend the range of accessible tools and resources, to enhance challenge and free opportunity for exploratory and creative play experiences in the daily environment.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder is fully committed to her own professional development and strives actively to provide high quality care. She has successfully addressed issues raised at the last inspection relating to healthy eating, independent play and keeping records, improving the outcomes for children. She is a reflective practitioner, who continuously reviews and evaluates whether there are more effective ways to involve children further and enhance their development. She is

able to apply the knowledge gained from training to help her identify areas for further improvement, such as using observations of children's progress and making enhancements to the play environment.

Parents are enthusiastic in their praise for the childminder and her care of their children. They place 'absolute trust in her', find her 'very receptive' to their expectations and through her 'professional, reliable and organised approach' to be 'a fantastic childminder'. They like the balance of 'educational activities' and 'emphasis on teaching of social skills'. The childminder encourages new parents to share information about their child, so that she is fully informed about their starting points. She makes time for daily sharing of information and includes parents' comments in planning next steps for children's learning. This helps her to respond quickly to any concerns, to be supportive of specific needs and to value and promote the child's home background within her planning. For example, if there is a new baby in a family, in liaison with parents, she sensitively includes play experiences to support this change.

Consistent implementation of required policies and procedures ensures that children's welfare is effectively promoted. The childminder fully understands her responsibility to safeguard children. She has updated her awareness through recent training, shares her responsibilities with parents and feels confident to implement required procedures appropriately. Children are always fully supervised in their play, whilst being actively encouraged to develop safe levels of independence. Their awareness of risk and safety is raised very well in everyday activities. For example, routine outings are used very successfully to promote awareness of road safety and the need for clear rules when out walking. Risk assessments are very well considered, both in the home and on outings, helping to keep children safe in all activities.

The childminder has given careful thought to the importance of developing appropriate links with other professionals and providers. She has regular conversations with the local pre-school and school to help her plan appropriately for children in her care, enhance the transitions between settings and ensure continuity of learning and care.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The childminder promotes children's well-being and active involvement in their own learning. She plans the daily environment well, so that it is interesting and accessible to each child. Children access resources freely, enabling them to enjoy experiences in all areas of learning, both indoors and out. The childminder plays and talks with the children constantly. She stimulates their curiosity and uses open questions well to encourage further exploration of ideas, for example, as they read books. Resources to encourage exploratory and creative play are routinely made available, but opportunity for free creativity, allowing children to explore and develop their own ideas independently using a variety of tools, is less well resourced.

Informal planning reflects the childminder's good awareness of individual interests,

so that there is appropriate challenge and stimulus in children's play. The childminder is developing more formal observations very effectively and has found recent training about the Early Years Foundation Stage helpful in establishing a framework for this. She is not yet fully confident in maximising these observations to plan consistently to promote next steps in children's learning and track their progress.

Children are very happy and settled in the childminder's care. She gives them confidence to be themselves, express their individuality and share their feelings. They are secure and relaxed in their play, confident of support but able to develop their own ideas. This promotes good self-esteem and enhances their independent motivation to explore freely. Children select books freely, enjoying conversation about people in other countries, thinking about how they are different and what similarities there are. The childminder skilfully helps children recognise and be proud of their own unique qualities and to value the different characteristics of others as they talk.

Children's current interests are reflected as they play with the animals, making animal sounds and miming the jaws of a ferocious crocodile. They look at factual books, naming different kinds of animals and considering their features. The childminder consistently introduces new language, using books well to enhance interest and extend learning, for example, following a visit to the butterfly farm. The environment is well resourced for mark making experiences both indoors and out. The boys especially love chalking out a 'village roadway' for their cars, as they organise imaginary games outdoors. Children talk about the words as they read books and become interested in the sounds of letters. They learn to write their name.

The childminder spontaneously introduces maths language into everyday play and children have lots of opportunity to explore shape and size in construction and imaginary play. They measure the size of the doll's clothes to see if they will fit and assess space to tidy things away. They plan lots of walks in their local community, observing the natural world and changing seasons. They enjoy planting in the garden and help to make a shale bed, engrossed as they fill and empty their buckets. Baking is always a favourite activity. Children become familiar with routines and are encouraged to respect their environment, for example, cooperating to tidy away toys and helping to prepare snack. They participate confidently, learning to share and take turns. Older children are very caring towards the younger ones.

Children consider how to keep themselves healthy and stay safe within everyday routines, as they talk about the importance of exercise and healthy eating. Parents are actively encouraged to provide healthy lunchboxes. Children use the large play equipment in parks, helping them develop skills to manage risks with care. The childminder actively involves children in thinking about why rules are needed and how to keep themselves safe, so that they learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Children make friends, cooperate well and are encouraged to become active, independent learners as they play.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

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

Leadership and management

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

Quality and standards

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

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.