

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	317333
Inspection date	18/09/2008
Inspector	Valerie Block
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).

Description of the childminding

The childminder was registered in 1993 and lives with her husband and two children aged over 16 years in Ulverston, Cumbria within walking distance of local amenities. She is registered on the Early Years Register. The sitting room, dining room, kitchen and upstairs bathroom are used for childminding. There is good access to most of the childminder's premises for people with mobility problems. However, the bathroom is on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder has not as yet fully entered into partnership arrangements with local schools and childcare providers. The setting is registered to care for three children under the age of five years. She is currently minding three children under five, two of whom attend at variable times throughout the week.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and is an active member of the local childminder's group .

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Children are looked after satisfactorily as the experienced childminder ensures that they are safe, healthy, settled and enjoy suitable activities that build on children's interests and what they can do. Children are generally making progress in their learning, although their learning is limited to some extent as there are some weak areas in activity planning and assessment. Inclusive practice is in place as children's unique qualities are respected and understood and all children are encouraged and helped to participate in activities. There is a sound capacity to improve as the childminder seeks out training courses, regularly attends a local group of childminders to improve her knowledge and practice and is open to feedback from parents and others.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals to improve learning through play for children
- improve knowledge and understanding of how to put in place effective systems to further help children learn and develop using the Early Years Foundation Stage framework
- improve assessment methods through using liaison with other childcare and education providers to increase knowledge about each child and to secure robust educational planning
- further develop the complaints policy to ensure that all required procedures are in place and known to parents.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder has some understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of her service, although does not formally appraise her work by using feedback from parents and self-evaluation tools. She shows capacity to improve as she is ready to undertake training and advice offered. She shows a commitment to ensuring any recommendations raised at inspection are met in full.

Parents are valued; regular verbal communication and written policies and record keeping, such as diaries for younger children, ensure that there is a satisfactory exchange of information. However, information about the children's progress according to the early learning goals is limited and parents are not involved in extending activities at home to reinforce their children's learning. When children first attend the childminder finds out from parents what the children can do and what they are like, so she can build on the children's achievements and follow their interests. Although the childminder regularly visits other settings that the children attend, there is little purposeful communication to help ensure she uses their experience to inform her assessment of the child's future needs or to provide continuity of learning for the children's benefit.

Children are safeguarded as the childminder has a good understanding of protecting children and the required child protection procedures, as well as a commitment to ensuring that children are with suitable persons. Effective risk assessments are undertaken to ensure the protection of children's health and safety both inside and outside the home. Most of the required documentation is in place to promote children's welfare. The childminder's complaint policy does not describe all of the required procedures, although parents are informed of Ofsted's contact information and role in complaint investigation.

The childminder is warm and welcoming and displays children's work and information for parents to make her home a welcoming place. Children have a good amount of access to the play equipment and activities so promoting their independence and making opportunities available to all. She demonstrates an inclusive, anti-discriminatory approach to her business. Although she has not cared for children with additional needs for some time, she shows a proactive commitment to meeting children's additional needs. For example, she has undertaken training in sign language.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children enjoy an appropriate range of suitable activities, including regular outdoor activities and play equipment, to encourage new learning through enjoyable play. Children are taken to children's groups regularly and they become involved in community events such as children's walks for local charities. They begin to become involved in their community, socialise with other children and develop a sense of belonging and responsibility. They regularly play in the garden and visit the nearby park so enjoying outside physical exercise and play as they use slides and swings and play with balls and ride-on toys. Children enjoy helping the childminder collect

apples that have fallen from the apple tree and the childminder uses this activity to help children count as well as to talk to children about how apples contribute to a healthy diet.

Children have a good amount of choice as there are a satisfactory amount of accessible, age-appropriate toys, and the childminder is keen to allow children as much choice as possible to follow their interests. Children begin to enjoy creative play as the childminder leads a painting and crayoning session where she allows children opportunities to direct their learning. For example, children decide to mix paints and they talk about the colours they make. Children also have use of sponges and different size paintbrushes as well as large crayons and finger paints for younger children. This allows younger children to be included in the session and for older children to explore different ways of applying paint to paper.

The childminder has an adequate understanding of the early learning goals and is in the early stages of using observation and assessment to plan for children's learning needs. Planning at present is largely spontaneous depending on regular events, such as visits to children's groups, craft activities, free play and some special events. The childminder has begun to make some simple observations of children's achievements in writing which she is using to assess children's next learning steps. She is aware to some extent of what children can do and extends children's learning through everyday play. For example, she is aware of children's understanding about colours and is using opportunities through play to reinforce and extend children's colour recognition. However, children's potential for learning and achieving is reduced because assessment and planning are limited.

Children are relaxed and well-settled and receive a good amount of emotional support. Children are kept very safe and healthy as the childminder has good systems in place to meet their needs. Children are helped to begin to learn skills that will help them in future life to secure economic well-being. For example, she encourages them to explore their environment and to make choices about their learning preferences so promoting independence.

Children have a healthy lifestyle as they are often outdoors enjoying fresh air and exercise. They receive a healthy diet as the childminder offers nutritious food and encourages children to drink fresh water throughout the day. The childminder is vigilant about keeping her home clean and employing procedures to avoid cross-infection. When children wash their hands after the toilet they can explain that they are washing away germs that could make them feel ill, as the childminder has talked to them about personal hygiene. Emphasis is given to children learning to behave well and to respect others, so building skills for the future that will help them become good learners. This gives them a secure base for their future lives.

Children also learn to keep themselves safe as the childminder explains about fire evacuation procedures and the dangers of fire. She regularly practises her evacuation procedure using a fire engine noise to summon the children to stand in line and go to the exit quickly. She has reinforced this learning by taking opportunities for children to visit the local fire station and talking to the fire officers about the dangers of fire.

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?	Satisfactory
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	Satisfactory
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	Satisfactory

Leadership and management

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

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	Satisfactory
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	Good
How well are children helped to stay safe?	Outstanding
How well are children helped to be healthy?	Good
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	Satisfactory
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?	Satisfactory

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 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.