

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY308748
Inspection date	11/02/2009
Inspector	Anneliese Fox-Jones
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 2005. She lives with her husband and three children aged four years, five years and six months, in the small village of Colney Heath near St Albans, Hertfordshire. The property is within walking distance of the local school, pre-school and park. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding, comprising of a toilet, lounge and a dining room which leads through to the kitchen and utility room. The secure garden is equipped with small and large apparatus and is easily accessible from the play areas. Access to the house is at ground level immediately off the driveway.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and the voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She is registered to care for a maximum of three children at any one time. There are currently six children on roll cared for at various times. She is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA).

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. The childminder provides a welcoming and inclusive setting. She works in partnership with parents and offers a variety of enjoyable and interesting learning experiences for children. All the necessary policies and procedures to promote children's welfare and safety are in place and her welfare records are implemented effectively. Children are valued as individuals and encouraged to feel at home. The childminder is beginning to self-evaluate, and involves the views of parents using the service. This 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:

- plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child as they progress towards the early learning goals
- develop further systematic observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles and use these to identify individual learning priorities.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder's documentation is very well organised and easily accessible. She 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 focussed on making further improvements through ongoing self-evaluation, personal development, planning and assessment systems. This allows her to set achievable targets to further enhance the provision. The

childminder has up-to-date qualifications in childcare and first aid. She demonstrates a positive approach to improvement and has instigated reflecting on her practice and ensuring a safe garden with a wide range of equipment is accessible, following recommendations from her last inspection.

The childminder has a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues. She has appropriate procedures in place to ensure children are always protected and is seeking up-to-date training to increase her knowledge in this area. In addition, children are further safeguarded and their good care is underpinned by the comprehensive and effective policies that the childminder has developed. The childminder is well organised and has good record keeping systems so that children's individual needs are known and provided for. Children play safely as she ensures that children are well supervised and robust risk assessments are in place, so as to minimise any hazards to children. Children benefit from the childminder's sound understanding of how to promote their learning and enjoyment, and how to help children feel secure and confident in her care. This stems back from her extensive experience as a mother of young children and a qualified nursery practitioner. A scrap book is in its early stages of development to show children's achievements and progress. The childminder has yet to develop these systems so that they are used to inform future planning and learning opportunities for children.

Children's sense of security in the childminder's care is fostered by the many ways she has devised for building good partnerships with parents. Parents are helped to settle children slowly and share their preferences for how their child is cared for. All parents are given a copy of the childminder's policies and procedures and an information booklet about the services she provides. The childminder also obtains all the appropriate written consents from parents for different aspects of the children's care to ensure their wishes are respected. Parents and carers are regularly updated about their children's activities through regular discussions with the childminder, a daily diary and monthly e-mails with photographs and information about their child.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are provided with many good opportunities to help them make progress across all areas of learning. The childminder makes informal and flexible plans and organises an environment that is matched to children's different interests. A variety of resources are stored at a low level and children are confident in choosing what to play with. Through interaction in their chosen activities the childminder increases children's awareness of different concepts, such as numbers, letters and position. Children are happy in the setting and become absorbed in their play, for instance, when building, fixing and playing with the large Duplo train set. They are encouraged to be independent and develop high levels of concentration. Children enjoy playing group games and cooking together, thereby learning to share, respect others and work to a common aim. The mix of child-initiated play and organised activities encourages children to become active participators with an appropriate awareness towards learning.

The childminder organises activities that are relevant to children's individual ages and abilities. She offers a choice of activities and responds with interest to children's selections, ensuring children are able to follow up their own choices during their play. Children develop some useful skills in language, literacy and numeracy through their play experiences. The childminder is beginning to consider assessments for individual children and is developing scrap books which include pictures and notes of their participation in activities and their achievements. However, they are not linked effectively to the Early Years Foundation Stage so that the childminder can plan around the children's next steps of learning. There is a good balance of activities within the six areas of learning. Children explore materials and learn about different countries. There are good opportunities for them to take part in physical activities both indoors and outdoors. For example, children are positively encouraged to feel the benefits of being healthy and active. The childminder helps to build children's confidence and to take risks in their play, through a wide variety of physical activities accessible in the garden, such as crawling through pop-up tents, riding on scooters and bikes, and climbing the large apparatus, as well as frequent trips to the park. Children are well motivated and helped to learn how to ride a bike. Even young children are beginning to enjoy mark-making activities and to engage in pretend play as the setting is well resourced and materials are attractively set out. Children's interest in the natural world is fostered well through books, conversation, gardening and outings. The environment contains many resources that help children to learn about cultures outside their own, as well as exploring different foods. This well-planned provision ensures that learning is fun and that children are building a foundation that will contribute their future economic well-being.

Children are cared for in a safe and healthy environment. The childminder carries out daily safety checks to ensure children remain safe at all times. Regular fire drills take place and these are effectively recorded in a log. Children develop a sense of belonging in a relaxed atmosphere. For example, they have their own place mats, cooking aprons and coloured drinking cups. Children develop an awareness of the community as they make frequent trips into the village. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through discussion and role play. They are aware of their boundaries and learn how to take turns with toys and equipment. There are effective hygiene procedures in place and children are offered a healthy balanced diet. Parents have clear information about when children may not attend and the safe practices followed when medicines have to be administered.

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.