

## Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 121595  
**Inspection date** 13/08/2009  
**Inspector** Amanda Jane Tyson

**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 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 has been a registered childminder since 1993. She lives with her husband and two adult-aged children in Tadworth. There are no pets. The premises is situated close to Epsom Downs, and Epsom town centre is within short commuting distance. Childminding takes place on the ground floor of the home, which consists of a cloakroom, kitchen-diner, play room and lounge which is used for quiet activities and for the children to sleep. There is a fully enclosed rear garden available for outdoor play. The childminder belongs to the National Childminding As a Network Childminder, has a current first aid qualification and is a member of the National Childminding Association network. She has a car and takes children to various community based activities throughout the week.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register for a total of five children aged under eight years; of these three may be within the early years age range, of whom one may be aged under one year at any one time. There are currently nine children on roll, of whom eight are within the early years age range. Children attend for a variety of part-time hours.

## **Overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. The childminder's proactive approach towards professional development is driving continuous improvement and ensuring highly effective practice. Systems for monitoring and assessing children's learning journey, their safety and well-being are rigorous and astute. This information is skilfully used to plan for each child's individual welfare and learning needs in close partnership with parents and children's other early years providers. Children's levels of achievement are high and they thoroughly enjoy their learning. The environment is warm, welcoming and highly inclusive.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- apply more of the well demonstrated skills used for evaluating children's progress and development, to self-evaluation; make priorities for improvement more specific to enable a closer focus on an individual area.

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children's welfare is exceptionally well safeguarded. All required records and documentation are in place, well maintained and where appropriate visibly displayed. The childminder's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and of the Local Safeguarding Children Board policies and procedures is

secured through training which she updates every three years. Comprehensive and well monitored record keeping enables prompt identification of possible emerging concerns; this leads to early intervention and support for children. The childminder conducts regular risk assessments and is very proactive in evaluating these to find solutions for minimising identified hazards and planning for different situations. For example, children wear high-visibility jackets when they go on outings, and she carries photographic identification cards detailing all necessary emergency information. Furthermore, there is an individual risk assessment in place for each outing which includes a plan for responding to a lost child situation. The childminder has a superb supply of play and learning resources which are constantly supplemented and replenished to meet the individual needs of attending children, and which are very attractively stored to inspire their interest and to encourage independence.

The childminder's capacity for continuous improvement is exceptionally well demonstrated by her commitment towards developing professional knowledge and practice, through her evaluations of children's achievements and planning for their next steps. However, this is not so well reflected by her self-evaluation form which provides more of a descriptive broad summary and does not reflect the vision that she clearly has for maintaining ongoing excellence. Nonetheless, the childminder has achieved the Children Come First quality assurance accreditation, attends regular training courses and puts her learning immediately into practice. She reads childcare publications and keeps up to date with early years research, such as for Raising Boys' Achievements. She has developed excellent systems for monitoring and assessing children's progress and development, for introducing parents to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and for establishing professional partnerships with children's other early years providers. Children's learning and development journey is comprehensively documented from their starting points, what they can and cannot do and what they like and dislike, at the commencement of placement; photographs and astute written observations thereafter are skilfully evaluated and used to guide activity planning so that it is tailored to meet the preferred learning styles and unique personal, social and emotional needs of each individual child. Parents are secure in their understanding of the EYFS and are fully involved in planning a programme of learning, based on play and first-hand experiences, for their child. The childminder has recently arranged to be present when school teaching staff conduct home-visits to parents and children. Teachers are then provided with a wealth of information, supported by outstanding documentary evidence, the learning journeys, to help plan for children's entry into school; this provides for a smooth transition and continuation of their learning journey because the teacher knows clearly what to expect and agreements regarding communication between all involved in the child's EYFS have been reached.

Parents' high regard for this childminder is epitomised by some of the many comments detailed in letters of thanks, and on the parental questionnaires that she regularly sends out as part of her self-evaluation, for example; '...she offers a happy, loving, safe and stimulating environment'; '...children are taught wonderful manners and very good hygiene skills'; and 'She [the childminder] has high expectations of the children which the children respect...'

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are cared for in a highly inclusive play and learning environment whereby their sense of belonging is particularly well fostered. The childminder is particularly proactive in demonstrating to children how she values their differences and beliefs, for instance making sure that a vegetarian child understood that a messy activity, that they were about to take part in at a community group, involved a fish that was once alive; the child was therefore able to make an informed decision about whether or not to take part. The childminder plans meals around the specific dietary needs of the children so that wherever possible they are all eating the same or similar meal. Children's settling in experience is individually tailored, taking good account of any parent-child separation anxiety issues. They play beautifully together; toys are shared, older children understand tolerance, are kind towards younger children, and they all use forms of common courtesies routinely. Walls are adorned with photographs of all the attending children and their creative work, and they each have their own coat hooks and colour-coded flannels. Play equipment and books, such as dolls depicting different ethnicity, cultural, traditional and role play dressing up clothes, and small world people using disability aids all promote awareness of diversity to younger children. Activities, such as a Australia Day party celebrations, making and learning about the origins of Dream Catchers, to help overcome an individual child's experience of nightmares, and finding out about the beliefs that dominate Chinese New Year extend the knowledge of older children. Opportunities to use a working water pump help children to understand how people live in other parts of the world, and as they collect and wrap gifts to send in a shoe box to orphaned children, they learn compassion and generosity.

Children enjoy a highly nutritious daily diet and this, along with the abundance of fresh air and physical exercise is laying the foundations for children to adopt future healthy lifestyle habits. The childminder has an extremely good supply of small outdoor play equipment to compliment the large apparatus that she has. For example, as three-year-olds notice the 'air' circle shapes they are creating with coloured streamers, toddlers are fascinated by the different sized 'circle' shapes created by the bubble making machine. They use their whole bodies to work the variations of balancing discs that the childminder has, dig in the sand, experiment with weight, volume and capacity during water play, enjoy the challenge of hoopla and knocking down skittles. Learning is brought to life through the wonderful trips that the childminder organises. For example, visits to the Science Observatory Centre provide opportunities for children to experiment with giant magnets and iron filings, and they are more than a little surprised when a chair, powered by a vacuum hoover, begins to move. They enjoy rides on the mini steam railway, enjoy fruit picking at local farms, nature walks in the countryside and tree climbing in the forest. Regular fire evacuation practice has introduced children to the 'stop, drop and roll' routine and why and how this helps to keep them safe. Daily walking trips out within the community ensure that road safety and 'stranger danger' rules are consistently reinforced. The childminder has identified the need for children to understand how to stay safe with dogs; her arrangement for the Blue Cross to visit to explain this to children is an excellent example of her capacity to keep children's learning moving forward.

Firm arrangements, as a result of local authority funding, are in place for the provision of equipment to promote children's technology skills. Children have access to a wide range of writing tools and are keen to use pens and pencils, paint brushes and chinks because the childminder encourages them to use it to link with their current fascinations. An excellent example of this is the way that a three-year-old drew a picture of 'an ambush' based on his memory of a six-year-olds drawing two days previous. Children are becoming articulate communicators which is reflected by the rapid progress of children with additional needs, as a result of joined up working to support identified goals.

Children build and assemble with a range of construction sets, for example, babies use magnetic block shapes, toddlers use duplo and older children with complex sets of nuts and bolts and small Lego; they learn problem solving skills as they work out how to make models balance and where to fit shapes. All children love 'getting messy' with substances, such as gloop, paint and shaving foam and all enjoy creating and designing with recyclables. Every child has an individual play plan which identifies very worthwhile areas for further encouragement, such as 'more participation in role play/nature'. Children are making fantastic progress in this delightful setting; most importantly they are having tremendous fun.

## 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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	1
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?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met