

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	123294
Inspection date	13/05/2009
Inspector	Susan Tuffnell
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 was registered in 1994. She lives with her husband and adult daughter in a residential area of St. Albans, Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's home is used for childminding. One of the upstairs bedrooms may be used for a child that needs a sleep. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminding area is on one level and includes toilet facilities, wide doorways and a flat secure garden.

The childminder provides care every weekday during term time and school holidays. She is registered on the Early Years Register and compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She is registered to care for six children on the Early Years Register and currently two children attend. The childminder currently provides care for four children on the Compulsory Childcare Register (CCR) and there are three children attending on the Voluntary Childcare Register (VCR). All the children share the same facilities.

The childminder holds the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level Three in Children's Care, Learning and Development and is a member of the National Childminding Association. She works in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is outstanding. The childminder provides an excellent service for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. She offers a safe, secure and welcoming environment and supports them effectively as they benefit from excellent well-planned and imaginative activities. The close partnership with parents contributes significantly to ensuring that the individual needs of all the children are met. Children are highly valued at the setting because the childminder has a sensitive understanding of diversity and equal opportunities. She uses her extensive knowledge to ensure that planning includes activities and equipment that promote positive awareness of a multicultural world. Very effective procedures are in place for evaluating her practice and she has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. Priorities for improvement in her self-evaluation show that she continuously strives to provide the very best care and education for the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensuring activities are planned that take into account the age and the stage of development of the children attending.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder uses her excellent knowledge and experience to ensure that all aspect of the provision are managed effectively. Outstanding policies, procedures and records are in place to support the safe and efficient management of the setting and ensure that the needs of all the children are met. The childminder has clear procedures for monitoring and evaluating her practice and has identified some priorities for improvement in her self-evaluation. Information collected from observations clearly evaluates the impact of the educational programme on each individual child. Comprehensive planning ensures that each child receives an enjoyable and challenging experience across all the areas of learning and is securely linked to the early learning goals. Planning is evaluated to ascertain the impact on individual children's learning and the success of the activities. Children's progress is carefully monitored and their identified learning needs are carried forward and implemented into future planning to give a very clear picture of progress.

The childminder shows an outstanding attitude to her own training and development which has led to a rich and varied educational experience for the children. The childminder has completed training for the NVQ Level Three in Children's Care, Learning and Development and is studying for an Early Years Foundation Degree. Parents greatly appreciate the close links encouraged by the childminder and are well informed about their children's care and education. For example, daily diaries are kept for young children and babies and are available on request for older children. The children are encouraged to build a workbook using the Early Years Foundation Stage which is shared with parents to keep them fully informed about their child's achievements and progress. Information sharing is further enhanced with regular feedback and the childminder's exceptional work in forging close links with other professionals such as the local school and nursery, to ensure that children's care is consistent and their education extended at the setting. The childminder's excellent safeguarding policies include comprehensive risk assessments to ensure that children are protected at all times.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are supported exceptionally well in their learning and development and are consistently offered an extensive range of opportunities that support them in making excellent progress. The highly individual and flexible approach to planning ensures that children's uniqueness is valued and their interests and needs are always included. However, some activities such as printed worksheets do not always take into account the age and the stage of development of all the children. Children lead and follow their own interests. For example, children enjoy water play and use plastic guttering to make waterfalls and direct water into different channels. They learn about weight and volume as they fill jugs and bottles with water to pour down the guttering. Children work out how to remove the wet sand that clogs up the gutter by using a spade to push it down. Excellent base line assessments securely identify children's starting points and are transferred into children's individual planning and used to target future observations. The

childminder has a excellent understanding of the learning process which is clearly reflected with detailed observations and assessments.

The imaginative planning ensures that children enjoy stimulating and interesting activities that encourage them to explore the natural environment and life cycles as they study plants, flowers and investigate caterpillars and worms. Children use magnifying glasses and bug boxes to look closely at the structure of insects. They watch squirrels and feed the birds in the garden. Children are fascinated as they watch chicks hatch from eggs at the nursery and extend this at the setting with art and craft work and stories. Children's understanding of the natural world is greatly enhanced by interesting activities. Visits to parks and garden centres inspire children to sow seeds and care for plants. Daily walks bring opportunities to experience nature and the seasons. Children notice the blossom on the trees and discuss the weather as they look at the changing cloud formations. Children help to shop for fresh fruit and vegetables. They explore the different textures and smells and have opportunities to count and weigh the fruit and vegetables.

The inspirational environment and quality resources promotes children's progression towards the early learning goals. Bright information posters and attractive examples of children's work adorn the walls of the spacious, bright and welcoming setting. For example, excellent examples of early writing, art and collage work and hand prints are displayed. An abundance of play materials are stored in baskets, boxes and on low shelves that are freely accessible to children. Children are provided with a language rich environment and are encouraged to enjoy books, read together and listen to stories. Children have daily opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, rhymes, music, songs and poetry. A good range and variety of written information is available which includes stories and pictures to raise children's awareness and understanding about the wider world. Dual language books and posters help children who have English as an additional language to join in with the activities. Children have ample opportunities to make marks as they draw, chalk, paint and print using a rich array of materials and techniques. They are encouraged to be active in their learning and use problem solving skills as they solve puzzles, sequence and count shapes, colours and numbers. Children benefit greatly from the excellent planning of knowledge and understanding of the world. An excellent topic about The Great Wall of China is extended as more information is found in the children's encyclopaedia which encourages the children to play a game of travel and discover a picture of Beijing, the capital of China. Children are encouraged to be active and understand the benefits of physical activity as they walk to and from school daily and practise their physical skills at the mini Olympics and on the climbing frame. The childminder offers regular free tennis lessons which gives children excellent opportunities to test and increase physical fitness and body strength.

Children are cared for in a very safe, secure environment because the childminder has an excellent knowledge of this area. She has completed a thorough risk assessment which covers all areas of the home, garden and outings. Children are beginning to understand about taking care of themselves and others as they practise regular fire drills and help tidy the toys. The childminder has a clear

understanding of issues relating to safeguarding children and has ensured that she has relevant information and contact details.

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?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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