

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	123917
Inspection date	18/05/2009
Inspector	Lynne Kathleen Talbot
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 January 1995. The childminder works with another register childminder and minds from her own property. Her husband and two children aged 16 and 11 years live at the property in a village close to Stevenage and Hertford in Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding as well as rooms on the first floor as required. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. Access to the childminder's home is via a single step.

The childminder is able to provide care on each weekday during term-time and school holidays. She is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The childminder is registered to provide four places for children when working alone or six places when working with her co-childminder. Together they are caring for nine children between them who attend varying hours, four of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Both childminders have equal responsibility for the childminding practice. Three children attend other settings such as the early years unit of the local primary school or nursery.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Good knowledge of each child's individual needs ensures that the childminder and her co-worker promote most aspects of their learning with success. Children are generally safe with their welfare suitably promoted whilst arrangements for safeguarding children are secure. There are good procedures in place to support all children maintaining inclusion. Informal methods of working with parents and carers, together with other settings providing for children, contribute to ensure that the needs of all children are met and that their transition into future education is successful. The childminder and her co-worker assess the care provided but have yet to establish methods of review to promote continuous development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the use of planning and assessment to show how they link to the next steps for children, show the progress which children are making and ensure that initial starting points involve parental input
- use self-evaluation and quality improvement processes as the basis of ongoing internal review
- ensure that documentation and records are maintained ensuring that risk is minimised; this refers to records of risk assessment, the accessibility of bottled alcohol in the lounge and records showing parental permission to seek emergency medical treatment.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Policies and procedures devised by the childminder and her co-worker are used effectively to promote the welfare of children. The childminder takes overall responsibility for maintaining the contractual agreements, although both childminders hold equal responsibility for care and works in partnership with all parents. The childminder has a firm understanding of issues relating to safeguarding. She extends her knowledge by reviewing childcare practice issues within professional publications and through the internet. However, this does not assess the setting's strengths or areas for development that will improve the outcomes or quality of provision for children. The childminder and her co-worker work closely with parents, identifying specific needs to ensure that each child receives appropriate support. An example of this is close monitoring of children where there is a medical need. The childminder offers particular flexibility in the arrangements, offering care as early as 05:45 to meet family needs. Records and appropriate permissions are kept, although attention needs to be paid to ensure that all parental signatures for emergency treatment are immediately available in the event of an emergency.

Risk assessments for the home and outings are undertaken daily and periodically; however, they are not fully documented and this leads to areas of risk being overlooked. This includes the current accessibility of bottles in the lounge area which present a risk to children. Resources are plentiful and are organised to enable children to self-select materials and initiate learning. Flexible routines encourage children to enjoy a range of activities within the home and regular exploration, with either childminder, in the local community fosters an awareness of their local community. For example, they choose books in the library and visit Paradise Park at Broxbourne.

The childminder works closely with parents offering verbal feedback and giving information about forthcoming activities. The responsibility for sharing information lies with both childminders and both work equally with families. Positive and complimentary references are received. However, there is no process to agree a baseline starting point for children or methods to show progression arising from plans using identified next steps. This means that some developmental opportunities may not be fully investigated. Links with other settings are established with the childminder and her co-worker having knowledge of planning and topic works to enable them to continue and complement the care given.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children enjoy a range of flexible activities that support them in making good progress. The environment and accessible resources motivate children to explore. For example, they sit together to read and extend their play using blankets as a rocket ship discussing how they will fly to the moon, later they change this to a trampoline on the same blanket. Children choose activities such as peg-boards and beads deciding to make circles, rectangles and other shapes together, they find and add set numbers and colours showing a developing knowledge of shape and

number. Children enjoy the garden play where they have a separate, fenced play area within which there is an abundance of play materials both static, wheeled and stored in large crates such as dressing-up clothes and bats and balls. Observations are completed periodically for children, including some photographs and narrative observations. Information is shared with parents verbally and informally. Next steps are identified for each child separately and reviewed by the childminder and her co-worker, However, there is no link to starting points involving parents or a planned progression. This means that children may not be suitably challenged to reach their full potential.

Children enjoy a good range of creative activities. They follow themed project works such as Easter when they make bonnets or paint their own mugs. Children are encouraged to develop a sense of security and this is helped by making their own placemats for the table. They take part in constructing a large dolls' house with the childminder and this offers them opportunities to follow instruction, solve problems, measure, match and work co-operatively thereby developing pride and self-esteem. Children engage in conversations asking questions and considering their responses. For instance, they tell the childminder about how they make cakes at home, discuss safety when using the oven and the process of cake making. They are encouraged to talk and listen to each other showing good social skills. Children enjoy outdoor activities that enable them to explore their community such as visiting the woods and making camps outdoors. These activities enable them to explore the seasons and experiment with basic construction.

Children thrive because they are in a secure environment. They enjoy a varied menu which is nutritionally beneficial planned by both childminders and prepared by the childminder. Children enjoy choosing lunches and gain an understanding of food for good health. They take part in evacuation routines regularly to begin to learn about safety in the home. Children are gaining an understanding of caring for themselves. For instance, they hang their coats on their hooks, wash their hands following the 'Tigger says' poster before lunch, and change their clothes independently. Children develop a good awareness of road safety when walking in the local areas. They wear high-visibility waistcoats to ensure they are seen and, when on outings, have cards attached to their clothing zips holding telephone numbers in case they become lost. Children learn to self-manage their behaviour and enjoy sticker rewards, rewards charts and writing details on the 'marking board' to show their parents later in the day for positive behaviours. These methods help children to develop behaviours for their lives in society.

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?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
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?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
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

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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