

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	129181
Inspection date	16/04/2009
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 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 was registered in May 1995. She lives with her husband and three children, aged 11, 13 and 14 years of age. The whole of the ground floor of the home is used for childminding, with the exception of the kitchen. 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 six places for children. There are currently nine children attending part-time hours, three of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Two children attend other settings such as the early years unit of the local primary school and the local pre-school. The childminder is able to provide care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children are fully engaged with activities that take into account their interests and developmental stage, promoting progress across all areas of learning and ensuring inclusion. Children are safe and their welfare is promoted well whilst arrangements for safeguarding children are robust. Methods of working with parents are established and partnerships with other settings providing EYFS for children are complementary. The childminder has established procedures for self-evaluation that enable her to recognise strengths and areas for development and implement change for improved outcomes.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide opportunities for parents to be involved in developing the children's baseline assessment and input to the planning for continued development
- develop opportunities for children to celebrate, recognise and show respect for each other's home languages and cultures.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare of children. The childminder has a firm understanding of issues relating to safeguarding. She extends her knowledge by attending training on topics such as 'the six areas of learning' and 'observations, assessment and planning'; this promotes her continued

development. The childminder works closely with parents, identifying specific needs, including medical, dietary or developmental needs, early in the arrangement to ensure that children receive appropriate support. She works closely with other professionals or providers of EYFS to follow any set programme for children, ensuring consistency in approach. This partnership extends to everyday care, where themes are shared and activities are complimentary.

The childminder has completed a self-evaluation to assist her development and completes thorough risk assessments for both the home and any outing undertaken. She has an extra precautionary method when away from the home and carries a key ring with photographs of herself and the children, listing relevant details, plus medical requirements to ensure any emergency services involved have access to pertinent information if needed.

Resources are well-organised in the playroom, to enable children to self-select materials and initiate learning. Flexible routines encourage children to enjoy activities and exploration of the local community, which fosters an awareness of the immediate world around them. They visit Willow Farm, where they have contact with newborn livestock, Hatfield House and the Natural History museum at Tring, where they explore history, as well as their local areas to pick blackberries, later making it into jam. The childminder shares the weekly activities with parents using a 'marker board', seeks regular feedback through questionnaires from children over five years as well as parents, and issues a newsletter regularly. Parents review children's learning journey folders but do not yet have input into a baseline starting assessment or ongoing development. This means that parents are not fully involved in their child's learning.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are offered an inventive range of activities that support them in making very good progress across all areas of learning. Individual learning journey folders are developed, showing progression and identified next steps, together with spontaneous and narrative observations. Planning is both long-term and medium-term, yet adapts to children's current interest. This means that there is sufficient flexibility to ensure that children are supported to fulfil their potential.

Children often initiate themes, for instance, when the question 'what is bigger than the sky?' was asked, the childminder broadened the current topic to cover the solar system. Parents are included and often supply reference books or items from home when asked. Children become engrossed in exploring the planets, using both battery-operated displays and non-fiction books to learn and create a delightful wall display. They begin to explore astronomy and learn about star constellations such as the 'Big Dipper', linking this to other experiences talking about the heat from the sun, how plants need sun to grow and how the children must protect themselves in the sun wearing sun-protection and hats. Children show increasing interest as the project develops, asking questions about space and exploration discussing the moon, space suits and leading into play figures they are familiar with. Children show particularly developed skills as they cooperate, take turns, allow each other time to complete tasks, compare size and shape, or listen to older

children read information. The activities are very well designed and engage children in exciting tasks in which they want to learn.

Children enjoy celebrating festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. They make clay light-holders and explore Rangoli patterns, as well as trying new foods such as spices and fruits from other countries. Children show great interest in the world around them, recording trips by themselves or others on the world map or European map displayed in the playroom. They enjoy taking 'Rocky the Travelling Teddy' with them, either on holiday or to events with their families, following which they participate in adding photographs and text to a diary recording Rockys' adventures. These methods help children broaden their understanding of the world around them and increase their social awareness. They have, however, fewer opportunities to develop an appreciation of each others culture or language, which is failing to take advantage of first hand experience.

Children thrive because they are in a secure environment. They take part in routines that promote their safety such as evacuation and practising road safety each day. A visit from a fire officer was used to broaden awareness of fire safety and people who help us. Children are developing excellent physical health and eagerly use equipment from the Youth Sport Trust 'Lets start to play project', which follows on from a training course attended by the childminder. It promotes the development of physical activity indoors, using small equipment and activity books and stories, and captures children's interest. They plant peppers, peas, beetroot and tomatoes, learning about propagators when caring for seedlings, later deciding that they would make a scarecrow and windmills to ensure the seeds were not eaten by the birds. This is an example of problem solving and team work. Children are developing clear interest in the world around them, their physical health and well-being, and are engaged in physical, first-hand learning experiences that promote rapid development.

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.