

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	405162
Inspection date	10/06/2009
Inspector	Valerie Block
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 1993 and lives with his wife in a bungalow in Slyne, Lancaster within walking distance of local amenities and schools. He always works with his wife, who is also a registered childminder. The two childminders work closely together, with this childminder taking overall responsibility for risk assessments and premises maintenance as well as art and science activities. Very occasionally they employ an assistant. There are two assistants available. When working alone, he is registered to provide care for up to six children under the age of eight. When working together they can mind up to 10 children under the age of eight years. Currently they are minding 13 children under the age of eleven, mostly in the early years age group. Three of the couple's grandchildren are included in this number. The childminder is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

All areas of the property, apart from the front garden and the main bedroom, are used for childminding. There is a designated indoor playroom available, directly accessible to the garden, that is fully enclosed.

Both childminders are accredited members of their Local Network offering nursery granted places. They support children with additional needs. Both childminders have professional qualifications in early years care and education.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is outstanding as the childminder and his co-worker provide a really stimulating, welcoming environment, in which children thrive and make good progress. This childminder has a wealth of experience, as well as qualifications in child care and education. Strong partnerships with parents and others contribute significantly to ensuring that the needs of all children are met to a very high standard. The childminder's effective and thorough self-evaluation and monitoring systems ensure continuous improvement in childminding practice and the childminder has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of this setting.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- take advantage of further training and information about the Early Years Foundation Stage
- review the risk assessment regarding children's access to unregistered parts of the house.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder has considerable knowledge and understanding of his role and responsibility for safeguarding children and has undertaken training in this area, in order to keep up-to-date with current legislation. Written risk assessments are comprehensive for the home and for outings and are reviewed on a regular basis for children's ongoing safety. The premises are very safe, however, there is a small omission in the risk assessment regarding children's access to unregistered parts of the home. Health and safety procedures are very robust so the children's health is well protected and information is researched about childhood illnesses and shared with parents.

Children's interests are well met and parents are very well informed as the childminding provision is very well organised and all documentation is in place to promote the welfare of children. The childminder, together with his co-minder, has also developed many other records and policy statements that enhance this provision for the children's benefit. The organisation of the premises is outstanding, for example, there is a designated play room with an area for messy and creative play where children can access a good amount of interesting, varied toys and play materials. This room opens directly to the garden where there are many opportunities for outside exercise and physical challenge, as well as a vegetable garden for the children. Within this children's area is a child-sized toilet and basin that children are able to access without difficulty themselves. There also is a very welcoming reception area where there is a wealth of information for parents as well as child sized coat hooks for children to hang their coats and bags.

Partnerships with parents are relaxed and friendly and ensure each child's needs are thoroughly met. There are excellent systems in place for keeping parents well informed on a daily basis, which the parents value highly. A very informative information booklet also helps to keep parents fully informed about the childminder's practice and about their child's progress. A number of parents have completed questionnaires about the provision and comment on the excellent service provided. Children benefit as positive steps are taken to build partnerships with other professionals who also work with some of the children. Children with additional needs are given very attentive and professional support from the provider and parents are most grateful for this support. Parents are also included in the learning and development of their child as the two parties have excellent communication processes to achieve this. For example, photographs are kept on children's individual memory sticks for parents information and there is a digital photograph frame in the reception area, showing new photos of what the children have been doing that day. The setting has an anti-discriminatory policy and the childminder shows an active attitude towards ensuring children and families are made welcome and included.

The childminder and his colleague have very good systems to work together and have used information from the parents and children to closely consider their working practices using the Ofsted self-evaluation tool to good advantage. They have an action list to improve their setting that has considered strengths and areas

for improvement very well. They have both attended a very good amount of courses over their time as childminders and continue to show a great interest in continued learning for the benefit of the children. As part of their network, they regularly meet with advisors to consider their practice and also research the internet and read childcare publications to improve their practice.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make very good progress as the childminder ensures that they all receive individualised learning and development activity planning, based on good knowledge of each child and their starting points and next steps in learning. Observation and assessment is excellently managed to ensure each child receives very good support in their learning and is encouraged to view learning as a positive experience. The childminder has an excellent knowledge of the early learning goals and is very imaginative and thorough about providing an exciting, challenging, programme whilst providing very warm, sensitive care. The exceptional and extensive range, balance and variety of activities that are planned and available to children of all ages fully promote their all round learning and enjoyment. The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. Children confidently explore and learn in a secure, safe and stimulating environment.

Children are introduced very skilfully to considering the world around them and scientific principles as the childminder makes a gyroscope spin on the table and spin along a string held tautly. He allows the children to observe in wonder and to consider how this happens, answering questions and allowing further experimentation to occur. Children bring costumes to wear to tell stories based on film characters they have seen. The childminder is very encouraging to children and his excitement assists the other children to pay the children due attention as he helps the children deliver a successful piece of theatre. Children's self esteem, communication skills and imagination are greatly enhanced by this activity. As part of their recent activities around the theme of growth they have been doing a gardening project planting seeds and they are planning together to make scarecrows using hay to keep birds off the strawberries they have planted. The childminder talks to the children about the garden, they consider what the seeds need to grow and they look carefully with magnifying glasses at strawberries to find the seeds that will make the next plant. Children are very absorbed in this activity and learning is greatly enhanced by the skills of the childminder with young children. As part of this theme, the children are asking parents for photographs of themselves as babies, so they can see how they have changed and grown. To increase their understanding of the children and to help forge links that are understandable to children between home and the setting, the childminders have asked parents to keep a diary, including photographs, to show what the toy, 'honey bear,' does when he goes home with each of the children in turn.

Children are kept very healthy as the childminder ensures that there are very good procedures in place to prevent cross-infection, such as, a robust sickness policy. He also ensures that his paediatric first aid certificate is kept up to date. Children wear hats and sun cream on sunny days to keep them healthy and drinks are

available at all times. Children are encouraged to have regular outdoor exercise in all weathers as the childminders provide wellington boots for children's use. Children begin to learn about keeping healthy as they learn to clean their teeth after meals with the support of the childminder and learn about healthy eating through activities to help them understand the importance of a healthy diet. They are currently growing their own fruit and vegetables to increase children's awareness of healthy eating. The children understand about safety out of doors as the childminder discusses road safety with them.

Children are developing skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being as they become increasingly confident in information and communication technology, using the family computer and other electronic equipment. Children also behave very well as they are encouraged to respect other people and be kind to one another. Children show respect for children when they are telling stories, knowing to give them attention and to take turns in conversation. The childminders have used training in the use of persona dolls to help children express their feelings and to consider other people's feelings when there is conflict. Children begin to learn about diversity as they have a very good amount of available toys and books showing positive images of diversity and the childminders plan activities to help children consider differences 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?	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?	1
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?	2
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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