

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	250803
Inspection date	10/06/2009
Inspector	Hazel Meadows
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 1996. She lives with her husband and three children, two of whom are adults and one aged 16 years, in a house in Stowmarket, Suffolk. There is one small step to access to the premises. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding activities but children predominantly play in the lounge and conservatory. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The family has a pet rabbit and goldfish.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding four children in this age group, most of whom attend part-time. The childminder is also registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register and she also offers care to children aged over five to 11 years. The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

She walks or drives to take children to and from local schools, attends a local childminding groups and local toddler groups. She also takes children to local parks and play areas and to nearby places of interest.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and holds a relevant early years qualification. She is working towards Childminder Accreditation to enable her to receive government funding. She is a support childminder to newly registered childminders, which is organised through Suffolk County Council.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. Children are offered a superb variety of play and learning experiences, both in the home and on outings, and consequently make excellent progress. The childminder provides a welcoming, stimulating and child-focussed environment where children flourish. She has a secure knowledge of the children's individual needs and thorough documentation and safety requirements are in place to ensure children's welfare. The childminder maintains very positive and trusting partnerships with parents to ensure continuity of children's care, learning and development. She has developed effective methods for monitoring and promoting each child's progress towards the early learning goals and reflects on her practice to make ongoing improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further a systematic method of self-evaluation to help highlight strengths and identify areas for further development.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder is experienced and has a secure knowledge of child development. She is very committed and enthusiastic towards ongoing training, her personal and professional development, and ensures that she is well-informed of current childcare issues and requirements. All required training is up-to-date, with certificates neatly presented in a folder and she also keenly attends additional workshops and training events. Knowledge and skills gained on training are applied to her daily practice to enhance the care of the children. The childminder reflects on her practice and pro-actively makes ongoing improvements. She is a member of the Suffolk Quality Assurance Scheme which promotes continuous development. The childminder has a thorough understanding of safeguarding children and has attended relevant training. She has a robust policy, is clear of her role and responsibilities to protect children and knows what action to take if she had concerns about a child.

The childminder is conscientious and attentive to child safety and has clearly written risk assessments for her home and a risk assessment checklist for outings. The childminder organises her home, time and resources extremely well to support and meet the varying routines and needs children of different ages and abilities. She has a positive and inclusive attitude and approach to diversity, which is well reflected in her policies, resources and activities. She has established a clear method of observing and assessing children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), by adapting Suffolk County Council Learning Journeys. Each child's progress is clearly recorded in individual folders and observations are used effectively to aid planning and to identify the next steps in their learning and development. Learning Journeys are shared with parents approximately every eight weeks, although none have yet chosen to make their own contributions.

The childminder develops very positive and trusting partnerships with parents and their comments and feedback are welcomed. She encourages frequent two-way communication to ensure each child's individual needs are met and to promote continuity of care. Daily diaries are maintained for infants and toddlers and shared with the parents to keep them informed and updated. She maintains excellently organised documentation and has well-written, clear policies. The childminder gathers comprehensive, essential details about the children and has signed, written parental consents in place, to ensure children are cared for according to their parent's wishes.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are very happy and settled in the childminder's care and interaction is warm and relaxed. They are confident and communicate freely with the childminder who is attentive and responsive to them. The childminder knows the children very well and is aware of triggers which impact their behaviour such as tiredness or hunger. Children are learning how to manage their behaviour well and respond positively to the childminder's calm manner and her simple explanations.

They are gaining independence as they make their own choices and selections from the range of toys available. Laminated photo cards of the actual resources enable them to see all that is on offer. An excellent range of good quality toys, books and games provides ongoing interest and progression for the children as they get older and more able. The children benefit from using child-sized furniture and play purposefully and concentrate for considerable periods. The childminder plays with the children at their level and engages with them to focus their attention and support their learning. For example, helping them use playdough moulds. She skilfully knows when to change an activity to offer new interest and challenge for the children.

The childminder has a projected plan of activities and topics covering the areas of learning, based on her knowledge of the individual children. These plans are very flexible to accommodate and follow ideas and interests or experiences the children have. Children learn through fun activities and benefit from many hands-on experiences. For example, they have many opportunities to engage in creative play and are regularly offered craft activities enabling them to explore a range of textures such as glitter, sand and paint using large and small brushes and doing hand or foot paintings. Their efforts are valued and some are displayed in their folder. Children's imaginative play is well supported with dressing up clothes and role play props. Small world toys such as play people and cars and garage also support children's imagination. Musical instruments are readily available and children regularly attend a sing and sign session, where they also learn basic Makaton signs.

The childminder embraces diversity and all children are welcomed and valued. She works closely with parents to meet any particular needs a child may have. Children of all ages are included and enabled to try activities, for example, babies have opportunity to explore the playdough alongside the older children. Children are able to explore their local community and the natural world around them. For example, they visit local toddler groups and places of interest and find twigs and leaves outside to investigate and enjoy watering the plants and helping to feed the rabbit. Children have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise playing in the well equipped garden. They also visit local parks and play areas where they develop skills and confidence on larger play equipment. Babies have freedom and space to move around and action-reward toys promote their physical skills, problem solving and exploration. Children's finer manipulative skills are promoted through craft activities and toddlers and babies are offered a spoon when eating to begin to develop their co-ordination.

The children's parents provide their main meals and the childminder is vigilant to ensure it is stored and reheated to the correct temperatures. She maintains an excellent standard of hygiene to promote children's health and wellbeing, for example, children have individual hand towels to minimise the risk of cross-infection. Healthy options are promoted through clear policies and the childminder encourages children to develop an understanding of good eating habits, as she provides healthy snacks, such as fruit, and drinks are readily available. Older children independently wash their hands, often without prompting, and understand why this is necessary. The childminder is a positive role model for good hygiene

practice as she wears gloves to change nappies and washes her hands as required, clearly explaining to the children what she is doing.

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?	2
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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