

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	125509
Inspection date	19/08/2009
Inspector	Cilla Rachel Mullane

Type of setting	Childminder
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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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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 has been registered since 2000. She lives with her husband and adult children in a village on the outskirts of Maidstone. The ground floor of the premises is used for childminding, and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The toilet is on the ground floor, and there is a step up into the house.

The childminder is registered to care for six children aged under eight years, of whom three may be in the early years age range at any one time. She is currently caring for seven children in the early years age range on a part time basis. The childminder is also registered to care for children aged over five years on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The childminder collects from local schools and pre-schools. She is an accredited childminder who is in receipt of Government funding, and receives the support of a Network Coordinator.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress towards the early learning goals, because the childminder uses her expert knowledge of how children learn to provide enjoyable activities in which all children can take part. She reflects on her practice, and attends training to ensure that she maintains continuous improvement. She develops professional and supportive relationships with parents, and liaises successfully with other agencies so that children receive good continuity of care. An emphasis on children's emotional wellbeing ensures that they are settled, confident and ready to learn. Children respond positively to good behaviour management strategies, and have clear boundaries which they understand.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- consider improving the amount of written information supplied to parents regarding childminding policies and procedures
- further develop the use of reflective practice and self-evaluation, taking into account the views of parents and carers, to identify strengths and priorities for development that will continuously improve the quality of the provision for all children
- ensure that all required documentation, including parents' written permission for the childminder to seek emergency medical treatment, is accessible and ready for use

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder organises her service well. She takes her responsibilities as a childminder seriously, and provides a professional service. She attends training courses on an ongoing basis, so that her knowledge and understanding of relevant issues is up to date. For example, she has learnt more about managing children's behaviour and asking open questions, both of which enhance the care of the children. Furthermore, she has gained accreditation to accept funding for pre-school children, and welcomes the support and advice of her network coordinator. The documentation required for the smooth running of the childminding service is well maintained, but parents' permission slips for relevant aspects of children's care, including those giving the childminder permission to seek emergency medical advice and treatment, are not kept to hand and are not readily accessible.

The childminder has started to use the online self evaluation form to evaluate her practice. As a result, she has appropriately targeted areas for improvement and development, and decided how to implement them. For example, she has identified that she needs to more thoroughly seek parents' views on her care of their children, and plans to achieve this by the use of questionnaires.

Partnership with parents is strong. They are helped to be confident in leaving their children in the childminder's care because she encourages at least two settling in visits before the arrangement starts. Parents are well informed about their children's activities and behaviour daily during informal chats, and they also take home their children's informative folders to read about their achievements, development and learning in detail. Their comments, such as expressing thanks for the childminder's hard work, show that they appreciate this sharing of information. They learn about interesting events via newsletters, for example, sponsored events to raise money for charity. Parents are given information regarding the childminder's policies and procedures, for example, how she manages children's behaviour, and how parents can make a complaint, if necessary, verbally during initial visits. They are given limited written information about their children's care.

The childminder has attended training regarding child protection recently, and has accurate information available to enable her to act promptly and correctly on a child's behalf, should she have concerns regarding their welfare. She gives parents the correct phone number to contact should they have a complaint about the childminding service. Therefore, children are well safeguarded.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals. The childminder's well maintained records of her observations of children enable her to plot their progress from their individual starting points, see how well they are progressing, and provide help and support where necessary. She uses them effectively to plan for children's next steps, and provide activities to help them make progress. She can also use her records to check that she is providing a balanced range of activities including all areas of learning and development.

The childminder places an appropriate emphasis on helping children to settle and feel safe and secure, and as a result, children are relaxed, generally well behaved, happy to approach her for cuddles, and interested in the activities on offer.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is well promoted: they are confident and settled. Children form positive relationships and friendships with the childminder and other children, and are generally kind and helpful, for example, saying 'you're my best friend' and offering to help lay the table.

Children are well behaved due to the childminder's 'firm but fair' approach. She is consistent, and so children are aware of the boundaries. They are happy to take turns and play fairly, for example, during 'the bug game' they follow the rules, and give each other turns. Children are well mannered: they say please and thank you without being asked, and the childminder acts as a good, positive role model. Children have clear boundaries and are able to understand and explain the rules, such as 'the lounge is for sitting down'. Children's confidence and self esteem are well promoted: young children are confident enough to 'read' a story to the others, and the childminder listens to children's contributions carefully, showing them that what they say and feel is valuable.

Children enthusiastically say what they enjoy doing best when at the childminder's house: their favourites include playing with their friends, playing with the pushchair and on the bike. Story time is a popular part of the day: children enthusiastically choose favourite books and discuss what will happen: 'he got stuck in the mud, didn't he?'. Children are therefore treating books with respect, learning that the written word has meaning when the childminder points out words and letters, and they are gaining pleasure from telling stories. The childminder encourages children to support charities, currently Community Action Nepal: they raise money, for example, by sponsored 'pram pushes'. Therefore children learn about other cultures when they look at information on the internet, and think about helping people who are less 'well off' than themselves.

Children's welfare is well promoted. Risk assessments are carried out, and a written record kept, so that children can move around freely in the house and garden, and play in a safe environment. For example, the childminder assesses the age and understanding of children present, and uses a stair gate accordingly. Children know how to keep themselves safe on outings: for example, they discuss how they must hold the childminder's hand. Children play in the fresh air on a regular basis, and have access to bikes and small slides in the garden, and walk to a local park to practise climbing and balancing on more challenging equipment. Meals are nutritious and healthy, and snacks are good for them, but also fun, such as frozen real-fruit lollies. Therefore children are learning to make healthy choices.

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

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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