

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY310508
Inspection date	05/08/2009
Inspector	Brenda Joan Flewitt
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 2005. She lives with her husband and one of their adult children in Exmouth, Devon. Children are cared for in a designated playroom known as the Garden Room, and have access to the kitchen and toilet facilities. The childminder works with an assistant. There are separate rooms available on the ground and first floor for children to sleep or rest. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The family have a pet cat, to which the children have supervised access.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. When the childminder is working alone, a maximum of six children may attend, of these, three may be in the early years age range. When working with an assistant, a maximum of 11 may attend, with six in the early years age range. There are currently 24 children on roll. Of these, 18 are in the early years age range. The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The childminder holds a level 4 Montessori International Diploma and a play work qualification at level 2. She is a member of the Devon Childminding Association, the National Childminding Association and the Montessori Schools Association. The childminder's practice follows the Montessori philosophy.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the early years provision is outstanding. Children are cared for in a safe, secure and very well organised, stimulating environment, where they are highly valued as individuals. Children's needs are very well met through the excellent communication with parents and the effective support they receive in their activities. The childminder's clear understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the Montessori philosophy promotes children's welfare and helps them make excellent progress in their learning through meaningful activities and experiences. The childminder is committed to continually developing her role through ongoing training and study.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the system for recording when assistants are present, to clearly show when they are left in sole charge of children.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder and her assistants work very well together as a team. They are consistent in implementing clear policies and procedures, which are shared with parents, that promote children's safety, welfare and development. Keeping children safe is given high priority. The childminder carries out comprehensive risk assessments for areas of the home and outings, to ensure that children move around freely, and play and learn in a safe environment. Child-sized furniture and equipment enable children to access their activities safely and develop independence in practical skills from an early age. Children's accidents and medication are well managed, and all required records are up-to-date and completed accurately. However, the system for recording when assistants are working with the children does not clearly indicate when they are left in sole charge, to fully support how the provision promotes children's safety and welfare. The childminder has a secure understanding of safeguarding children, which includes recognising signs of abuse and the procedures to follow with concerns. She keeps her knowledge up-to-date through training and records existing injuries as routine. All this helps to protect children from harm.

The childminder promotes excellent relationships with parents. She supplies comprehensive information about her provision, which includes written policies and material about how she helps children learn and develop. The childminder encourages daily exchange of information to help meet children's welfare and development needs. She makes herself available outside working hours for discussion as required. Parents are made to feel welcome and are invited to social events, which include garden parties which the children help to organise. Parents' knowledge about their child's achievements at home is included in planning the next steps in their learning. The childminder has established links with other settings that children attend to share information to further promote their development.

The childminder is committed to developing her role by attending training and gaining qualifications. She has gained a further Montessori qualification at level 4 this year and regularly attends courses and workshops, such as 'Gender Achievement and Behaviour in Early Years Settings'. Ongoing self-assessment systems are effective in identifying areas for development and all the recommendations set at the last inspection have been addressed. This has improved aspects of children's health and safety.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children play and learn in a calm, welcoming and stimulating family home where they are happy and settled and make extremely good relationships with the adults who care for them and each other. They are made to feel a strong sense of belonging and are encouraged to regard the environment as belonging to everyone in the group. They are involved in decision making and their ideas are valued and acted upon. Children's birthdays are celebrated with 'birthday buns' made by the children, counting and blowing out candles, and exploring how they have changed

by looking at photos of them as babies. All children develop respect for all people through discussion and the good example set by the adults. Children behave very well. From a young age, children learn what is expected through the clear and consistent explanations given by the adults, and by following the example set by the older children. Children display good manners, know how to take turns and receive frequent praise and encouragement for effort and achievement, which helps boost their self-esteem. Children become very independent as they practise skills for life in practical everyday activities, which includes using the toilet and hand washing facilities, managing their own clothes and preparing food. For example, three- and four-year-olds competently use tools such as potato peelers, apple corers and knives to prepare fresh fruit for snack time. They pour their own drinks using small jugs, learn to take care as they use breakable crockery, and clear away equipment and clean up when they have finished.

The childminder has a very good understanding of child development and is skilful in combining the EYFS learning and development requirements with the Montessori philosophy. This results in children participating in a broad range of self-initiated activities with free access to an extensive supply of resources, which are well organised to encourage children to select and explore for themselves. The childminder and her assistants expertly encourage children to be creative, active learners and think critically. Children are allowed freedom within boundaries according to their own stage of development, choosing to be inside or outside as they play and learn. Adults provide sensitive intervention by asking open ended questions, posing problems and providing explanations to help children understand the world around them. Children understand the use of number, shape and measure by working with specific Montessori resources and through real life events. For example, a four-year-old is able to recall an adult's age and confidently explains the number in terms of 'tens and units'. The childminder is developing the effective observation, assessment planning system, which is updated on a daily basis and contributes towards children making very good progress in their learning.

Children's healthy lifestyle is very well promoted. From a young age, they learn good procedures for their own personal hygiene. A two-year-old wipes their face clean after lunch, using a low-level mirror to check their success. Children start to make healthy choices in what they eat through discussion and the good example set by the adults. Children gain a secure knowledge and understanding of the world through purposeful play and real experiences. For example, they learn about changes in nature as they enjoy the results of growing their own flowers and vegetables, which they harvest themselves. They have also experienced that creatures such as caterpillars and slugs, also like to eat what they have planted. Children are made aware of their own safety at all times. They are taught how to use equipment and tools correctly, continually assessing risks as they play and learn. Regular practices of the emergency escape plan help children understand what is expected in a real situation.

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?	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

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
---	-----

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
--	-----