

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	02/09/2009
Inspector	Sarah Johnson
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).

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.

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Description of the childminding

The childminder was registered in 2002. She lives with her husband and four children aged 18, 17, 15 and nine years in the village of Sawbridgeworth in Hertfordshire. The ground floor of the childminder's home is used for childminding and a secure enclosed garden is used for outdoor play activities. The childminder has five cats and a dog as pets.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, no more than three of which may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding seven children in this age group, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The children live in the local area and some also attend sessions at a local nursery. The childminder works closely with her husband and mother who are also registered childminders. Although the childminder tends to take the lead in managing children's medical needs, she shares overall responsibility for the childminding practice with her co-childminders. When working together, they may care for a maximum of 12 children aged under eight years. The childminder also offers care to children aged over five years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The childminder collects children from the local school and nursery, and goes to a toddler group occasionally. She is currently working towards a relevant National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) to level 3.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are provided with a very good standard of care and make highly positive progress in all areas of their learning and development. Strong partnerships with parents are proactively fostered and the childminder works in cohesive partnership with her co-childminders to ensure that children receive the support they need to progress. Children are highly confident, settled and clearly enjoy spending time at the setting. The childminder has effective systems in place to identify aspects of her provision that she would like to develop further and her commitment to ongoing training provides a strong basis for her capacity to maintain continuous improvement to the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the key person approach to fully maximise each child's ability to receive an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are expertly protected from harm as the childminder demonstrates a very strong commitment to her role in safeguarding children. She has attended appropriate training relating to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) guidance and procedures and has established a comprehensive written safeguarding policy, ensuring she can confidently follow up any concerns about a child's welfare. Robust vetting procedures ensure that the childminder, her co-childminders and other members of the household have completed the necessary checks to ensure their suitability. Highly detailed risk assessments are carried out each day to ensure the premises is kept extremely safe and secure, and there are very well-considered arrangements in place should an emergency situation occur in the home or during an outing.

Children are cared for by a motivated childminder who continues to access a wide range of relevant training courses, including a relevant NVQ Level 3 qualification, to ensure she has good knowledge and understanding to support her role. The setting runs very smoothly as the childminder works in cohesive partnership with her two co-childminders to offer a high-quality service which centres around meeting the needs of all children. The childminder manages her time effectively and makes sound use of space and resources to support children's learning. The childminder has strong aspirations for the quality and standards of the service she provides and regularly self-evaluates the provision. For example, she holds meetings with her co-childminders on a monthly basis to purposefully review current practice and to jointly agree on targets that will bring about further improvement. The childminder is very receptive to support provided by advisors from the local authority, ensuring she is able to gather new ideas to trial at the setting.

The childminder demonstrates an unquestionable commitment to working in partnership with parents and carers. Parents are provided with a superb range of written and verbal information, ensuring they are able to fully understand and compliment the childminder's procedures and expectations. Each child is provided with a detailed daily diary which offers meaningful accounts of the activities that they have enjoyed and inspires parents to understand the skills that their children are mastering. Emphasis is also placed on daily discussions with parents, particularly in relation to children's health and medical needs, enabling the childminder to respond to their individual needs with precision. The childminder has established good links with the other EYFS settings that children attend and values the input of professionals from outside agencies. For example, she initiates daily discussions with teachers at the local nursery to ensure consistency in children's care and experiences between the settings. The childminder actively promotes equality of opportunity and ensures that she sensitively tackles and challenges any issues with prejudice and discrimination.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children benefit as the childminder has a good understanding of how children learn and develop through their play. They are offered a welcoming, homely environment, with sound amounts of space to explore and spread out as they play with a range of resources. Most of these resources are set out for them to access freely for themselves. The childminder provides a good balance of adult-initiated and child-led experiences to promote children's development in all aspects of the areas of learning. Children's individual abilities and interests are celebrated and often used as a starting point in the planning. For example, the children's interest in wheels is fostered through drawing and writing activities. Although the childminder is in the early stages of working with her co-childminders to establish a key person approach, as yet the planning for individual children is not always led by the key person who has formed a particularly close bond them and their parents, and is best placed to understand their learning needs. The childminder is skilled in using observations and assessments to effectively track children's progress towards the early learning goals. These observations are collated in each child's 'learning journey' record, along with numerous meaningful photographs and comments from parents, providing a clear overview of each child's progress. Children are developing strong skills in communication, language and literacy as they confidently describe what they can see as they lie back to look at the clouds and learn to write their names in their own exercise books. Children enjoy building towers with bricks, counting how many they have used, and estimating that they have used more than 10 and then more than 100 beads during a creative activity.

Particularly strong emphasis is placed on encouraging children to lead extremely healthy lifestyles. There are rich opportunities for children to get involved in shopping routines, where they choose healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables to include in the freshly prepared meals they enjoy each day. The childminder is committed to planning varied menus, which are balanced and precisely tailored to meet children's individual dietary needs. Children intuitively remind each other of the importance of washing their hands before eating their meal, independently taking themselves off to use the child-friendly hand washing facilities. Children delight in accessing the childminder's garden where they actively develop their physical skills in the fresh air. In addition, they relish the opportunity to get out and about in the local community whilst taking the childminder's dog for a walk.

Children feel extremely safe and secure as they play in a highly safe and secure environment. The childminder makes the most of opportunities that inspire children to think carefully about their own safety. For example, real-life situations such as a spontaneous fire drill lead the children to introduce fire safety scenarios into their role play situations, and walks in the local area promotes rich discussions about road safety.

Children demonstrate an excellent sense of responsibility for their behaviour and are consistently well behaved and polite. They have a very secure understanding of the importance of being kind to each other, happily playing alongside each other, sharing resources and often stepping up to help their friends. They are

offered constant praise and encouragement by the childminder who understands that good self-esteem is the key to enabling children to become active and excited learners. The childminder is sensitive to children's complex behavioural needs, working closely with their parents to ensure consistent boundaries are promoted, and seeking advice from outside professionals to enable her to increase her understanding of specific needs. Where necessary, the childminder modifies or provides additional resources so that all children can participate and are not excluded from activities. For example, larger beads are provided to enable younger children to join in with a popular bead activity.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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