

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	506226
Inspection date	14/08/2009
Inspector	Sarah Johnson
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).

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 was registered in 1993. She lives with her husband and two older children aged 17 and 22 years in the village of Elsenham in Hertfordshire. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding and a secure enclosed garden is used for outdoor play activities. The premises is accessed via the front entrance which has a low step and there are toilet facilities on the ground floor. The family has a pet dog.

A maximum of six children under eight years may attend the setting at any one time, and of these, no more than three children may be in the early years age range. The childminder's daughter regularly works as an assistant at the setting. When working together, they may care for a maximum of six children aged under eight years, all of whom may be in the early years age group. There are currently seven children on roll, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. Of these, four children are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) years. Children live in the local area and some also attend sessions at a nearby pre-school. The childminder also offers care to children aged over five years, both before and after school, and during school holidays. This provision is registered by Ofsted on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The childminder escorts children to and from the local primary schools, preschool and nursery, and attends several social groups with the children on a regular basis. The childminder holds an appropriate early years qualification to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. Children are provided with an excellent standard of care and make highly positive progress across all areas of their learning and development. The childminder strives to offer a fully inclusive setting where all children are skilfully supported to actively participate in all activities. Partnerships with parents and other early years providers are highly valued and contribute significantly to ensuring that each child's individual needs are expertly met. Children are highly confident, settled and clearly delight in spending time with the childminder. The childminder fully embraces the process of self-evaluation and demonstrates a highly committed approach towards making sustained improvements to the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- reviewing documentation to include a daily record of the times when other key workers such as assistants have worked directly with the children.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder is very well-qualified and experienced, and she proactively sources ongoing training to enable her to provide extremely well for the children in her care. The setting runs very smoothly as the childminder works extremely effectively with her assistant to offer a high-quality service which meets the needs of all children. The meaningfully written policies and procedures, which are over and above requirements, are implemented consistently in practice to ensure that children are kept extremely safe. For example, the childminder is stringent in carrying out robust daily risk assessments to ensure children's safety is fully prioritised whilst they play in the home and garden, and during outings. The childminder has continued to review her detailed written safeguarding children policy on a regular basis and as a result, the childminder is very confident in the steps she would follow if she was concerned about the welfare of any child. Children are constantly supervised as they play, although the childminder ensures a balanced approach in her supervision to offer children valuable opportunities to learn from being independent and managing risks for themselves.

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. They are invited into the setting for informal 'coffee, cake and chat' times, during which they discuss their children's development and share photographs of their activities. The ongoing exchange of information is further encouraged through highly informative monthly newsletters, sharing photographs via text messages and emails, and the comments written in the children's daily diaries. The childminder has established strong links with the other EYFS settings that children attend. For example, she strives to promote discussions with practitioners at the local preschool to ensure the themes in children's learning are being supported consistently between the settings. She has also recently started to pass more detailed written reports of children's progress onto the pre-school.

The childminder has high aspirations for the quality and standards of the service she provides and conscientiously reflects upon her practice through rigorous self-evaluation. For example, she has completed the Ofsted self-evaluation form in great detail, identifying realistic targets to improve the provision for all children. For example, the childminder has identified the need to update her documentation to include a record of the times when key workers, such as her assistant, have worked directly with the children. Annual appraisal forms are issued to parents and children, ensuring their views and suggestions are fully embraced. Parents speak extremely highly of the care their children receive at the setting and clearly feel that their children are making very positive progress.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The childminder demonstrates extensive knowledge of the children's needs and meets them with great enthusiasm. Children learn to be highly independent as the childminder provides them with an environment which is child-led and rich in

opportunities. All children quickly find activities and resources which capture their interest and offer appropriate challenge to extend their skills, particularly in the well-resourced outdoor garden area. For example, they enthusiastically explore and investigate the wildlife in the garden, showing high levels of curiosity as they observe the spiders and their webs in the spider catchers, and look at the swarm of bees nesting in the tree. Younger children respond to new activities and challenges with lively interest as they learn how to control and catch the ball in the hoop. Babies are skilfully supported to be fully included in all activities, for example, they delight in freely exploring the flour on the table, whilst the older children weigh out other ingredients. Babies are expertly supported to develop their verbal communication skills, as they are praised for repeating 'row, row, row' and 'baa, baa' during familiar songs and rhymes. The childminder is very skilled in using observations and assessments to effectively track children's progress towards the early learning goals. Extensive 'Learning Journey' records include meaningful photographic examples of the children participating in a wide range of learning opportunities, and detailed observations are skilfully linked to the EYFS areas of learning.

A flexible and child-centred approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. For example, children's spontaneous interest in sharing books is fully celebrated and their learning is skilfully extended as the childminder prompts them to count the toothbrushes in the picture, and to consider what they think will happen next. A wide range of resources that reflect diversity, such as books and puzzles are successfully incorporated into the continuous provision, helping children to develop an awareness of different cultures, traditions and disabilities. In addition, children learn about different practices and events as they visit local restaurants to sample traditional foods from around the world, experiment with chopsticks in their role play, and visit a local Church during harvest time celebrations. Children are supported to develop a very secure understanding of the importance of being kind, often reminding each other that 'sharing is caring'. 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 actively supports children to lead a healthy lifestyle, providing an extremely well-balanced range of highly nutritious meals and snacks, and ensuring they have daily opportunities to be physically active in the fresh air. Children have rich practical opportunities to plant a wide range of vegetable plants in the garden, and begin to value these as part of a healthy diet as they make collages of healthy foods. Children are actively involved in activities that encourage them to consider their own safety. For example, during a planned safety topic, children help to make posters about the fire procedures, learn about the importance of wearing their seat belts in the car, and meet a local Crossing Patrol Officer who visits the setting to talk about road safety.

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

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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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