

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	18/09/2009
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the childminding

The childminder was registered in 1992. She lives with her husband and two adult children in St Albans, Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a first floor bedroom for children requiring undisturbed rest. Children have access to the fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The family has no pets.

The childminder provides care on each weekday during term-time and school holidays. She is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of three children in the early years age range. She is currently minding one child in this age group. She also offers care to children aged over five years and this provision is registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently two children on roll in this age group. Children on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register share the same facilities as those on the Early Years Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder maintains good partnerships with parents and has a good knowledge of each child's needs and interests. She uses this knowledge to ensure that children's needs are met and they are offered appropriate care and activities that successfully promote their welfare and learning. Information from the childminder's assessments of children is used well to inform activity planning and ensure that children are offered appropriate support. The childminder maintains a positive approach to self-evaluation, continuously reviewing her work. This enables her to build a clear picture of her practice and to consistently carry out improvements, thereby maintaining a service which is responsive to children's needs.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the assessment and planning procedures to show how children's next steps are consistently fed into the overall planning in order to provide further experiences which are appropriate to each child's stage of development
- develop further the use of the self-evaluation process as the basis of ongoing review of practice.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is well promoted because the childminder has a good understanding of her responsibilities relating to safeguarding children, attending regular training in order to keep up to date with this area. This is supported by a practical written procedure which enables her to identify any child at risk and take appropriate action. Thorough daily risk assessments mean that hazards are minimised and children's safety is promoted. Good daily practice and ongoing explanations from the childminder help children build up their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they practise road safety each time they are out.

The childminder has a good understanding of anti-discriminatory practice, enabling her to provide a service which is inclusive for all children and their families. She works with parents to ensure that she understands each child's background, needs and beliefs. Children are gently encouraged to recognise differences and respect diversity. Their self-esteem and sense of belonging are promoted as they are encouraged to say what activities they would like to do, with the childminder meeting these requests wherever possible. The childminder has good relationships with parents and carers, enabling them to exchange information about the children and ensure that the childminder can offer children appropriate support. Parents are well informed about the service the childminder provides. They receive an informative booklet which explains the childminder's policies, and have regular discussions with the childminder to keep them up to date with their child's activities and progress. Consistency of care is effectively promoted as the childminder has a sound understanding of the importance of maintaining close links with other professionals involved with the children. For example, she is developing procedures for working with the schools attended by the children.

The childminder demonstrates a genuine enjoyment for her work and is motivated to continue to make changes that improve the outcomes for children. She has a clear picture of her strengths and weaknesses, prioritising improvements and maintaining a clear vision for the future. Recent improvements include the introduction of written assessments of children's progress. These enable the childminder to plan appropriately to promote their individual development. However, the self-evaluation process is not fully utilised to inform the overall review of daily practice and to evaluate the impact of any changes made. Children make good progress in their learning and achieve well because the childminder makes good use of resources. Her home is welcoming and resources are organised and generally accessible, enabling children to make independent choices about their play. The childminder also uses community resources, such as the toy library, parks and childminders' support groups in order to provide an extended range of opportunities for children.

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

Children make good progress in all areas of learning and are supported in achieving because the childminder has a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She has developed clear procedures for assessing children as they play. She uses this information to inform activity planning and thereby provide relevant activities and play opportunities to promote children's individual development. However, this is not fully promoted because the assessment and planning procedures do not show how children's next steps are consistently fed into the overall planning. Children's behaviour demonstrates that they feel safe and secure. They happily select resources and play independently or with the childminder. They are confident and are therefore actively involved in their own learning, developing positive attitudes to this.

The childminder's good knowledge of each child means that they are offered appropriate support to enable them to participate and to make full use of the resources. For example, young children explore the large pieces of a construction set before the childminder joins them and demonstrates how the pieces fit together. The childminder also uses her knowledge of each child to make the best use of their individual learning styles and interests to promote their development. For example, after noting that young children enjoy playing with spoons, the childminder provides a large plastic jug of spoons; children thoroughly enjoy exploring the different textures of the metal and plastic spoons, putting them in and out of the jug and laughing as they shake the jug to make a jingling noise. Activities such as these encourage children to explore and develop their understanding of cause and effect.

Children's emotional development is promoted as they develop secure, trusting relationships with the childminder. The consistent boundaries and the ongoing explanations about behaviour further promote children's sense of security and enable them to develop their understanding of appropriate behaviour. The childminder acts as a good role model and encourages children to work together to resolve any issues. Children's understanding of diversity is developed as they participate in daily discussions and access relevant resources. For example, they read about different types of family composition and discuss this with the childminder. Appropriate resources, such as books, role play materials and posters in other languages provide positive images and information about other ways of life.

The environment is interesting and resources are generally accessible, enabling children to see what is available and make independent choices. Their enjoyment is enhanced and they are offered an extended range of opportunities as the childminder also makes her own resources. For example, young children become engrossed in exploring the heuristic play materials such as soft brushes, balls, sponges and textured fabrics. Good use is made of outdoor areas to offer children additional activities and play opportunities. Their awareness of the environment and appreciation of nature are enhanced as they help in the garden, visit nearby parks to feed the ducks and watch birds come to the bird table in the garden.

Children are encouraged to use their mathematical skills to solve simple problems. For example, younger children count items as they play and enjoy counting rhymes, whilst older children play games where they identify written numbers, count and take turns. Children are developing their understanding of the relevance of good hygiene practices. They wash their hands after using the toilet, discussing the reasons for this. They talk with the childminder about the importance of eating a healthy diet and are often involved in planning meals. Children have opportunities to develop early reading skills and an appreciation of books. For example, younger children choose books to read with the childminder, whilst older children are encouraged to use both fictional and reference books. Children of all ages have opportunities to explore the uses of information and communication technology and thereby develop valuable skills for the future. For example, younger children access play telephones and interactive activity centres, whilst older children enjoy using the computer.

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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

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	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
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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