

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	19/10/2009
Inspector	Janet Armstrong
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 has been registered since 1997. She lives with her husband and three children, a daughter aged 15 and two sons aged 13 and 11 years in a four bedroom detached house in Merley, Dorset. All areas of the home are used for childminding purposes, with the living room, dining room, play room, kitchen and downstairs cloakroom used as the main accommodation. Toilet facilities are also available on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She is registered to care for a maximum of six children, three of whom may be in the early years age group. There are currently two children on roll, both of whom are in the early years age range and attend on a part time basis. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and is NNEB qualified.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are very comfortable and relaxed in the welcoming, homely environment. They are happy and content due to the positive interaction and support they receive from the childminder, who is gentle and reassuring in her approach. She knows the individual children well and is able to offer a range of activities that promote their learning and development. This is because she has a secure knowledge of child development and works closely with parents. The childminder is able to maintain good practice due to her childcare experience and knowledge. Her lack of effective self-evaluation does not enable her to monitor her strengths and weaknesses to identify key areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop self-evaluation systems to monitor and assess practice to highlight key strengths and the impact they have on children to identify areas for improvements
- further develop records of assessment so that they identify specific key areas for the next steps in the children's learning to help focus planning and extension of the activities offered
- introduce a system to communicate with other early years settings that the children attend to promote consistency and continuity in their care and learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder has a very secure and up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues. She has attended recent training which means she is clear on child protection issues and what to do should she have a concern about a child in her care. The childminder provides a safe environment for children to play and explore safely. Risk assessments enable her to identify and address any potential hazards within her home and on outings to ensure children remain safe. She monitors and supervises the children closely so that they can play safely and freely.

The childminder makes very good use of her home and resources to enable her to meet the individual care and learning needs of those children she minds. Space has been used well to provide children with different areas to accommodate their needs and stimulate learning. A dedicated play room offers children independent access to a range of suitable toys and play provision. They have good floor space to explore and spread themselves out. The childminder rotates her toys regularly to promote children's interests and curiosity.

Clear house rules and a consistent approach means that children are learning to respect the needs of others. The childminder is a positive role model and supports young children well in learning to share, take turns and consider their actions and the impact it has on others as they develop positive relationships. They learn about diversity and difference through access to some toys and play provision and through the positive discussions and guidance from the childminder.

There are strong systems in place for working in partnership with parents. The childminder has a range of written policies and procedures in place that are effectively shared with parents who sign to confirm they understand and agree to the practices that will be followed by the childminder when caring for their children. Daily discussions between parents and the childminder means that both parties are kept up-to-date and well informed about any issues, concerns, activities and achievements so that they are both able to work together. This provides children with a sense of belonging and security. There are no systems in place that enable the childminder to work with other early years settings that the children attend to promote consistency and continuity in their care and learning.

The childminder is committed to her role. She attends training to update her knowledge and skills, such as safeguarding. She links up with other professionals to share good practice, reads literature and uses the internet to support her in developing her practice. However, self-evaluation systems do not enable her to identify her strengths and monitor her practices, to assess the impact they have on the children in her care so that she can identify key areas for improvement.

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

Children are well cared for under the sensitive and loving care from the childminder. Young children respond positively to her reassurance, cuddles and affection. They babble happily to themselves and the childminder as they explore the range of toys and activities on offer. The childminder allows young children the freedom to explore whilst remaining close at hand so that she can offer reassurance and encouragement. This gives the children a sense of security and natural curiosity about what they find. For example, an eight-month-old studies a range of toys intently, passing them from one hand to the other. The childminder talks to them about what they see.

The childminder has a secure knowledge about each child and supports their development well through offering appropriate activities to promote their learning. For example, an eight-month-old is just becoming mobile. To encourage this, the childminder places toys of interest just out of reach so that the child is tempted to stretch and reach forward. She plays games of 'peep-bo' where she hides behind the sofa so that the child tries to come and look for her.

The childminder keeps written records of assessment for each child. These show the activities the children have engaged in, with links to the Early Years Foundation Stage and shows their next steps. These are supported by photographs and evidence of the children's creative play and mark making skills. The recorded next steps and learning pathways do not identify the specific key areas that the childminder wishes to focus on to help her plan and concentrate her attentions to fully extend the children's learning further.

The childminder plans her days based on those children present, their interests and own ideas, which she supports through offering activities, such as craft, physical and messy play to support the children's learning. A four-year-old is encouraged to learn simple rules to share and take turns, increasing concentration through favourite board games. Children have good access to a range of suitable toys and play provision to promote their personal independence. The childminder ensures young children experience a range of activities through changing them regularly to keep their curiosity and interest.

Children are learning to lead healthy lifestyles through healthy eating and some personal hygiene routines. They learn to follow house rules and the childminder's instructions so that they can play safely. For example, they learn not to throw things indoors in case it hits someone, they learn not jump on furniture or run indoors in case they hurt themselves. This allows them to make informed decisions about what they do and the consequences.

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	3

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	3
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	3
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	3
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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