

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	20/10/2009
Inspector	Alison Putnar
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

This childminder registered in 1999. She lives with her husband and daughter. They live on a housing estate situated on the outskirts of Grantham, which has all the local amenities. Minded children have access to the whole of the ground floor, with sleep facilities available in this area. Toilet facilities are located on the first floor. There is access to an enclosed rear garden and covered area at the side of the house. The family has a pet dog.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. She may care for a maximum of six children under eight years old, of these, three may be under five. Children over eight also attend. There are currently seven children on roll; three are in the early years age range. Children attend part-time during the week. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder provides a welcoming and stimulating environment for children in her care, helping them to enjoy their time and to make good progress while they play. Systems of assessing and planning for children's progress are generally effective. On the whole, she works well with parents to ensure that children's individual needs are respected and catered for. She has developed some sound methods of reviewing her practice and taken appropriate advice and attended training to extend her knowledge of changes in requirements. Thus demonstrating her ability to continuously improve for the benefit of the children. Overall, the childminder has implemented appropriate procedures and practices to ensure children are safe and their welfare is promoted, although risk assessments lack some details.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend methods of working in partnership with parents in relation to documenting children's starting points and involving parents in deciding next steps for learning to ensure all are working together to provide continuity in children's learning
- expand the use of development records to ensure children make progress in all six areas of learning equally and use the information to plan some adult-led activities to support children in reaching their full potential
- expand risk assessments to include everything a child comes into contact with such as the dog and water activities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder takes appropriate steps to safeguard children from harm. Household members are appropriately vetted, ensuring their suitability to be around children. The childminder demonstrates a good understanding of what child abuse and neglect mean, and of what to do in the event of any concerns about children's safety or welfare. She provides clear written information to parents about her child protection responsibilities, helping to promote a shared understanding of safeguarding issues. Children are supervised consistently to reduce the likelihood of accidents. In addition, appropriate resources are used to further promote safety; child safety gates prevent access to potential hazards including the stairs and kitchen. The childminder has completed risk assessments and maintains a record of these to evidence she has considered the safety of children in her home and on trips. However, some potentially hazardous issues are less well considered or documented such as children's access to the family pets and use of an outdoor summer pool.

A welcoming area is created in this family home; space is used well to provide areas for children to play actively in the lounge whilst others sleep peacefully in the conservatory. The childminder effectively ensures that all children are included and receive equal attention. Children are encouraged to access all resources as an effective method of challenging stereotypes and promoting equality. Good relationships are evident as children frequently approach the childminder for a cuddle and giggle with delight as she responds playfully to their tickling games. The childminder has previous experience of working closely with parents and relevant professionals to ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effectively supported.

The childminder has made good use of available local training and support to help her gain a generally good overview of the areas of learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Consequently, children enjoy a range of activities which help them to make good progress. She observes children in play and keeps written and photographic evidence of their progress. She is beginning to highlight next steps for children to work towards. However the method is not yet fully secure in helping children to make progress in all six areas equally. Whilst the records of development are shared with parents, the childminder does not fully document individual's starting points or involve parents in deciding the next steps for children's progress. This somewhat reduces opportunities for all to support children to reach their full potential. Positively, she is aware of the need to link with staff from other settings providing for the EYFS in the event that she cares for children who attend two settings, thus promoting continuity in children's learning.

Partnerships with parents are effective in ensuring that the childminder holds all relevant information to enable her to meet individual needs. This includes information about medical details, children's likes, dislikes and favourite activities. As a result, the childminder uses this information to provide activities that she knows children will enjoy, helping new ones to settle quickly. Relevant permissions are obtained to ensure that children are cared for in line with parent's wishes.

Parents are kept well informed of their child's daily events through regular discussions and the use of daily diaries. The childminder has developed a range of policies and procedures to guide her practice in keeping children safe and healthy. These are shared with parents, enabling them to feel confident in her secure practices and engaging their support in maintaining a healthy environment, for example, keeping children at home if they are ill or infectious. Methods for gaining feedback from parents about her provision are informal. The childminder has completed a self-evaluation of her service, highlighting strengths in practice; she has begun to develop action plans detailing how she intends to address areas for improvement thus demonstrating a positive attitude to continual improvement. She works with local advisors as another effective tool to review the quality of her services and periodically participates in a range of training sessions to extend her knowledge and skills. The childminder has taken appropriate steps to address recommendations raised at the last inspection.

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

Children are settled and secure in the care of this experienced childminder because she knows them well as individuals, so helping them to feel confident to voice or indicate their wishes. The childminder warmly accommodates a child's request to play with the toy trains, thus meeting individual needs. A good range of toys and resources are available helping the young children to make choices and enjoy their play. The variety provided assists children in developing skills for the future. They explore early technology, accessing a wide range of computerised or musical toys and delight as they press buttons and await the responses. They explore textures such as dough and paint as an early creative experience and smear glue with spreaders, developing hand-control for future writing. Important social skills are developing well as the childminder helps children to cooperate with others and reminds them about the need to share toys. Children are handled in a sensitive and appropriate manner helping them to understand the expectations for behaviour and are praised and encouraged in response to their positive actions. They begin to develop a sense of responsibility as they help to tidy away toys after play.

The childminder engages in play with the children, supporting their emerging language skills. Older ones repeat words during play and initiate communications when sharing books; pointing at and naming familiar pictures. Babies enthusiastically babble and move in response to the childminder's singing or when listening to children's songs. At an appropriate age, children are introduced to concepts of counting and recognising colours through practical activities such as building with blocks. A suitable range of books, toys and activities are provided that help children to learn about and appreciate different cultures, lifestyles and abilities. Children explore their local community during trips out and develop their knowledge and understanding of the world during visits to the National Park. Here they hunt for mini-beasts and observe creatures and animals in their natural environment such as the squirrels, grass snakes and deer. The childminder seizes these types of opportunities and trips out to help children to consider safety issues for themselves, engaging in conversations about watching animals from a safe

distance, or practising crossing roads carefully.

The childminder positively recognises that children benefit from outdoor activities. A covered area in the garden ensures they can access fresh air in all weathers and explore sand, water and physical play. Together they visit a nearby allotment and delight in harvesting fruits and vegetables for a tasting session back at the childminder's home. This encourages children to develop an awareness of healthy foods. The childminder is aware of children's dietary needs and currently serves meals provided by parents. Young ones are supported to practise feeding themselves and all children are successfully included in social meal times through the use of high chairs or by sitting on the childminder's knee. Drinks are regularly offered to ensure children remain well-hydrated.

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	2
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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