

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	03/11/2009
Inspector	Cheryl Langley
Type of setting	Childminder

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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 registered in October 2005. She lives with her husband and one year old child in a house in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire. All of the property is used for childminding, including access to a ground floor bathroom. There is a secure garden for outside play. The family have some pet fish. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

When working alone the childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children at any one time, two of whom may be in the early years age range. She is registered on the Early Years Register and is also registered to care for children over five years as per the compulsory and voluntary part of the Childcare Register.

The childminder regularly works with an assistant and, for three days a week, another registered childminder. When working with the other childminder and/or assistant she is registered to care for a maximum of eight children, five of whom may be in the early years age group. They are also registered to care for children in the older age range as per the compulsory and voluntary part of the Childcare Register. They currently have 23 children attending at various times, 13 of whom are in the early years age range aged under five years, three children are in the older age range from five to eight years as per the Childcare Register and seven are over eight years as per the voluntary part of the Childcare Register. They are not registered for overnight care. Minded children are taken to and collected from local schools and nurseries. The childminders and assistant support children who speak English as an additional language.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children make good progress in their learning and development. This is attributed to effective organisation, the excellent use of high-quality resources and exemplary partnerships with children and parents. Children are well supported in a safe, welcoming and stimulating environment which meets their individual needs. Their welfare is promoted and safeguarded through clear working procedures which the childminder, her co-childminder and assistant adhere to. The childminder continues to strive to improve the provision for the children, although the process for self-evaluation is still being developed.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhance the child-initiated play and activities to ensure that children always receive a challenging learning and development experience
- ensure the system for self evaluation identifies the setting's strengths and priorities for development to improve the quality of the provision for all

children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded and protected. The childminder has clear policies and strategies in place should she have any concerns about a child's welfare. She has attended relevant training in this area to underpin her knowledge and understanding of child protection. Arrangements for safeguarding children are carefully managed and understood by those who work with the children. They work well together to provide an environment which is safe and supportive. Steps are taken to ensure that children are safe indoors and out. Areas for play and the care of the children are very well organised to meet their needs and encourage learning. Children are supervised closely to keep them safe. They have space to move around and make independent choices from an extensive range of inspiring toys.

The childminder strives to improve her practice. She has introduced a number of changes since her last inspection and addressed the recommendation given. For example, observation of the children's achievements is now linked to their next steps to enhance learning and development. A clear and concise procedure has been put in place to encourage parents' comments and suggestions and to make any complaints received easily accessible for reference. An appraisal system is used to identify areas of strength and training needs for the other childminder and assistant that work with her. Both childminders continue to update their training. She is currently working towards the Herts Quality Standard. However, the current system used for self-evaluation gives details of what is in place but does not always include information to help improve the outcomes for children.

The partnership with parents, carers and children is excellent. The childminder provides clear and concise ways parents and carers can support their children's learning. For example regular letters are sent to individual parents to encourage activities at home to complement and provide consistency in the children's learning. Displays in the childminder's home give relevant information about the children's care and how their play and activities link to the areas of learning. Highly inclusive systems of communication mean that all children are well supported, including those who speak English as an additional language. Parents and children's views are regularly sought and taken into consideration when planning for individuals. Positive and complimentary comments have been received from parents about the childminder and her colleagues. Communication takes place between the childminder and partners who work with the children such as pre-school or nursery. Information from this partnership is used to contribute to children's achievements and well-being.

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

The childminder has good knowledge of the learning and development and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result children make good progress in their learning in relation to their starting points. Observation and assessment are used effectively to plan for each child's next step. High-quality planning and organisation ensure that every child is suitably challenged, although on some occasions opportunities are missed to encourage child-initiated ideas or problem solving. An interesting, well-equipped and welcoming environment reflects the children's backgrounds and the wider community. They play with figures which depict different ethnic backgrounds, colour posters showing people with differing abilities and share books promoting various cultures. Children are confident and show good levels of self-esteem. They are valued and relevant praise from their peers and adults helps to promote this. For example, certificates are awarded for developmental achievements. They co-operate, share and take turns, becoming aware of the needs of others. Children are well behaved and polite.

Children are active learners. They have fun exploring and investigating the programmable and construction toys as they press buttons and switches or dismantle parts. Children develop skills in communication and language. They respond to stories with delight, joining in with the animal sounds. Children sing simple songs and rhymes and have fun making sounds with musical instruments. They learn new words as they talk and listen to their peers and the childminders. More-able children link sounds to letters, recognise colour and are beginning to count. Children know some number labels. They use trial and error to match puzzle pieces and can name some shapes. Children become adept using pencils and utensils. They draw pictures and make marks to represent their name. Children have a good understanding of the purpose of writing and its different uses. For example, they create a passport to use for travel. Children express their feelings and ideas through creative and imaginary play. They show how to care for dolls and concentrate as they paint models with their chosen colours.

Children are confident, secure and appear happy in the setting. Through play, sensitive reminders and interesting activities they learn how to keep themselves and others safe. They take part in the fire drill regularly, become aware of potential hazards when crossing the road and use play equipment safely. Robust procedures are in place to keep the children safe. Risk assessments are conducted regularly and hazards kept to a minimum. Records are kept to keep the children healthy and meet their individual requirements such as a particular diet or medical need. Relevant information is shared with parents to promote this on a regular basis. Children are aware of the advantages of following a healthy lifestyle. They take part in regular exercise to develop their physical skills and benefit from the fresh air in a well-resourced garden as well as on outings. Children enthusiastically play in the outside area, enjoying target practice with bean bags or making pictures on the soft play area with the equipment. Interesting planned activities promote their knowledge and understanding of health further. For example, children make food plates with examples of healthy foods and take part in aerobic exercises to learn about a balanced diet and keeping their bodies fit and healthy.

They follow personal hygiene routines and have regular drinks. A varied range of interesting outings to different parks to observe animals or feed the ducks increases their interest in the natural environment. They enjoy planting seeds in the garden to watch them grow.

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	1
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	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	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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