

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	02/12/2009
Inspector	Valerie Fane
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 was registered in 2000. She lives with her husband and five children, two who are adults and three aged seven, 10 and 11 in the Marshalswick area of St Albans. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding. Accessibility to the premises is up one step. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The childminder is able to take and collect children from local schools and pre-schools. The family have a dog.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range. There are currently four children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder also offers care to children aged over five years to 11 years. She is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time with the childminder because she has an excellent knowledge of how to plan and provide well-resourced play opportunities for children of different ages. They feel valued because she works very closely with their parents and gets to know individual children and their families extremely well. She takes into account their cultural background when planning her provision and provides resources and activities to support children's awareness of our diverse society. However, she has not developed links with other providers who share the care of minded children. She is committed to providing high quality childcare and has made a number of improvements since the last inspection but some documentation specified in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage is not in place.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- devise and implement a system to obtain prior written permission for each and every medicine from parents before any medication is given (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 16/12/2009
- conduct an annual risk assessment of the premises that identifies aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis (Suitable premises, environment and equipment). 16/12/2009

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

- develop the opportunities for partnership working where children receive care and education in more than one setting.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are protected because the childminder has attended recent training. She has a good understanding of how to recognise indications of child abuse and the procedures she would follow if she was to have concerns about a child in her care. Children receive care in a home that is safe and secure in all respects. The childminder has carried out a visual risk assessment of the premises and has compiled a daily checklist of safety checks which she completes each morning. However, she has not complied with the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements to maintain a record of the annual risk assessment and the date of its completion. Risk assessments are in place for all outings.

Children thrive because the childminder is committed to the provision of good quality childcare and she is regularly reflecting on her practice to identify areas for further development. She has met the recommendations made at the last inspection so she has improved her knowledge of safeguarding and she has produced a set of written policies that underpin her good practice. Children benefit greatly from her improved knowledge because she has attended regular training courses and she has nearly completed a Level 3 childcare qualification. Children enjoy an excellent range of resources in a dedicated play area within her home. The childminder's plans for future developments include the provision of further resources for soft play and sensory play.

Children enjoy excellent continuity of care between their home and the childminder's house because the childminder works very closely with their parents to ensure that she is fully aware of their individual needs and their home situations. Parents are encouraged to express any concerns they may have to the childminder and she responds accordingly. For example, she has recently provided hand sanitizer to reduce the risk of swine flu following a comment from a parent. Children are well-placed to continue their learning at home because the childminder completes daily diaries for parents as well as learning journeys and monthly newsletters. Parents have an abundance of information about what their children are doing and learning.

Children who attend other Early Years Foundation Stage provision do not benefit from good partnership working because the childminder has not developed links with other providers to enable a two way sharing of information to support children's welfare and learning. The childminder has not cared for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities but she fully understands the benefits of working closely with outside agencies to provide good support for such children.

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

Children receive good individual care in most respects at the childminder's house. She finds out all about their particular needs so that she is fully aware of any specific dietary or medical needs and she knows what to do should an emergency arise. She always maintains a current first aid certificate and keeps a record of any accidents that occur. She has never needed to administer any medicine to minded children. However, her systems for obtaining consent for medication do not meet the Early Years Foundation Stage requirement to obtain prior written parental consent for each and every medicine. Children's home culture is celebrated and all children gain a good awareness of our diverse society. They enjoy an advent calendar with pictures from around the world. They like to play with the dolls house play people who reflect different cultures and people with disabilities. They take part in celebrations for different festivals. For example, they make cards for Eid and they colour flags and talk about people wearing kilts for St Andrew's Day.

Children have excellent opportunities to learn about healthy eating. They eat nutritious meals and snacks provided by the childminder such as lasagne. The childminder records how many portions of fruit and vegetables children eat each day so older children learn about the importance of eating five a day. They take part in activities such as fruit picking in season and talk about the colours and textures of fruit such as raspberries. The childminder implements some measures to reduce the risk of cross infection, such as wearing gloves and an apron for nappy changing, but children use a communal hand towel for drying their hands. They develop awareness of their personal safety when they are out with the childminder because they learn how to cross roads safely and to be careful in the car park when they get out of the car.

Children behave well and are very enthusiastic learners. They enjoy an excellent balance of times of free play and planned activities because the childminder has a very secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and knows how to plan extremely well for children's individual learning needs. Children make outstanding progress because the childminder observes and assesses their stage of development and uses the assessments to identify their next steps in all areas of learning. The wide range of activities also supports children's development of skills for the future extremely well.

Young children interact very well together and thoroughly enjoy well-resourced imaginative play. They get out the play fruit and vegetables and share it out between them. The childminder supports their use of mathematical language in their play as they talk about the size and quantity of the different items. For example, she encourages them to have two apples each when they have a minor dispute over them. Children love music and spontaneously sing favourite songs as they play. They use language with exceptional skill for their age as they change the words of 'Humpty Dumpty' to fit their play by singing that he fell off the pear instead of the wall.

Older children enjoy very interesting and varied outings. They go to a park where

they explore 'Winnie-the-Pooh's Hundred Acre Wood' and see animals such as goats and turkeys. They talk about the animals and they develop excellent climbing and balancing skills as they climb on the logs and balance across the chain ropes. All children thoroughly enjoy regular visits to a local farm where they learn to handle small animals, such as guinea pigs and rabbits, with care and feel the texture of their fur. They love to use the extensive soft play area with an excellent range of equipment for children of all ages.

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	3
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	1
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	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