

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	03/03/2010
Inspector	Heather Tanswell
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 registered in 2006 and works in her own home with another registered childminder and an assistant. She lives with her husband and two children in a detached former farmhouse in the rural hamlet of Carfury. This is close to the village of Heamoor and Penzance, and about six miles from St Ives, in Cornwall. Areas of the premises used for childminding are The Piggery, a self-contained annex close by the house, and the entire home, with the exception of the main bedroom and office. A garden is used for outdoor play activities. The family has two pet cats, a dog and keeps chickens in a run.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range. She also offers care to children aged over five years to 11 years. When working with another childminder and/or an assistant together they may care for a maximum of 11 children. Currently, between them, they are caring for 36 children who attend a variety of sessions. All the children live locally in surrounding towns and villages and 10 also attend early years units of local primary schools or pre-schools. The childminder is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The childminder drives to local schools and pre-schools to take and collect children. With children, she also visits the local library, art galleries, shops, beaches, and goes on country walks. She is a member of the National Childminding Association. The setting receives support from Cornwall Council's Children, schools and families directorate. The childminder is a member of an approved childminding network and is currently in receipt of funding for early education for three and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The childminder, in partnership with her co-childminder and assistants, offers families a highly effective child care resource, in a rural idyll where children thrive and make exceptional progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. The excellent relationships established with parents, other early years settings and outside agencies further ensures children's inclusion and that their welfare is promoted successfully. The childminder and her co-childminder reflect accurately on their strengths and look continually for ways to advance and bring about improvements that promote children's skills for the future in a fun-loving atmosphere.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- continue to develop the assessment systems, matching the observations of children to the expectations of the six areas of learning and development to inform feedback to parents and other providers who share care responsibility.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The children's care, learning and welfare is significantly enhanced by the exemplary way the capable childminder, her co-childminder and assistants work together in a mutually respectful environment providing individual interaction to challenge and support learning in cooperation with parents and those that share care and learning responsibility. Well-written and presented policies and procedures underpin animated and enthusiastic practice. The great care taken to vet all those that live or work on the premises makes sure children are properly safeguarded from harm. Daily diaries keep parents fully informed about children's routines and progress, however these do not make specific links with the learning and development requirements noted in the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Leavers' reports based on children's considerable achievements are linked to the six areas of learning and assist children's progression on to school. Children's needs are shared with everyone that needs to know. As a result, they are extremely confident and assured in the care of experienced professionals who show them total respect for everything they say and do. Parents' views on the care and education provided are sought and they report back how highly they value all aspects of the childminder's professional approach that best meets the needs of their individual children.

Excellent use is made of the learning environment. Indoor and outdoor spaces and outings to local places of interest provide challenging experiences often linked to cultural events. There is ready access to a high quality range of resources and an excellent balance of adult led and child initiated play to foster active learning and provide a wide range of worthwhile experiences. The planned and spontaneous use of outdoor spaces maximises opportunities for children to revel in the rural nature of the setting and learn how to keep themselves out of harm's way. Children's safety receives high priority; best possible use is made of risk assessments which are reviewed regularly or any time an accident or incident occurs. The rigorous use of self-evaluation brings about significant improvements in daily practice. For example, the results inform topics for study to further the childminder's understanding of how young children learn, as well as the advantage of rebuilding a stone wall so that groups of children can safely and securely have easy access to the vegetable garden. The childminder team also focus on what each child needs to make sure they get the help they need to blossom and thrive.

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

Children make outstanding progress during their time with the childminder, enjoy themselves very much and make friends. They have the freedom to explore their own ideas, and select from a wide variety of resources made readily available. Children are supported by adults who form warm and caring relationships with them. Children's creativity emerges as they become absorbed in action and their own ideas. Very young children revel in repeatedly squeezing and making marks in dough, undressing a doll and helping the childminder empty and refill a crate of toys. Older children show great maturity for their age as they organise the layout and construction of a track, quietly negotiating roles to complete the task to their satisfaction and then sharing their efforts with younger children who want to join in. As a result, children learn from each other, have a sense of their community and radiate confidence and self-esteem from a very early age.

Opportunities for children to become competent communicators, speakers and listeners abound. They learn to listen and take part in conversations about topics that take their interest as they interact with adults who in return listen carefully and respond playfully. The mention of jelly for pudding stimulates children to talk about their favourite colours and flavours while a very young child responds with gestures and rhythmic movement to what he hears. Every child responds and joins in gleefully to 'Old MacDonald' by singing, counting, dancing in their seats and making the correct sounds for the farm animals represented by small world toys used as prompts for what comes next.

Children thrive on the healthy meals and snacks provided for them to meet their individual need. All food is freshly prepared by the childminder and contains only healthy and tasty options that appeal to their palette, sometimes including eggs freshly collected from the henhouse in the garden. During the growing season children plant, take care of and pick, vegetables such as peas and carrots helping them appreciate fresh food. Children are protected from the risk of infection because the childminder is an excellent role model in establishing good routine hygiene practices.

Children display an admirable understanding of how to keep themselves safe. When the smoke alarm goes off, everyone stays calm and promptly gathers by the door to go to the outside collection point. Children develop physical strength, a sense of well-being and a love of the natural environment and culture of the area as they play outside routinely each day, breathe in the atmosphere and go on outings. They climb, swing, slide, bounce on a trampoline, dig in soil and sand, go on local walks, to art galleries, the library and take part in events such as St Piran's Day celebrations. Particular attention is paid to promoting children's independence so they relate well to other children and adults. Their behaviour is exemplary and they become skilful and competent learners developing all the confidence and skills they need to take their next steps in life.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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