

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	142616
Inspection date	09/02/2010
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 1995. She lives with her husband and 16-year-old daughter in a three bedroomed detached converted barn in the rural hamlet of Milton, near Martock in Somerset. All areas of the home are used for childminding purposes, with a dedicated play room, living room and kitchen used as the main accommodation. Rest and toilet facilities are available on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The family have pet cats and a small holding that children have supervised access to. These include kennelled dogs, Shetland ponies, chickens, ducks, geese, pigs and sheep.

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 when working alone. The childminder works alongside two other assistants and can care for a maximum of 15 children, with up to nine in the early years age range. There are currently 23 children on roll, 20 of whom are in the early years age range and all attend on a part-time basis. The childminder also cares for children over eight years of age. The childminder is nearing completion of NVQ Level 3 in childcare and education.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are met to a very high standard. A strong sense of family and belonging is offered by the childminder and her assistants. Consequently, children are very settled, relaxed and confident in the warm, welcoming and homely environment, cared for by familiar adults that promote young children's sense of security and well-being successfully. Excellent use made of the home means that children are able to experience a wealth of different learning opportunities to develop and promote their interests. This is especially true of the outdoor environment, where the children benefit immensely from helping to care for the different animals. There is a very strong capacity to maintain continuous improvement due to the childminder's dynamic and enthusiastic approach to offering the best possible care and education through regular training and assessing her practices.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- bringing together the self-evaluation systems so that they further promote focused outcomes and areas for improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

There are highly effective systems in place to keep children safe. The childminder has a very secure knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. She is very clear of the types of abuse and action needed should she have a concern about a child in her care. This is effectively shared with parents to promote an honest and open approach so that children's welfare is safeguarded at all times. Safety of the home and any outdoor activities are effectively risk assessed to ensure children play and explore safely at all times. Children have helped to identify what they believe may be potential hazards to enable them to take appropriate action as they play to reduce any accidents or injuries. Young children play under high levels of supervision at all times to promote their safety.

There is excellent organisation of staffing, rooms within the home, routines and use of resources. The warm and comfortable homely environment helps children to relax and settle into an interesting range of planned activities as well as access and initiate their own ideas. A dedicated play room that has been well thought out and planned means that children have very good floor space and independent access to play provision that is suitable and appropriate to their age and stage of development. Play provision is stored in transparent crates that are clearly labelled using writing as well as sign language pictures. This means that children are able to ask for activities that they see that maybe out of reach. The childminder and her assistants share responsibilities so that children benefit from the different skills and ideas for planned activities. The extensive range of play provision and equipment and furniture means that the childminder is able to cater for and meet individual needs of all children comfortably.

Children learn about equality and diversity issues through extremely high quality planning, positive discussions and access to a wide range of play provision that effectively raises their awareness of the wider world in which they live. This means that children from a young age, learn to show respect, care and kindness towards others. This is supported by 'friendship rules' and activities looking at differences positively, such as 'Around the world in 80 teas' where children get to 'visit' many different countries through food tasting, as well as projects looking at disability. The childminder is proactive in discussing with children any preconceived beliefs or questions the children may have about what they experience or see around them, either first hand or from the television.

There is a comprehensive range of documentation, paperwork and records in place to enable the childminder to work highly effectively with her assistants and parents. Well written policies and procedures promote excellent working partnerships between the different parties which means that children are extremely well cared for and individual needs met to a very high standard. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in the care and education their children receive whilst at the childminder's. They are able to record any requests for changes to welfare needs and routines as well as share what they want their child to be learning. This helps the childminder to plan for specific requirements. The childminder has developed excellent relationships with other early years settings

that the children attend to ensure a consistent approach.

The childminder is highly motivated, dedicated and committed to offering outstanding care and education to her families. Her constant enthusiasm and determination drives her to assess her practices, identify any areas for improvement and what this will mean for the children, although, current systems are somewhat disjointed. The views of the children, assistants and parents are obtained to enable her to adapt her practices and the service offered. The childminder and her assistants attend regular training to update their skills and gain new ideas. For example, forest schools. There are very effective management systems in place that enable the childminder to ensure that her assistants are suitable to work with children, highly knowledgeable and well motivated to support her in offering children outstanding levels of care and education.

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

Young children are very settled and confident in the child-orientated and interesting environment that is supported by highly stimulating activities. They respond to the childminder and her assistants' encouragement and love with eagerness and keen interest, confident in the knowledge that a cuddle and reassurance is on hand at all times.

Children have an excellent introduction to keeping safe and leading healthy lifestyles. House rules and support helps the younger children to learn about boundaries and expectations to share, take turns and follow rules when around the animals. They eat healthy snacks and meals due to the consistent approach from their parents and the childminder. They get daily fresh air regardless of the weather. Use of wet-weather gear means they can enjoy familiar walks and visits regardless of the weather. Grooming, caring for and feeding the many animals as well as planting and growing fruits and vegetables means that children are developing a love for animals, learning about environmental issues, where their food comes from and respect for the countryside.

Regular routines means that children benefit greatly from the frequent opportunities to be imaginative in a range of situations. For example, they engage in planned adult-led tasks to link themes together, as well as use the wide range of creative materials to express themselves through junk modelling, painting, baking, cooking, and exploring malleable materials, such as play dough. The vast range of play provision means that they are able to act out familiar roles and experiment with new ones as they dress up and use the play kitchen and resources. Outdoors, young children explore the effects of the dry sand as they use the different tools to move the sand from one place to another and watch it closely as it changes and toys disappear under the sand.

Young children's language development is promoted extremely well. The childminder and her assistants talk constantly to the children about what they are doing and see. They encourage the children to repeat new and familiar words to express their needs and wants. The children respond with delight as they are

encouraged to 'meow' to attract the attention of the family cat.

Planning, observation and assessment systems are highly effective in tracking the children's progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Written observations show the progress children are making through the six areas of learning. These are supported by many photographs and evidence of the children's mark making and creative skills. Next steps are identified, in line with the steps within the EYFS, and used to help focus planned activities to ensure that children make the best possible progress in line with parents' wishes.

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

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Met