

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	302681
Inspection date	01/02/2010
Inspector	Karen Cockings
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 their two children, aged eight and five years, in a village on the outskirts of Barnsley, within walking distance of local schools, parks and other amenities. The ground floor rooms of the house are used for childminding, including a downstairs toilet, and the bathroom and one bedroom on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The family has tropical fish in an aquarium in the sitting room.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children under eight years at any one time. She currently minds seven children in the early years age range and six older children, who all attend for a variety of sessions. She is also included on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register and is approved to provide overnight care. She currently also provides care for a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The childminder has a level 4 early years qualification, is a member of the Barnsley Choices Childminding Network and is eligible for nursery education funding. She is also a member of a local sponsored childminding network and part of the 2 Steps Forward project.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The childminder cares very deeply for the children she minds and gives their welfare, learning and development the utmost priority. She demonstrates particular skill in caring for children with additional needs and in developing close, supportive relationships with parents. She also works very closely with other professionals and settings involved in children's care. Thorough documentation and carefully implemented procedures underpin the childminder's practice. There is a passionate commitment to continuous improvement, through training, critical reflection and effective networking with other childcare professionals.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- exploring further ways of developing children's records to include summary assessments of children's progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder has an excellent understanding of her role and responsibilities with regard to child protection, which ensures that children's welfare is always

paramount. She is fully aware of possible indicators of abuse and confident to take necessary action should she have concerns. Relevant guidance materials are readily available and there are good links with other professionals for advice and consultation. From a broader safety perspective, the childminder takes effective measures around the home and keeps meticulous records to maintain children's safety and well-being. Rigorous risk assessments and checking systems are conducted to ensure that the environment is safe for children, taking into account the particular needs of the children she cares for. The checking and cleaning of appliances and equipment is also scrupulously recorded. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures is reviewed annually and shared effectively with parents.

Children are cared for in an immaculately clean and well-organised environment, where they have access to a wealth of good quality resources to support their learning. Most toys are stored in the dedicated play room, although children have plenty of additional space, as they move freely around the ground floor rooms. Many toys and play materials are in low-level boxes, labelled with word and picture, to help children to make independent choices. An array of colourful posters, children's art work and displays creates a vibrant and print-rich space, which shows children they are valued and promotes their learning. The childminder also makes excellent use of local resources, such as toy libraries and children's groups, to extend the range of activities she is able to offer. Visual aids, including picture cards to help children understand the sequence of daily events, are also used well.

The childminder builds excellent partnerships with parents, which enables her to meet children's individual needs very successfully. Parents express very positive comments in references and thank you letters, as well as in their responses to her questionnaires, referring in particular to the significant contribution the childminder has made to their children's learning and development. A key strength of the childminder is her ability to build trusting relationships with parents where children have additional and sometimes complex needs. She liaises very closely with them, gives reassurance and takes careful note of any special requirements, so that they feel absolutely confident to leave their children in her care. She monitors children's health and safety very carefully, while encouraging and supporting them to achieve their full potential. Indeed, the local authority has acknowledged her skills and dedication in this area by honouring her with a special award. The childminder also works closely with other professionals, such as Portage workers and the community nursing service, to implement care and development programmes. Partnerships with schools and nurseries are also well established.

The childminder is totally dedicated to her work with children, demonstrating a firm commitment to the continuous improvement of her provision and to her own professional development. She has attained high level qualifications and plans to go further, while also accessing a wide range of relevant shorter courses to enhance her practice. For example, she has done a lot of training in relation to the care of children with special needs. She is an active member of a local childminder network, sharing ideas and expertise with them as well as disseminating good practice to others. The recommendation made at the previous inspection has been thoughtfully addressed, and as a result, children's growing independence is nurtured. The childminder fully recognises the importance of self-evaluation as a

way of building on strengths and identifying any ways in which she can further improve outcomes for children.

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

Children thrive in this warm and caring environment, where the childminder tunes in exceptionally well to their needs and feelings. She has a sensitive awareness of children's particular ways of expressing themselves, which enables her to pick up quickly on what makes them happy or may be distressing to them. They build trusting relationships with her, growing in confidence as she warmly acknowledges their achievements with smiles and claps. Children show care and concern and begin to understand each other's needs. The childminder gently explains why they need to take care with any special equipment some of the children use and she ensures that all children are able to participate in their own way. Children learn that their contributions are valued because she seeks their views, displays their art work and encourages their involvement in the provision. For example, older children devise their own golden rules and are invited to complete their own 'All about me' forms. Children develop a strong sense of responsibility as they eagerly help to tidy toys away and to prepare their own snacks.

Children's health, safety and well-being are given the utmost priority, which helps to protect them from the spread of infection. The childminder maintains meticulous standards of hygiene in the home and also encourages children to follow safe hygiene practice, so that they learn from an early age about the importance of taking care of themselves and their bodies. For example, she encourages them with cleaning their teeth, talking to them about getting rid of the germs and 'sugar bugs'. Children's good health is further promoted through the provision of healthy snacks and meals, which include a varied range of fresh fruit and vegetables. Colourful fruity place mats prompt discussion about foods that are good for them and children learn how foods are grown and prepared. They have helped to plant potatoes, take part in baking activities and very carefully cut up fruit using a safety knife. The childminder makes excellent use of such opportunities to raise children's awareness of safety issues, so that they learn how to use their environment and equipment safely. There are many opportunities for children to be active, both indoors and outside in the fresh air, which helps to keep them fit and well. They have great fun playing in the garden, developing physical skills and confidence as they use tricycles, climb up onto the slide or play on the trampoline. Regular walks and outings are also planned, including visits to parks and play centres. Indoors, children love to dance along to 'busy feet' programmes, showing how they can jump, hop and move their bodies in many different ways. The childminder encourages them to notice how the exercise affects them; they feel their heart beating and notice they are getting warm. She is keen to be involved in any local projects to promote children's good health, working alongside advisers and childminder colleagues to develop these for the benefit of all.

The childminder has an excellent understanding of how children learn through play and of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She plans exciting learning experiences for them, guided by her observations of children's interests

and abilities. For example, they watch how water becomes ice in the freezer and what happens to it when it is in the warm air. They do bark rubbings in the woods, learn about the life cycle of a butterfly and make bird feeders. The childminder makes good use of visual aids, soft toys and books to capture children's interest and to reinforce their learning. She poses questions in a way that makes them think, introduces them to new vocabulary and effectively promotes language development through stories, songs and rhymes. Their number and counting skills grow as they sing number rhymes and practise counting as part of their play and everyday routines. They compare the size of the big and small caterpillars they have made out of play dough and talk about why one might be bigger than the other. Children have their own scrap books where they keep special pictures and stories. The childminder also compiles attractive development folders for each of the younger children, which include her own sensitive observations and photographs, to share with parents and as a way of tracking children's progress. She carefully considers her findings together with any information from parents, and uses this knowledge to inform her future planning. She has identified as part of her own self-evaluation, the further development of this aspect of her record keeping, possibly to include more summary assessments to share with parents and to promote continuity of care and learning with other settings.

Children flourish in this very welcoming and inclusive environment, where the childminder is constantly attentive to their particular needs. She is deeply committed to overcoming any barriers to their development, and supporting them to achieve their full potential as active and inquisitive learners.

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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