

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	953196
Inspection date	12/05/2010
Inspector	Sharon Greener
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.

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 was registered in 2001. She lives with her husband, an adult daughter and two children aged five years and 10 years. They live in the residential area of Peterlee in County Durham. The whole of the ground floor and the spare bedroom located on the first floor of the childminder's home are used for childminding. 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 five children aged under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding three children in this age group. She also offers care to children aged over five years to 14 years. There are two children aged between five to under eight years on roll, and one aged over eight years. Overnight care may be provided for one child at any given time. The childminder cares for children Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 6pm for 49 weeks of the year. She takes and collects children from the local schools and attends toddler groups on a regular basis each week. The family have two small dogs.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder offers a welcoming and inclusive environment to children and their families. She works very well with parents and forges good links with others to ensure that children's needs are met. Good systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the service, care and education provided, and to identify and address areas for further improvement. Children progress very well and have access to a good range of resources. The required documentation is in place and the vast majority is very well organised and maintained.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- amend the complaints policy to remove reference to the national standards and ensure full familiarity with the time scales in respect of managing a written complaint
- develop further systems of monitoring and assessing individual children so as to help shape and inform planning and support their learning effectively.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder has a good knowledge of policies and procedures, which are shared with parents. For example, she understands very well the procedure to be followed to safeguard children from harm. She has completed relevant training and the recommended literature and contact details are in place for reference

purposes. She understands very well the action to be taken in respect of a sick child or a lost or uncollected child. Security is very well maintained. Procedures regarding the collection of children are strict. Appropriate safety equipment is provided. Regular fire drills are carried out and recorded. Risk assessment procedures are good and details of appraisals are appropriately recorded. Space is very well organised, and child-friendly storage systems offer children easy access to a good variety of resources. This enables them to make choices about their play and self-select resources and activities. In turn, this nurtures their decision making and independence skills. Overall, a well-written complaints policy is in place, though it mentions the national standards. In general the childminder demonstrates a good knowledge of the procedure to be implemented regarding receipt of a written complaint, though she is not fully familiar with the set time scales. The required documentation is in place. Procedures for evaluating the quality of service, care and education are good. Areas for further improvement are identified and tasked accordingly to support continuous improvement. The childminder actively seeks out relevant training to support and enhance her practice. For instance, she has renewed her first aid certificate and holds a food safety and catering certificate. She has completed several training sessions in respect of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and has attended courses regarding policies, 'early to books' and the observation of children. The childminder is currently working towards a level 3 childcare qualification.

The childminder works very closely with parents and they are very well-informed of the service provided. Induction procedures are used effectively and ensure children's admission into the childminder's care is tailored to meet their needs and is conducted sensitively. For instance, parents and children carry out a series of visits to the childminder's home. This enables all parties to become familiar with each other and children settle very well. Pertinent information about children's requirements and their starting points is obtained from parents and recorded. Through this, the childminder is able to establish a very sound understanding of children's initial needs and abilities. Parents are kept very well-informed of general events and information regarding their child's progress. This is achieved through the effective use of ongoing verbal feedback, telephone calls, text messages, photographs and respective parents' access to their child's personal records. The childminder actively encourages parents to support their children's learning by ensuring that they are very well aware of their children's current interests and favourite activities, for example, a young child's current interest in numbers and colours. This allows parents to mirror activities and to work in harmony with the childminder. Feedback from parents is most positive. This is reflected through the greetings cards and letters they have given to the childminder. These contain very complimentary comments, such as, 'Honest and caring', and, 'Patient, caring and supportive.' A child had stated that the childminder was 'a kind woman who would do just about anything to help us'.

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

The childminder uses her knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage well to enhance and support her practice. She makes good use of observations to enable

her to gather very sound information about children's individual developmental progress and abilities. There are some written records of observations kept, though these are not consistently maintained. The vast majority of information is retained mentally by the childminder. She uses the information acquired through her observations of the children effectively to identify the next step to be taken to support each child's learning. A good range of activities and resources are provided to help children to achieve, and they make good progress towards the early learning goals. A good variety of adult-led activities are initiated by the childminder, for example, cookery, model making, story telling, singing, board games and outings. Children go for frequent walks and visit places of interest, such as Washington Wetlands Centre, Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens, Tweedle farm and Mr Twister physical play facilities. Younger children regularly attend local parent and toddler groups several times each week. These outings allow children to socialise with others and to further develop their awareness of the local community and wider world. The childminder uses questions and conversation very well to promote and reinforce children's learning. She readily acknowledges and praises children's achievements and efforts. For example, a young child's ability to recognise and name items in a book was acknowledged and celebrated. This positive reinforcement fosters children's self-esteem and confidence, which is high. Children's language and vocabulary skills are very well promoted. For instance, during a baking activity a young child was encouraged to describe what they were doing as they made some cookies. The childminder also used the activity to reinforce simple mathematical concepts such as size and counting. Very close, warm relationships are evident between the childminder and children in her care. Children are very happy and contented. They are very confident in their interactions with the childminder, and she shows a genuine interest in what children say and do. Good links are made with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage. The childminder has established contact with teachers at the local primary schools. Relevant information is shared about individual children to support their continuity of learning, and to provide an additional link between school and parents.

Hygiene standards are very well maintained. The childminder has a good understanding of relevant policies and procedures, such as the care of a sick or injured child and the administration of medication. The use of regular routines and positive role modelling from the childminder enables children to develop an age-appropriate understanding of the need to adopt good hygiene practices. This helps to promote and preserve children's health and well-being. The benefits of a healthy diet and active lifestyle are very well promoted. Children are able to access outdoor play each day, weather permitting. The childminder acknowledges the benefits children gain from access to fresh air and exercise. A good selection of resources and activities are provided to allow children to develop and refine their physical skills. Healthy eating is very well promoted, and children show an emerging awareness of healthy eating. For instance, a young child selected a piece of fruit as their afternoon snack. Parents are consulted in detail about the dietary needs of their children and relevant information is recorded. Fresh drinking water and other suitable drinks are provided throughout the day.

Children's behaviour is managed very well. The childminder uses age-appropriate strategies in a calm and consistent manner. For instance, house rules are

explained simply to older children, and gentle reminders are given as necessary. Distraction techniques are used effectively with younger children, and children's positive behaviour is recognised and praised. Children respond very well and their behaviour is very good. The childminder works very well with children to help raise their awareness of safety in accordance to their ages and levels of understanding. For example, matters such as using resources safely, staying close to her at all times and stranger danger are discussed with children. Road safety and regular fire drills are practised. Children's awareness of diversity and the wider world is very well promoted. They have access to a good selection of resources and activities to help them to develop positive attitudes and to recognise differences in a positive manner. For example, a young child was able to explain why a play figure was in a wheel chair, and could find England on a globe and a map of the world. The childminder presents herself as a good role model to children and encourages them to show concern for others. Suitable arrangements are in place to support children who speak English as an additional language. The childminder is able to describe how she would obtain key words and phrases in a child's home language from parents, and use visual prompts to aid initial communication with a child. She has some experience of caring for and supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The childminder is able to explain how she works closely with parents and other professionals to ensure children get the help and support they need. She is able to describe how activities are adapted to enable all children to enjoy them and to participate at their own level.

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	2
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	2

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	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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