

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	15/03/2010
Inspector	Janet Fairhurst
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 has been registered since 2004. She lives in Consett with her husband and two children, aged eight and two years. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding, as well a bedroom which provides additional play space for the older children. Toilet and hand washing facilities are on the first floor. A yard, at the back of the house, is available for outdoor play. There are schools, pre-schools and toddler groups within the local area, as well as parks, shops, a library and leisure facilities.

The childminder is registered for a maximum of five children at any one time. She is presently caring for four children, two of whom are in the early years age range. The childminder also offers care to children aged over five years to 11 years. She is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register as well as the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The family has two pet dogs, which live indoors.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association. She takes children to the local toddler groups.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder provides a positive and relaxed environment where children's confidence grows in the warm and caring relationships that are established. Children are supported well throughout their play and learning, therefore, their ongoing development and progress are fully promoted. Partnership with parents is good. There is a valuable exchange of information to ensure that a fully inclusive environment is established, where children's needs are routinely acknowledged and met. The childminder uses effective methods to regularly evaluate her practice and is committed to continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the assessment records further to include links to the areas of learning and children's next steps
- explore further the methods to collate information from parents with regard to the experiences children bring from home and what they know and can do, to help form a view of their starting points for their learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is safeguarded effectively as the childminder has good knowledge of the possible signs of child abuse and the procedure to follow should concerns arise. Robust risk assessments of the premises and for each type of outing are regularly reviewed to ensure children's safety. These, combined with appropriate supervision, minimise any potential risks to children. All documentation required to promote the safe and efficient management of the setting is in place, for example, consent to obtain emergency medical treatment. This is combined with an up-to-date first aid certificate to ensure that the childminder is able to respond effectively to any accidents.

The childminder organises the family home well to provide children with a range of experiences and easy access to all resources. The childminder promotes equality and diversity through enabling all children to participate in activities and differentiate their experiences, to reflect their ages and stages of development. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of differences through daily routines and making their own choices. All children are able to participate fully in the activities and experiences, ensuring they are all gaining the most from their time at the setting.

The childminder has developed good relationships with parents and actively encourages the ongoing two-way flow of relevant information about individual children. Parents are invited for introductory meetings, where the childminder discusses how she works and shares all relevant policies and procedures. Consequently, they are well-informed about the service she provides. At present the childminder discusses and records general information from parents regarding children's likes and dislikes. However, specific dialogue with parents to ascertain their views about what their children know and can do is not collated. Daily verbal feedback, text messages, a daily communication book and access to children's individual development files keep parents informed about their children's progress. All the children in the early years age group are cared for solely by the childminder. She is aware that if children also attend other settings who provide the Early Years Foundation Stage then she should establish links with them in order to ensure continuity and coherence in children's development and learning needs.

The childminder's own self-evaluation process enables her to identify her strengths and areas for improvement. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed, the childminder has improved hand drying and nappy changing routines, and has obtained written consent for outings and transportation of children. The childminder welcomes feedback from parents and invites them to complete a questionnaire three months after they start the placement and every six months thereafter. The childminder recognises the importance of keeping her knowledge up-to-date and is currently studying towards a level 3 childcare qualification.

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

The childminder's confidence in her knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage is developing well. Children enjoy a wide range of fun and challenging activities. The childminder puts the emphasis on free play, so that children are able to use the resources imaginatively and follow their natural curiosity as learners. Planning is flexible, with daily activities based around the needs and interests of the children. The childminder has good systems in place for ongoing observational assessment. The development files for each child are well-supported by photographic evidence and narrative observation. However, although the childminder is familiar with the areas of learning and is able to identify children's next steps, these are not recorded in their assessment files. A balance of adult and child-initiated activities ensures that children are engaged in purposeful play which is appropriate to their ages and stages of development.

Children have clearly formed secure relationships with the childminder. Their individual needs are clearly understood and met very effectively. For example, shy children are sensitively introduced to the inspector, so they eventually feel safe and secure to be confident with visitors to the home. The childminder engages children in conversations and enthusiastically responds to their attempts to converse and express their needs. This approach has a positive effect on children who, because of the warm praise, are more eager to communicate and are filled with confidence and self-esteem. Children play with a range of resources that reflect positive images of diversity, including dolls, small world toys and puzzles. Children are beginning to explore some festivals around the calendar year. For example, during Chinese New Year they enjoyed making lanterns and special biscuits.

Access to a range of jigsaws and construction toys encourage children to learn about the concepts of shape, size, and colour, as well as develop their problem solving skills. Children are supported in developing the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. The childminder undertakes regular visits to toddler groups, where children have opportunities to socialise with others. Children have good opportunities to use their creative imaginations through craft activities, including painting, drawing and working with clay. Children develop their mark-making skills and begin to write with a purpose, for example, they make lists of the items they need to buy at the local shops. Children have a huge range of books to select from and enjoy the opportunities to sit with the childminder to look through their favourite picture book. Regular visits to the local library further enhance children's interest in and love of books. The childminder introduces children to mathematical concepts in a fun way. For instance, activities such as baking develop children's awareness of weighing, measuring and counting. The children count the number of places they need to set for lunchtime and count out the pieces of fruit they have for snack time. Children are well-behaved and thrive on the positive praise they receive from the childminder.

Children adopt good personal health and hygiene practices. They follow the good

role-model of the childminder, who keeps her home clean and well-maintained. Children do not attend if they are sick, which enables the childminder to protect others from illness. Regular fire drill practices and reinforcement of basic road safety further contribute to children developing an awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Older more able children learn about stranger danger through discussions with the childminder. Children enjoy being active and have plenty of chances to safely use their energy in the fresh air, for example, going on a nature trail, visiting local parks and visiting soft-play centres. Children have regular drinks and enjoy a healthy and balanced diet which encourages fresh fruit and vegetables. As a result, children are making good progress towards adopting healthy lifestyles.

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	3
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:

Not Met (with actions)

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

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- devise and implement a written statement of procedures to be followed for the protection of children, intended to safeguard the children being cared for from abuse or neglect (Arrangements for safeguarding children) (also applies to the voluntary part of the Childcare Register) 05/04/2010
- devise a written statement of procedures to be followed in relation to complaints made by parents. (Procedures for dealing with complaints) (also applies to the voluntary part of the Childcare Register) 05/04/2010

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the childcare section of the report (Arrangements for safeguarding children) 05/04/2010
- take action as specified in the childcare section of the report. (Procedures for dealing with complaints) 05/04/2010