

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	08/03/2010
Inspector	Liz Margaret Caluori
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 2002. She lives with her husband, two adult children and one adult lodger in Boughton Monchelsea, Maidstone, Kent. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a garden available for children to use when boundary fences are fully secure.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She may care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, of whom not more than three may be in the early years age range. She is currently caring for six children under eight years of whom four are in the early years age range. She also cares for one child who is over eight years. All children attend on a part time basis.

The childminder drives to local schools to take and collect children and attends the local parent and toddler group. The family has two cats, two dogs, two guinea pigs, a rabbit and chinchilla and a pond of koi carp. The pond is covered and is only visited by the children under the direct and constant supervision of the childminder.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are relaxed, happy and feel safe in the childminder's care. They take part in activities which they enjoy and which are generally effective at promoting their all round development. Their individual personalities are understood and respected although there is only minimal focus placed on promoting children's knowledge and understanding of diversity. The childminder has recently revised her working practices to reflect the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This has begun to result in improved services for the children and their families. Children benefit from the positive relationships the childminder maintains with their parents, carers and other professionals.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- increase the support for children to learn about and respect diversity to help them to prepare to interact positively with people who will become their friends, neighbours and colleagues
- improve the clarity of the written complaints procedure to include details of the process to be followed should a written complaint be received and to include the timescales for investigating concerns
- further develop the systems for assessing children's development to more clearly show how progress is monitored to ensure that children are offered an appropriate level of challenge

- extend the communications systems in place with other professionals involved in delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to the children to share observations that can be used to monitor progress and influence future planning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Appropriate procedures are in place to protect children. The childminder has produced a written statement outlining the process to be followed should she have any concerns about children's welfare. She is confident in her ability to recognise the potential signs and symptoms of abuse and is aware of her responsibility to report any concerns that she may have. In addition, the childminder has begun to produce written records of the risk assessments that she routinely undertakes.

The childminder has recently reviewed her practices and introduced a range of working practices and procedures to support her in meeting all of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This has included producing additional written policies. She also now undertakes observations of the children to enable her to assess their progress and plan future activities. This system is in its fledging stage and has yet to be sufficiently developed to support her to monitor the rate at which children are progressing. Therefore it does not currently help her to ensure that she is offering sufficient and appropriate levels of challenge. However, she is developing confidence in this area and is committed to continual improvement. She has arrangements in place to reflect on her practices although this is also in the early stages and has yet to result in effective evaluation of her strengths and weaknesses.

The childminder recognises the importance of working in partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals. She has introduced a range of strategies to share information both verbally and in writing, including daily contact books. Information about children's learning and development is also shared although this does not currently relate specifically to early learning goals. The childminder has a written complaints policy which is shared with parents and carers but this lacks clarity as it does not specifically differentiate between informal and formal complaints. The childminder communicates effectively with other professionals involved in delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage but is not currently using the information provided to support her assessment or planning.

Children are provided with a large range of toys to support all areas of their development. These are generally well maintained and are presented invitingly in the playroom. Many are at a low level to allow younger children to access them independently.

Children's individual personalities, likes and dislikes are well understood and respected by the childminder. They take part in activities which mark a range of festivals and special days such as Halloween, Christmas and Mother's Day. The childminder responds positively to spontaneous situations and children's questions with regard to different cultures, ethnicity and disability. However, she does not

place specific focus on teaching the children about diversity or encouraging them to consider the lives and customs of others.

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

Whilst the childminder lacks a fully effective system for monitoring children's progress, she provides activities to cover all areas of their learning. As a result children are making satisfactory progress in their development. Children engage in regular art and craft opportunities such as painting, gluing and sticking both in the childminder's home and at toddler groups. They also use their imagination as they play with cars and other small world toys. Their self-esteem is promoted as a result of the praise and positive re-enforcement they receive. Children chat happily to the childminder and their friends and are developing broad vocabularies. They are given some support to develop their writing and pre-writing skills although this is an area that the childminder has only recently begun to focus on. Similarly whilst children learn about mathematical concepts such as shape and size through their general play, the newly introduced planning systems are aimed at providing more co-ordinated and planned support in this area.

Children feel secure and are extremely relaxed and comfortable in the childminder's home. They approach her readily for cuddles and enjoy her good humour. They demonstrate a good awareness of the routines and boundaries in place and confidently explore their environment. They are also given a good level of support to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, a three year old is able to confidently explain the potential dangers of touching the oven while it is hot and reminds another child to mind their head and reaches under the table to retrieve a toy. In addition, the childminder teaches the children specific skills such as how to cross the road safely.

The childminder takes children out to local parks and green spaces to play most days and there is space within her home for younger children to practice their mobility. They learn about the benefits of healthy lifestyles and good personal hygiene. They play in a clean environment and are learning to wash their hands before eating. They are offered a nutritious range of meals and snacks and drinks are constantly available. The childminder maintains a current first aid certificate and also has appropriate procedures in place to deal with sickness and administer medication.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

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	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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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