

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	10/03/2010
Inspector	Anna Davies
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 1998. She lives with her partner and one child aged 10 in a small village close to Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. The childminder's 17-year-old daughter occasionally visits the house. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. Toilet facilities are upstairs.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register as well as the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She is registered to care for a maximum of six children 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 11 years. The house is within walking distance of local amenities such as schools, toddler groups, shops and parks. The family has two pet guinea pigs and two rabbits.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder provides a safe, welcoming and homely environment for children, effectively promoting their welfare. All required documentation and records are in place. She develops a good knowledge of each child and works closely with parents to ensure that individual needs are fully met. Methods for systematically observing, tracking and planning for children's learning are evolving. Children make good progress in their learning and development because the childminder deploys her resources well and provides a good range of stimulating learning opportunities for each child. Through discussion the childminder shows a good awareness of the strengths and areas for improvement of her provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that children's progress towards the early learning goals is effectively monitored through secure assessment arrangements and consider ways to give parents on-going opportunities to contribute what they know about their children to assessment records
- consider introducing an evaluation system, such as the one produced by Ofsted, to improve further the systems for identifying the provision's strengths and areas for development
- develop closer links with other settings providing for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to further support children's learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

An effective safeguarding children policy is in place and shared with parents so that they are clear about the childminder's duty to protect children from harm. The childminder has a secure understanding of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse as well as the procedures to follow should she have concerns about a child in her care. She has also attended training in this area to keep her knowledge both refreshed and up-to-date. Good quality risk assessments for the premises, garden and outings undertaken with children, are carried out, which ensures that children's safety is promoted at all times. For example, a stair gate positioned at the bottom of the stairs prevents very young children accessing these areas unsupervised and private bedrooms are kept locked as these are areas that the childminder does not wish children to play in.

The childminder's home is welcoming for children. There are photographs, posters and examples of their work displayed and a good range of toys and art and craft resources freely accessible to them. The childminder knows individual children well; she is aware of their needs, likes and dislikes and respects the independent choices and decisions that they make.

Good quality information is shared with parents about the provision. For example, policies are accessible and signed when parents have read them; other key information is displayed in the lounge and hallway. Daily discussions keep parents informed of their child's progress and development. However, there are no on-going systems in place to encourage parents to contribute what they know about their children to assessment records. Parents speak very highly of the stimulating and caring environment that the childminder provides for their children. The childminder cares for children attending other settings also delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage and has a good understanding of building effective partnerships with them. However, she has yet to explore ways of sharing information, particularly in relation to individual children's learning and development to ensure a consistent learning experience for children attending more than one setting.

The childminder strives to continuously ensure that children are happy, confident and comfortable in her care. She appreciates the positive feedback that she receives from parents about the service she provides. The childminder demonstrates that she is able to make improvements to further improve outcomes for children. For example, she has addressed previous recommendations from the last inspection such as obtaining written permission from parents for children to use public transport and ensures that the first aid box is regularly checked so that contents are suitable to use in the event of an accident. Through discussion, she demonstrates her ability to self-evaluate. She is able to identify her key strengths and aspects that she wants to further develop such as her assessment arrangements. She has also booked to attend training courses covering equalities and diversity to increase her knowledge and understanding in this area showing a good capacity to improve. However, she has not considered using a systematic evaluation system, such as the one produced by Ofsted, to be able to monitor and

track her key strengths as well as the areas for development she intends to address.

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

The childminder spends much of her time joining in activities with children. She promotes their learning effectively through her use of questions to help children to think and the use of effective strategies to help children develop their problem solving skills and language development. The childminder has just begun to record her planning of adult led activities. She includes the learning intention and in some cases, shows how she may differentiate the activity for older and younger children. She is mindful of children's next steps of learning as she promotes these in the activities that she provides. Assessment scrapbooks are in place for each child. The childminder has recorded some observations and next steps and constantly observes children and identifies aspects of learning to work on. However, as assessment records are in their very early stages it is difficult for the childminder to evidence the good progress children are making towards the early learning goals, for example, to parents and other providers if children attend more than one setting.

Children are given many opportunities to make independent choices and decisions as the childminder asks them open ended questions about what they would like to do or make. Their independence is respected for example, as the childminder asks them if they would like her help before she gives it. Young children speak confidently, describing details in books they are sharing with the childminder. The childminder repeats and models key words using good eye contact to ensure that children can both see and hear the correct pronunciation. Young children are able to recognise simple shapes such as the 'circle' they have created in the play dough. They notice colours in their environment that are the same such as the yellow play dough cutter and the yellow daffodil. Children use simple number language, for example, stating that they have 'two' pieces of play dough. They count by rote and this is extended well by the childminder who challenges children to count on further with support. Children enjoy helping to care for the pet guinea pigs 'Chocolate' and 'Harry' and the rabbits 'Milly' and 'Alfie'. They are able to explain how they help to feed them and what they like to eat showing an understanding about caring for living things. Children learn about the effect of exercise on the body in meaningful ways. For example, when they notice the guinea pigs having a drink, the childminder uses the opportunity to explain that this is because he has been running around which has made him thirsty. Children learn about diversity using a good range of resources. They are sensitive to one another's differences and similarities and this is supported sensitively by the childminder. All of these activities help support children's future economic well-being.

Children get lots of opportunities to enjoy physical activity. This includes trips to the nearby park, walks to places of interest such as the farm shop to choose their own fruit and the use of the local playing fields for games of football. Activities such as threading cards with pieces of wool encourages children to develop their small physical skills. They enjoy a good range of art and craft activities to develop

their creativity. For example, they decorate pots for their daffodils to give on Mother's Day, paint, use play dough and make models with recyclable materials.

Accidents and any administration of medication are well documented including all necessary details. The childminder holds a valid first aid qualification which ensures that she is able to deal with minor injuries effectively; she is booked to refresh this training shortly. Animals are well cared for and their cages cleaned out regularly to ensure that they do not pose a health risk to children. The childminder provides a good range of snacks, usually fruit, which are healthy and nutritious. Lunches are provided by parents. A sample breakfast menu is displayed in a child friendly way which encourages children to take part in this important meal at the beginning of the day. Drinks are freely accessible to children to ensure that they remain well-hydrated. Good hygiene routines are followed by both the childminder and children. For example, younger children use individual towels and flannels to wash and dry their hands, children are encouraged to cover their mouths when they cough and the childminder washes her own hands after wiping children's noses. These routines take positive steps towards reducing the risk of cross contamination. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they walk to school. For example, young children are able to talk about why it is important to walk on the paths and not on the roads and the childminder has just taught some of the younger children their full names in the event that they ever get separated from her. The childminder promotes good behaviour with her enthusiastic personality and the frequent use of praise and encouragement. As a result, she reports very few instances of inappropriate behaviour.

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:	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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