

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	20/07/2010
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 1993 and lives in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. The whole ground floor and part of the first floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

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 three may be in the early years age group. She is currently minding nine children under eight years, of whom seven children are in the early years age group. All children attend on a part-time basis.

The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children and also attends the local parent and toddler group. 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 outstanding.

Children's welfare and learning needs are extraordinarily well met in the caring, safe and entirely child-centred environment. Children are making excellent progress in all areas of their development as a result of the excellent range of resources and activities on offer. Their individual needs are clearly recognised and strong focus is placed on supporting them to understand and respect diversity. Highly effective self-evaluation and positive partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals enable the childminder to continually adapt her service to respond to the needs of the children and their families.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- reviewing the format of the annual questionnaires used to help the self-evaluation process to offer greater encouragement for parents and carers to respond with fuller comments and suggestions.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are protected by a highly effective range of precautions in place within the childminder's home which have been carefully planned to reflect their individual developmental needs. These include the use of safety gates to restrict their access to potentially hazardous areas. The childminder skilfully assesses risks to children in her home, her garden and on outings. This has enabled her to organise the

environment in a way which offers children a very good deal of independence to safely explore and investigate for themselves. The childminder has a thorough understanding of her responsibilities with regard to reporting any child protection concerns that she may have. She has clear written procedures and all of the contact details required to make a referral. She is confident of her ability to detect the potential signs and symptoms of abuse. In addition, she very competently provides children with opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe through practical experiences such as safe road crossing.

The childminder recognises the importance of constantly evaluating and improving her service and involves parents, carers and the children in this process. Parents and carers are provided with annual questionnaires which have a number of questions to which they can tick agreement or disagreement and space is also provided for additional comments. Those that have been gathered recently unanimously offer praise and support for the childminder and her current practices but do not tend to include any comments or suggestions for the childminder to take forward. The childminder is extremely good at identifying the strengths of her service as well as the areas which could be improved. She has a very clear vision for her service which is to offer children the best possible care and support whilst meeting their very individual needs. The childminder has recently completed a National Vocational Qualification in Childcare and Development at level 3. In addition she makes extremely good use of the support and guidance offered by the local authority advisory team to continually improve her practices.

Children benefit from the wonderfully positive relationships in place with their parents and carers. A variety of strategies are used to share information including newsletters, discussions and children's individual developmental files. These feature a good range of photographs of the children involved in a broad range of activities. Parents and carers are given strong encouragement to take part in goal setting for their child. In addition, the childminder has effective systems in place to work with any other professionals or agencies in order to meet children's needs. She communicates regularly with other childcare practitioners involved in delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to the children. This ensures that planning and support is consistent between all parties and helps children to feel secure.

The childminder provides a fully inclusive environment for children. Children's individual personalities are valued and excellent procedures are in place to identify their developmental needs. The childminder recognises that children learn and develop in different ways and very skilfully plans activities which children enjoy and which offer them the appropriate level of challenge. A good level of focus is also placed on ensuring that children learn to understand and respect people from diverse backgrounds. They learn that different people enjoy different customs and traditions and take part in a range of activities to introduce different festivals, for example Chinese New Year.

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

Children have tremendous fun playing with the childminder and their friends. They join in activities with great enthusiasm and, although they are often concentrating hard on their chosen activities, they can also frequently be heard laughing and chatting excitedly. Children are making outstanding progress as a result of the excellent level of support they receive from the childminder. They are given very good opportunities to explore and investigate in a safe, caring environment. They are confident to try new things and to try again if they are not completely successful. As a result, much of their learning and development is based on real life practical experiences. For example, they enjoy activities which promote their knowledge and understanding of the world such as hatching butterflies and growing tomato plants.

The majority of each day is given over to freely chosen play which is almost entirely child-led and, as a result, children are extremely independent in their learning. The childminder very skilfully builds on children's interest and extends their learning. An example of this includes a game in which she gives the children a mix of inflated and deflated balloons. In addition to simply throwing and catching the balloons, the childminder blew some up which she released into the room without tying up. The children squeal with delight as they watch them whizz about the room and the childminder introduces some very basic scientific concepts to explain what is happening.

The childminder places very strong focus on developing children's self-esteem and preparing them for the future. They are caring, friendly and beautifully behaved. They respond extremely well to the childminder's warm, caring manner and are given an extraordinarily good level of support to understand feelings. This supports them to develop empathy and understanding and, as a result, they are developing highly effective social skills.

Children receive outstanding opportunities to extend their communication, language and literacy skills. They take part in many interesting conversations which extend their vocabulary and increase their general knowledge. They love to listen to stories read by the childminder and also enjoy selecting books to look at independently. Before sitting down for snacks the children select the decorative wooden letter which corresponds with the initial of their first name. They are also now developing the confidence to select for their friends. This takes place each day along with similar activities such as identifying the day of the week, the date and discussing the weather. This repetition reinforces their understanding and also prepares them for the transition to school.

Similar attention is given to supporting children in their numeracy. They count confidently and are beginning to recognise written numerals. They have many opportunities to take part in activities to measure and to weigh objects. In addition, they confidently match, sort, sequence and compare items, for example by colour, size and shape. The childminder also successfully introduces more challenging concepts such as a mini-project to consider lines. This involves

encouraging children to consider how lines appear in the world, for example road markings, striped clothing and barcodes. Such activities support the children to think broadly and to make links. Children also have access to a good range of equipment provided to promote their information, communication and technology (ICT) skills such as computers and digital cameras.

Excellent support is given to ensure that children learn about the importance of good hygiene, healthy living and regular exercise. They have virtually constant access to the childminder's garden which is attractively organised with an excellent range of equipment to encourage physical games. They are also taken on a good range of outings including visits to the local park to play on the larger equipment. Children routinely wash their hands after using the toilet and before sitting down to eat. They also learn about nutrition and are provided with a very good range of snacks and drinks. The childminder has a current first aid certificate and maintains all of the records and documentation required for the safe and efficient management of her service.

The childminder provides children with an outstanding service which is very specifically organised to meet their individual needs. She very successfully inspires them to be independent and to think outside the box while ensuring that they also develop wonderful social skills. This ensures that they are well prepared to interact confidently with their peers and later with people who will become their colleagues and neighbours.

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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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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