

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	13/05/2010
Inspector	Stephanie Graves
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 1994. She lives with her husband and two teenage children in Sevenoaks, Kent. She is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Her home is close to public transport, schools, shops, parks and other amenities. All areas of the ground floor and one upstairs bedroom are used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder 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 a total of six children in this age group, all at different times throughout the week. She also offers care to children aged over five years to 11 years. The family has a pet dog and a cat.

The childminder attends the local toddler group on a regular basis. She is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA). The childminder is also a member of an approved childminding network and is in receipt of funding for nursery education for three and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The childminder promotes the welfare and learning needs of each child exceptionally well. Children play and explore within extremely safe boundaries and are well supervised at all times. The partnerships with other professionals and parents contribute significantly towards ensuring that the unique needs of every child are met. The childminder's capacity for maintaining ongoing improvement is excellent. She has identified the strengths of her provision and prioritises for future development to promote excellent outcomes for each child.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continuing to involve parents in their children's learning and development, for example, through making regular contributions to their progress records.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded through excellent measures that promote their welfare and safety at all times. For example, the childminder has updated her knowledge of safeguarding children. She keeps a wide range of guidance and knows exactly what to do in the event of a concern. Risk assessment and safety checks are

thorough in all areas of practice. The required records and comprehensive policy documents are in place. These measures all ensure that children's safety and welfare remains the childminder's priority.

The childminder demonstrates an exemplary commitment to continuous improvement and the recommendation set at the last inspection has been met. The toys, resources and the childminder's professional development enable every child to make rapid progress.

Equality and diversity is exceptionally well promoted. The childminder understands and skilfully supports the needs of individual children as they play together. The views and wishes of parents are fully respected and an excellent range of information is shared. The rich, stimulating learning environment is equally accessible to all children.

Self-evaluation is highly effective in separating out the strengths of the provision and any areas for improvement. Systematic annual reviews are held to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision overall. The childminder is accredited and has achieved advanced childminder status. She rigorously evaluates children's learning to ensure they make as much progress as possible. Future areas for consideration include further sharing practice with other providers and researching different methods of planning, observation and assessment. Other professionals and parents are included in the self-evaluation process to promote outstanding outcomes for the children.

Children benefit from highly effective partnerships with other settings, external agencies and services. For example, the childminder shares relevant information with pre-schools and health professionals to ensure that each child is supported according to their learning and development needs.

The partnership with parents is excellent. Written and verbal exchanges of information are shared on an ongoing basis. Parent questionnaires help to ensure that their wishes and views are respected. Parents are fully involved in their children's learning and development, with some contributing to the children's progress files. They feel their children are happy, enjoy the many experiences provided and the relaxed atmosphere in which their children play and learn. Very effective partnership working provides clear consistency of care and learning for the children.

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

Children learn and develop rapidly because the childminder constantly builds on their interests and skills. This means that they are highly motivated and eager to learn. She asks very effective questions to encourage children to explore, problem solve and make connections in their learning. The quality of the learning environment enables children to choose their preferred activities from an excellent range that covers all areas of learning. An attractive picture file helps even youngest child to recognise and choose their favourite activities.

The childminder plans for individual children exceptionally well. This includes spontaneous planning as children develop their own ideas through play. She clearly records the next steps needed in learning to ensure that children are provided with experiences that are meaningful and offer new challenges. Comprehensive use of observational assessment clearly shows the rapid progress children make. Tracker books enable the childminder to chart children's progress and identify any gaps in learning. Regular assessments include specific plans in each area of learning for every child. These are highly relevant and incorporated into the every day activities that children enjoy and clearly build on their existing abilities and interests.

The children thrive on an extensive mix of adult and child-led play and the childminder supports their needs exceptionally well. For example, babies new to the setting, settle very quickly. They are observed to smile at the childminder as they spontaneously get their boots ready for outdoor play. Older children communicate confidently and clearly, for example, as they excitedly describe the life cycle of a butterfly. Babies love to explore paint, by smearing and dabbing it and stamping in it as older children paint on paper in the garden. Children have every opportunity to share books and explore initial sounds. Overall, children's communication, language and literacy skills are developing very well.

Children enjoy activities that involve problem solving. These include shape sorting, matching and counting. For example, they count out four paint boxes with the childminder then work out that they will also need four bottles of paint, one colour for each. They use computers, cameras and interactive toys and resources that help them to discover how things work.

Children have excellent opportunities to learn about the natural world. They know that a chrysalis will turn into a butterfly and must put fruit into the net enclosure as they observe the changes that occur. They know they must be kind to animals and plants and discuss this as they water tomatoes and strawberries to help them 'grow'. Children have every opportunity to learn about diversity through the childminder's explanations and the wide range of toys, resources and outings that promote their positive awareness.

Ongoing opportunities are available for children to experience physical activity through the childminder's commitment to outdoor play and the excellent range of experiences available. Children are highly creative, for example, as they use hobby horses to tackle an obstacle course in the garden or pretend to make pancakes with play dough. They pretend that a stack of crayons is a bottle of syrup and 'pour' this on top. These experiences help children to develop excellent imaginations. Overall, children acquire excellent skills to help prepare them for their future learning and development.

Children learn about many different safety issues and understand the safety boundaries in place. They care about the safety of others, for example, as they pick up a toy lawn mower to prevent others from tripping over it. Babies demonstrate a complete sense of security in the childminder's calm and warm support. They show this through happy interactions with her and the other children attending.

Children are actively involved in promoting their own good health, for instance, as they help to grow, pick and eat fresh produce. The childminder ensures a good healthy range of meals are provided. She has a food safety certificate and ensures her home is hygienically clean. She follows set procedures in the event of children having infectious illnesses. Children know when and why they need to wash their hands and dry them on paper towels. These measures are all highly effective in reducing the risk of cross infection.

Children behave exceptionally well because they are constantly engaged in meaningful activity. They care for others and learn to share and take turns from a very early age. The childminder skilfully diverts unwanted behaviour and offers ongoing support, praise and encouragement. This enables every child to develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem.

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

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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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