

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	03/06/2010
Inspector	Gillian Charlesworth
Type of setting	Childminder

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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 December 2009 and is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA). She lives with her husband and two children aged three years and one year in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, close to shops, parks and schools. Access to the provision is via three steps up to the front door or without steps via the entrance at the rear. Children generally use the ground floor of the property although space for sleeps and toilet facilities are on the first floor. The family have a pet cat.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than one may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding two children in this age group who attend on a part-time basis. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The childminder has a car to transport children. She regularly attends messy play and rhyme time sessions alongside parent and toddler groups.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

The childminder is professional, enthusiastic and genuinely committed to the children and families in her care. There is a positive outlook towards improvement with self evaluation in the early stages of development. Children are settled, enjoy their time in the setting and benefit from mostly secure procedures and the generally safe, positive and inclusive approach. Overall, they are making sound progress in their learning and development supported by many positive strategies that are being developed to foster effective relationships with parents and enable children's individual welfare needs to be understood and met well.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure that prior written permission is obtained for each and every medicine from parents before any medication is given (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare).
- 11/06/2010

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

- develop further the risk assessment ensuring it covers anything with which a child may come into contact
- improve the policy on equality of opportunities including information about

how all children, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, will be included, valued and supported, and how reasonable adjustments will be made for them

- develop further the planning, linked more closely to the observations and assessment systems to plan the next steps in children's learning; with particular regard to targeting gaps identified through assessment and focussing on where children need to go next, in the context of their progress towards the early learning goals
- develop further a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development and ensure systems show the impact of improvements on outcomes for children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Suitable arrangements are in place to safeguard children's welfare. Vetting is appropriately completed and written confirmation is readily available to provide reassurance for parents. The childminder has benefitted from recent safeguarding training, and therefore is developing an understanding of most safeguarding regulations. She is aware of her duties in relation to child protection, including procedures to follow in the event of allegations against herself or a household member. Overall, there is a wide range of records policies and written procedures that are well organised and parents have chances to review and sign these to show their awareness, thereby beginning to promote continuity. However, a minority of policies and records, such as medication procedures, the equality of opportunity policy and risk assessments, are not yet fully developed thereby reducing quality. For example, prior written permission is occasionally overlooked when administering prescribed medication and although the childminder has a positive approach towards meeting individual needs, her equality of opportunity policy does not prioritise information about how the service promotes inclusion for children who are disabled or have special educational needs. Daily risk checks cover major aspects of the premises but are not always evaluating risks as changes to the environment occur. Consequently, they do not always take account of seasonal equipment, such as paddling pools that children come into contact with. However, the childminder supervises well, checks sleeping children regularly and gives high priority to security and fire safety procedures thereby ensuring children are always safe. Arrangements are also beginning to help children to learn to be safety conscious and develop an understanding of hazards. The childminder purposefully plans resources for outside play, for example, ensuring sand is available and accessible in fine weather. Resources are of good quality and presented in a welcoming environment where most toys are accessible to children and environmental print and posters are thoughtfully displayed. Overall, this, together with the childminder prioritising her time and supporting children well, enables inclusive independent learning. The childminder considers individuals when planning activities, ensuring those who are active learners have regular opportunities to play outside in all weathers. She is beginning to consider issues of sustainability, for example, growing tomatoes and butternut squash and walking to school.

The childminder is motivated to improve and promote positive outcomes for children. For example, she constantly evaluates the new systems introduced to monitor children's learning and development. This helps to focus on providing relevant activities based on children's interests. She has begun to self-evaluate against previous frameworks such as the National Standards and has sought and acted on feedback from both parents and the local authority support team, thereby improving overall quality. While she can accurately identify some strengths, and is formulating plans to improve, systems are not yet fully developed to systematically monitor or show how improvements impact on outcomes for children.

There are positive relationships with parents who are provided with a good range of information to support continuity of care. Communication is effective and ensures individual needs are considered and met. This includes the introduction of parent questionnaires, enabling parents to express their 'strong confidence' in the childminder and also gain reassurance and insight into areas of practice that are less familiar, such as sleeping environments. Attractive daily diaries help to inform parents about children's general achievements and interests, and parents are actively encouraged to share what they know about their child when they first start to attend. This enables the childminder to tailor activities and interactions to meet individual needs.

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

The quality of children's learning is satisfactory, therefore, they are progressing well in most aspects of their learning, although, progress in some areas such as problem solving, reasoning and numeracy are less well developed. Children enjoy their learning, are settling well and take part in activities at their own pace; making choices and decisions according to their needs and interests. The childminder encourages them to be active learners, which in turn promotes their curiosity as they imitate her actions and reach out to explore toys. Records of children's progress are developing well and resource led planning is beginning to be introduced. However, this is not yet fully targeting gaps identified in monitoring systems or identifying where children need to go next in the context of their progress towards the early learning goals.

Children are making suitable progress overall in communicating, literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT). Young children explore things with interest and respond well to the childminder's encouragement as they learn to operate simple buttons on interactive toys. They are learning to listen as the childminder initiates conversation and constantly narrates actions during practical activities. Young children express themselves best when they are excited about the activities on offer. They use their voices, squealing with delight and pointing to communicate, for example, when enjoying bubble blowing activities. They learn about shape and space as they explore different toys, such as, shape sorters or balls that they bounce using two hands. They are beginning to show an interest in the wider world when using resources, such as, multi-cultural dolls and books reflecting people's differences.

Young children show they feel safe in the setting as they wake from a sleep and sit quietly on the childminder's lap gaining confidence to take the next steps to play with others. The childminder helps children to begin to learn about issues relating to safety which in turn helps them to feel safe in the setting. She identifies dangers as they occur and talks to children about taking care, for example, when others are using a hammer. She talks to children about the importance of wearing shoes in the garden to avoid hurting their feet.

Children are beginning to show an understanding about healthy lifestyles. The childminder recognises their signs of tiredness and makes sure sleep routines are flexible so that children's individual rhythms are respected. Children enjoy close and warm relationships which support their emotional well-being. When prompted, children follow appropriate personal hygiene routines, using their own colour coded hand-towels to prevent cross-infection. They enjoy meals provided from home which are familiar to them, and they sometimes have chances to begin to feed themselves. There are plenty of opportunities to experience healthy outdoor lifestyles as they play in the well resourced garden, pushing trucks and gaining skills for independent walking, or taking part in outings to school in all weathers.

Children have positive attitudes towards learning, and have a strong exploratory impulse as they use the environment with interest, experimenting with sand and water in the garden and using tools such as a rake as the childminder encourages them to fill containers. They are making good relationships with the childminder's own children who take initiative and enjoy forming friendships. For example, they offer babies resources and use warm words of encouragement such as 'can you do it?' to encourage the babies to become involved. Children behave well, learning boundaries at an early age and responding well to the expectations of the childminder. For example, by wearing sun hats the childminder playfully encourages in the garden. Children take part in activities to help them learn about the wider community. For example, when listening to Chinese music.

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	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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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	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
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

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

Met