

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY334877
Inspection date	22/06/2010
Inspector	Hazel Meadows
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 2006. She lives with her husband and two children aged 13 years and seven years in a house in Martlesham Heath, near Ipswich. There is one step to access to the premises. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding activities and upstairs used for undisturbed daytime sleeping. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The family has one dog, two rabbits and two guinea pigs.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She is registered to care for a maximum of five children under eight years of age at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range.

The childminder's husband or mother occasionally work as her assistant. When working with an assistant the childminder may care for five children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than five may be in the early years age range.

She is currently minding eight children in the early years age range, all of whom attend part-time. She also offers care to children aged over five years. The childminder supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

The childminder holds a relevant early years qualification. She walks children to and from local schools and pre-schools and attends local toddler groups. She takes children to local play areas, the library and to nearby places of interest such as the woods and the beach.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder provides a welcoming, stimulating, home-from-home environment where children flourish. They are offered a delightful variety of play and learning experiences and make very good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. The childminder has an excellent understanding of the children's individual needs and maintains extremely positive and trusting partnerships with parents. She is developing a method to monitor and record children's progress although this requires some improvement. Thorough documentation and procedures are in place to ensure children's welfare and safety. The childminder reflects on her practice to make ongoing improvements and is considering a systematic method of self-evaluation to highlight strengths and to help identify areas requiring improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure observations of the children are linked to the areas of learning and clearly identify any next steps for children to ensure that they are making ongoing progress
- further develop self-evaluation to highlight strengths and achievements and to identify any areas for improvement or further development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder organises her home, time and resources very effectively and efficiently, to support children and meet their varying routines and needs. She is attentive to child safety and is proactive to minimise risks to children. She has written comprehensive risk assessments for the home and different types of outings, which are regularly reviewed, to promote children's welfare. The childminder has a secure understanding of safeguarding children and is clear of her role and responsibilities to protect children. She has attended relevant training, has a thorough written policy and knows what action to take if she had concerns about a child. The childminder values and embraces children's individuality and has a positive and inclusive attitude and approach to diversity. This is reflected in her practice and policies and some of the resources and activities.

The childminder maintains comprehensive documentation which is exceptionally well organised and neatly presented. She has written her own policies to support her childminding, which are reflected well in practice. The policies, plus copies of her training certificates and other relevant information, are made available to the parents. The childminder is committed to ongoing development and has attended training to support and enhance her childminding. She reflects on her practice to promote good quality and is considering establishing a more systematic method of self-evaluation to ensure areas for development are identified. Comprehensive details are gathered about the children and signed, written parental consents are in place, to ensure children are cared for according to their parents' wishes.

The childminder develops excellent, trusting relationships with parents and welcomes and encourages their comments and feedback, both verbally and via questionnaires. She promotes frequent two-way communication, including a daily diary for each child, to ensure children's individual needs are met and to promote continuity and quality of care. Comments from parents, to the inspector during the inspection, are all extremely positive about the childminder's competence and the care and information she provides. They are impressed with the variety of activities their children are offered and the excellent progress the children have made through the childminder's care, support and input. The childminder has limited links with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage but is aware that this is an area for development.

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

The childminder knows each of the children extremely well and is very caring and attentive towards them. Children are relaxed and happy with her and one another and interaction between them is warm, fun and spontaneous. Children are very well behaved as they are well occupied and secure with the childminder and the routine. The childminder has a calm and consistent manner which children respond well to and is a good role model for the children, treating them with kindness and respect. She offers children clear explanations and options which helps them to begin to manage their own behaviour and make positive choices.

The childminder understands the importance of children learning through play and first hand experiences and utilises day-to-day activities to support children's learning and independence in a fun way. For example, all the children enjoy helping her to hang out the washing, matching socks and discussing different sizes and colours as they peg them onto a mini rotary line adjacent to the childminder's main line. The childminder plays alongside the children at their level and is very skilled at encouraging children's communication skills and broadening their vocabulary, as she talks freely with them. She is attentive to their conversations, and attempts at communication, and gives them time to think and respond when she asks them a question. The childminder records observations of the children at play, which are supported by photographs, and attractively presented in individual Learning Journey folders. However, the observations are not always clearly linked to the areas of learning and any next steps are not always identified to monitor children's individual progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. The folder is regularly shared with parents who are encouraged to add their own contributions.

The childminder introduces broad topics to extend children's learning and experiences but is flexible to accommodate and follow children's ideas. Many photographs of the children and examples of their artwork and topics are attractively displayed on the walls, which helps children to feel valued and promotes discussion. Parents are encouraged to support topics and children are pleased to bring in items from home to show others, which provides a valuable link with home, supports children's learning and helps them to feel special. Resources are easily accessible in low-level storage or multi-drawer wheeled units, enabling children to help themselves and initiate their own play. A wealth of alternative resources is stored in the shed and the childminder rotates the selection to provide ongoing interest, variety and challenge for the children.

Children have regular opportunities to explore different media such as paint, play dough and collage and their efforts and creations are praised and valued. They learn about their local community and more about the world around them as they visit local play areas and also go to nearby places of interest such as the beach or to the woods. Opportunities on walks and outings are used by the childminder to help children learn about road safety. Children learn about different festivals and events through the year as they enjoy related activities and their imaginative play is supported with toys such as small world toys and role play props plus face

painting and dressing up clothes. The childminder recognises the uniqueness of each child and ensures all children are included and their preferences are accommodated when possible. For example, she offers drawing and mark-making opportunities with large sheets of paper on the floor and chinks outside as an alternative to sitting at a table.

Children have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise which promotes a healthy lifestyle. They relish playing in the well-equipped garden and delight in blowing and chasing bubbles. They gain physical confidence and co-ordination as they play on the trampette and ride-on toys and master the ramp and stilts. Good hygiene is well promoted and children readily wash their hands, younger ones with support, after toileting or before snacks and meals, which minimises the risk of cross infection. Children are offered nutritious snacks, such as fruit, to promote healthy eating habits and drinks are easily accessible ensuring they are well hydrated. Children's independence and dexterity is promoted as they are encouraged to chop up the strawberries at snack time. Children's routines are well maintained and supported in close cooperation with parents, for example, children are able to sleep and rest according to their needs.

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	1
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	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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	1
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	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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