

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 123254
Inspection date 07/05/2010
Inspector Hilary Preece

Type of setting Childminder

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

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

© Crown copyright 2009

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 1992. She lives with her husband and adult children in St Albans, Hertfordshire. The ground floor of the house is mainly used for childminding and includes a dedicated play room with direct access to a fully enclosed rear garden for outside play. The family has a Burmese cat and keeps chickens in a secure enclosure. There is a tadpole pond within a secured area of the garden.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, no more than three of which may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding five children in this age group. She also offers care to children aged over five years to 11 years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The childminder is accredited by Hertfordshire County Council to deliver early years education for funded three and four-year-olds and is a member of the St Albans Children's Centres Network. At the time of the inspection there were no funded children on roll. She takes a lead role in a local childminding group and the network group. She holds a level 3 qualification in Early Years Childcare and Education and has previously been awarded the Hertfordshire Quality Standards award.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

An exceptionally well developed knowledge of each child's needs, together with excellent partnerships with parents and other agencies, ensure that children's welfare and learning is promoted to the highest standards. This means that all children, including those with additional support needs, are carefully monitored to ensure they reach their potential and progress well, given their age and starting points. Rigorous procedures and a well planned environment keep children safe, secure and enable them to thoroughly enjoy their learning. Effective self-evaluation based on the needs of children and parents using the service allow the childminder to maintain exceptionally high levels of welfare and learning and make plans for further improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- devise systems to ensure self-evaluation records show the the impact of improvements on outcomes for children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded and protected by the childminder's extensive knowledge of the requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and her subsequent comprehensive policies and robust practices. She regularly updates her knowledge of current safeguarding procedures and first aid through training so that any concerns or accidents are dealt with effectively. She implements a range of rigorous procedures to ensure that children are protected and supervised at all times that include the vetting of all adults in the household and regular visitors to the house. Assistants, when used, are fully informed about policies and procedures so that they can promote children's welfare and carry out any emergency procedures as required so children remain safe. Comprehensive risk assessments and health and safety policies not only protect the children and keep them safe but also allow them to take managed risks and learn about their personal safety and that of others without causing anxiety. Highly efficient records are kept that accurately support these health and safety practices.

Resources are of particularly high quality and interest to stimulate children's learning and development. The environment is regularly assessed to see how further improvements can be made. For example, the recent addition of a tadpole pond and chicken enclosure provide first-hand learning experiences for children to learn about life cycles. These are backed up with interesting books and displays to further support children's learning. The childminder also makes excellent use of resources within the local environment and beyond to promote equality and diversity and children's understanding of the wider world. She provides a vast array of interesting artefacts from her own travels and allows children to explore their own faiths, cultures and family structures to help them value diversity, difference and their personal identity. Every effort is made to ensure the provision is sustainable. The childminder effectively promotes children's good health through mainly sourcing their food from local food growers and suppliers and involving children in trips to the local markets and farms to buy local produce.

Exceptionally strong partnerships are established with parents. Comprehensive information is shared between the childminder and parents right from the start. A detailed welcome pack keeps them very well informed about policies and procedures and regular two-way communication ensures they are actively involved in children's learning and development. For example, parents contribute to daily diaries by adding any comments about children's experiences at home that the childminder uses when planning. This helps to personalise and make children's learning more meaningful. The childminder confidently discusses aspects of their development with parents and is instrumental in seeking out further guidance if she feels children have any additional support needs. This means that care is very much tailored to children's individual needs and, consequently, they make very good progress. She is committed to working in partnership with other agencies and settings delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage and strong and well established links are evident. As a result, there is effective continuity of learning and care and children are very well prepared for the transition to nursery or school.

The childminder is driven by wanting to provide the very best for children, as reflected in her core values: 'Nurturing, exploring and developing independence.' She sets exacting standards and strives to maintain these through continually reflecting on her practice and developing further knowledge and skills. She reads widely, uses a range of resources and publications and shares good practice with other childcare providers in order to identify new ideas and improved ways of working. Self-evaluation processes are very effective and take account of the views of parents and children. Peer observations carried out by other childminders are used as a means of seeking impartial feedback and monitoring her practice. Self-evaluation records, however, tend to be descriptive rather than evaluative and so do not consistently measure the impact of improvements on outcomes for children.

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

Children thrive in a stimulating and welcoming environment that reflects the children's backgrounds and the wider community. The childminder has expert knowledge of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and of how young children learn and progress. Consequently, she plans a rich and varied programme of experiences tailored to their individual needs, interests and stages of development. Methods for observing and assessing children are highly effective in supporting children's learning and development and evidence shows that children's progress is excellent in relation to their starting points. Beautifully presented 'Learning Journals' provide clear evidence to parents of the progress children make in all areas of learning and development and these are carefully evaluated and monitored to ensure all children are equally supported. These records are enjoyed by parents and children alike. The children love to look at their photographs and recall happy experiences. Children's enthusiasm and desire to take part in play, activities and routines is very evident. They show high levels of self-motivation and independence in selecting their chosen play and managing to do things for themselves. The childminder challenges children to overcome any difficulties and successfully helps build confidence in their own abilities. For example, young children gain such a sense of achievement when managing to manipulate fastenings on dolls' clothes, as a result of carefully guided encouragement from the childminder, that they want to repeat this new skill again and again.

All babies and children show a strong sense of security and belonging because they receive such high quality interaction and routines run so smoothly and efficiently. They very quickly settle in and adapt to being around other children and adults. They build secure relationships and behave extremely well because expectations for their behaviour and respectful rules such as sharing and helping are introduced from the moment they start. Even very young children co-operate and negotiate with others through activities such as laying the table. They enthusiastically fetch plates and cutlery from the kitchen, place them on the children's lunch table and are encouraged to work out whether there are enough for all the children. Children relish these opportunities to be helpful and responsible and are very comfortable sitting together around the lunch table. Babies and very

young children remain very content and settled because their individual health, physical and dietary needs are met to exceptionally high standards. They go off to sleep easily and wake refreshed and happy. Children show an excellent understanding of the importance of following good personal hygiene routines by helping themselves to tissues to wipe their noses and disposing of them safely in the bin, or singing hand-washing songs to remind them to scrub between their fingers. They develop adventurous food tastes through being offered a wide range of home-cooked international meals from Japan, India and China, for example. Through these experiences children also learn to manipulate different eating tools such as chopsticks and use flatbreads with their hands to eat curry.

The childminder skilfully ensures children get the most learning and development opportunities from each activity. Whilst completing puzzles they are helped to develop their pincer grip as they manipulate the pieces, co-ordinate hand movements to get them to fit, problem-solve and recognise colours and shapes. Conversation is free-flowing and the childminder models clear language to encourage children's communication, language and literacy. Children enjoy a wonderful selection of story, learning and information books from around the world, sometimes written in languages other than English and portraying children leading very different lives to themselves. Exciting outings within the local environment further allow children to become inquisitive and explore the world around them. They visit garden centres and wildlife parks to investigate the natural world and the local airfield to watch the light aircraft take off and land. Their safety is paramount, as demonstrated by the practice of wearing high-visibility jackets, wrist bands marked with the childminder's contact number and special ear muffs at the airfield to protect children from the loud noise. Children are therefore helped to feel safe and reassured at all times.

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 |
|--|---|

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 |

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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