

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	152552
Inspection date	07/10/2010
Inspector	Sonjia Nicholson
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 registered in 2001. She lives with her husband and two school age children in a house in the village of Prestwood in Buckinghamshire. Children have use of most rooms within the house including toilet and sleeping facilities which are situated on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The family have four cats, two rabbits, two gerbils and fish kept in a tank indoors and a pond in the garden. The childminder walks to local schools and pre-schools to take and collect children. She attends a parent toddler group and takes children to the local park.

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 when working alone, three of whom may be in the early years age range. There is a condition in place to increase this number to four children on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. The childminder works with several assistants and when doing so may care for a maximum of eight children under eight years, five of whom may be in the early years age range. There are currently 16 children on roll, seven of whom are in the early years age range. The childminder is accredited to the Buckinghamshire Community Childminding Network and has gained a Certificate in Early Years Practice which is a qualification at Level 4.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children feel valued and enjoy their time in this friendly family home. The childminder has some good systems in place to support children's welfare, learning and development. She plans extremely well for children's individual needs and as a result they make significant progress in their learning and development. The childminder is committed to improving her service, showing a good capacity to continue to develop her childcare practice. The childminder has gained accreditation to a childminding network in order to accept funding for three and four year olds, giving local parents a greater choice of care for their children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- organise the toys and resources so they are more easily accessible to children, enabling them to be more independent in their learning
- ensure the risk assessments cover anything with which a child may come into contact

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder works with several assistants and has robust recruitment procedures in place to ensure children are cared for by suitable people. She interviews prospective candidates, takes up references and ensures Criminal Record Board checks are completed. The childminder has completed a 'Safer Recruitment and Selection' course to add to her knowledge. The childminder has a good understanding of how to protect children from abuse and has kept her knowledge up to date through attending courses and completing some on-line training. As a result the childminder knows the procedure to follow if she has concerns about a child. She shares these procedures with parents along with her own safeguarding policy so they are fully aware of her role and responsibility to protect children. Children practice the evacuation drill once a term so they learn how to leave the home quickly and safely. The childminder takes time to talk through the drill before it happens to minimise the distress to children and ensure they fully understand what is going on. Details of these drills are logged in the childminder's diary. There are smoke detectors fitted on both levels of the home and a fire blanket is available in the kitchen for use in the event of a fire.

Resources are plentiful and are mostly stored in the lounge where children can see them; however, they are rather muddled and look very cluttered and uninviting. The childminder has identified this as an area for development and has been looking at storage options so children can access things more easily. Risk assessments have been completed for the many outings organised by the childminder and for specific stages of children's development, for example, learning to crawl. However, due to way the childminder manages her home she does not always recognise that some household items pose a hazard to children. Therefore the risk assessments for the home are not entirely accurate. In the garden the childminder is part-way through a project to increase children's outdoor play opportunities. She has obtained a grant to purchase new equipment including safety mats, a wooden tower/slide, plastic climbing castle and large wooden sand pit with lid along with lots of ride-on toys. The pond area is fenced off but as the gate is not secure children can enter this area; again the risk assessments in place do not reflect this.

The childminder places high importance on attending training courses to increase her childcare knowledge and keep up to date with current practice. Most recently she has attended an 'Extending Learning Workshop', 'Food Hygiene Level 2' and 'Different Learning Styles' courses. The childminder has recently begun to study for an Early Years Foundation degree to further enhance her practice. Through the accreditation scheme the childminder receives regular visits from her Network Coordinator where they review different aspects of her provision; this ensures she remains aware of the improvements required to move her setting forward. There are extensive opportunities for parents and carers to become involved in their child's learning and development. The childminder sends a regular newsletter home to keep them up to date with what is going on within the setting and provides daily verbal and written feedback about the care provided. Parents attend regular events organised by the childminder, such as, a summer barbeque in the

woods, a pantomime trip and a concert performed by the children to raise money for an overseas school they support. Parents are full of praise for the childminder and her service as detailed in the many letters, cards and references on file. Most aspects of the provision are well organised. There is a detailed portfolio available for new parents which include a range of written policies and procedures most of which contain the necessary detail. The childminder has established good links with other Early Years Foundation Stage providers in order to provide children with a coherent learning experience.

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

Children benefit from the childminder's expert care. She understands the needs of each child and provides individual attention, for example, she perseveres in helping a baby go off to sleep by cuddling, walking around the room and trying different places for him to settle. She has a loving, warm manner with the children and as a result even the youngest of children respond positively, for example, the baby grins broadly at her as she chats freely to him. Children's emotions are dealt with effectively by the childminder, for example, she sends a text message to a parent as a way of pacifying a child who is very grumpy on collection from pre-school and wants to go home. The childminder asks him what he wants to say and this immediately makes him feel happy to have this link with his parent, especially when she replies. Children's independence is encouraged at all times, especially mealtimes where they serve their own egg rice from a large bowl and select their own cutlery. After saying grace, the children develop their social skills as they chat freely to one another. The childminder gives them gentle reminders to say 'please' and 'thank you' so they learn to be polite and well-mannered. Children have meals and snacks provided by the childminder that are healthy and nutritious. She encourages them to make healthy choices and develop an understanding of where food comes from by growing and harvesting their own vegetables from her allotment. They develop skills for the future as they use knives and other kitchen tools, under supervision, as they peel and chop carrots and other vegetables to make soup. The childminder is very aware of maintaining children's good dental health and only provides water or milk for them to drink. As with all aspects of her service, the childminder has attended relevant courses and workshops to increase her knowledge and understanding of healthy lifestyles. Babies who are bottle-fed are held closely to her providing them with comfort and security. Children gain exercise as they walk to and from pre-school or school most days. They enhance their physical skills by using the wide range of equipment available in the garden to climb and balance. Babies and toddlers explore a selection of resources with different textures and sounds which help them develop their fine motor skills, for example, grabbing and squashing the crinkly wings of a soft butterfly toy.

Children behave very well as the childminder has clear boundaries in place, for example, she reminds a child they cannot leave the table as someone is still eating. Her policy sets out the strategies used to manage unacceptable behaviour which are tailored to each child's age and stage of development. Children are kept busy and interested in what is going on so they do not become bored and begin to

misbehave. Children's needs are well-known by the childminder through pre-visits to her home where she discusses their routines and likes/dislikes with parents. These details are recorded for future reference and help her provide specific care, for example, to help a child who has difficulties feeding and sleeping. Within the home the childminder plans in great detail for each child that supports them to make excellent progress in their learning and development. She makes regular observations which are used to establish learning targets and takes lots of photographs as evidence of what children do. Children also take photographs using a Polaroid camera which gives them instant pictures to add to their Learning Journey.

Children's learning is greatly extended through outings away from the home, particularly during school holidays. Children are consulted about their ideas of where to go and have enjoyed visits on the train to Warwick Castle, to a Chinese buffet restaurant to experience new tastes and textures and on the bus to the cinema. Other outings take place to the local woods where children explore the environment and parks where they play on large equipment. Children's language development is highly promoted as the childminder talks to them at every opportunity and gives good explanations to help them understand, for example, they discuss what fruit they would like after lunch and why a plum has a stone in it. They chat freely to one another about the fact they forgot to go to the shop to buy some cheese and other items; one child suggests they make a list which the childminder praises as being a very good idea. The childminder consistently plans these type of first hand experiences so children learn at every opportunity.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
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	2
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	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	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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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