

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	260985
Inspection date	02/11/2010
Inspector	Sarah Johnson
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 2001. She lives with her husband and two children aged 16 and 17 years in Lowestoft, Suffolk. The whole of the childminder's home, with the exception of one bedroom, is used for childminding. A secure enclosed garden is used for outdoor play activities. The family has a pet dog.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, no more than three of whom may be in the early years age range. The children live in the local area and some also attend sessions at local pre-school and nursery settings. The childminder works very closely with her husband who is also a registered childminder, and together they may care for a maximum of six children. Currently they are caring for eight children in the early years age range between them. Although the childminder tends to take the lead on daily record keeping, she shares overall responsibility for the childminding practice with her co-childminder. The childminder also offers care to children aged over five years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The childminder walks and drives to local schools to take and collect children. She attends local social groups with the children and takes them on regular outings. She is a member of an approved childminding network and holds a relevant early years qualification at Level 3. The childminder is accredited to provide funded early education for three- and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children benefit from the strong partnerships formed between the childminder, parents and carers, and develop a positive sense of belonging at the setting. Highly effective risk assessment procedures ensure children stay extremely safe. Children make positive progress in their learning as they enjoy a good range of play opportunities, some of which are planned in the outdoor environment. There are effective interventions to support the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The childminder and her co-childminder work successfully in partnership, evaluating the early years provision well to identify key areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the assessments further to provide a summary of each child's achievements and ensure their next steps in learning are identified more systematically

- enhance the planning for outdoor learning, ensuring it fully complements indoor learning and offers a wider range of experiences across all areas of learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety and well-being are given unquestionable priority. The childminder is fully committed to her role and responsibilities in safeguarding all of the children in her care, and has excellent understanding of what she must do if she has concerns about a child's welfare. She has completed a relevant safeguarding children training course, and ensures the setting's safeguarding policy is shared with parents and carers. All adults in the home have completed the required checks to confirm their suitability to be in regular contact with children. Effective daily risk assessments, together with the childminder's intuitive awareness of safety, ensure that children play in a very safe and secure environment. The provision is very welcoming and inclusive to all children and families, and the childminder knows how to adapt the environment, activities and routines to meet children's individual needs. Children access a good range of safe and stimulating toys and resources, and benefit from plenty of space to move around and spread out whilst indoors.

The childminder values the strong partnerships she forms with parents and carers, and as a result, parents comment very positively about the support they experience at the setting. Daily diaries for younger children, freely accessible development records, newsletters and daily discussions help to keep parents well informed of their children's progress and care routines. The childminder continues to consider different ways to encourage parents to contribute comments to their children's learning journey records, and issues regular questionnaires to parents. This ensures that parents are given good opportunities to contribute their views and share in their children's learning. The childminder regularly liaises with practitioners at other early years settings, sharing information about children's changing routines and promoting continuity across the different settings that children attend. She is proactive in seeking the expertise of outside professionals, particularly when she is planning to meet children's individual health care needs.

The childminder is experienced and well-qualified for her role. She is keen to complete further training workshops to complement her existing early years qualification. For example, she continues to maintain a valid paediatric first aid certificate and is now completing a course to become an accredited Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. The childminder also values opportunities to share ideas and discuss her practice with her co-childminder, and with other registered childminders, through the local childminding network. She has positive aspirations for the quality of the service provided and demonstrates a good capacity to continue to make ongoing improvements to the existing high quality provision.

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

Children are very comfortable and content in the childminder's home. They confidently initiate their own play as the childminder carefully plans the indoor environment, ensuring toys and resources are accessible and there is ample space available. For example, children are able to access the dolls, pushchairs and doll's clothes from the low-level toy box, and know exactly where they can find additional props, such as, telephones, to extend their play situations. From here, children develop their speech as they hold a telephone up to their ear, chatting away to themselves and introducing narrative to their play. Opportunities for children to practise their early writing skills are good. For example, they enjoy drawing lines and swirls on black paper with chalks to represent fireworks, and drawing different shapes to bring their fish pictures to life. As they draw, the childminder asks questions to extend their learning, and as a result, children begin to name shapes, such as, circles and triangles, and identify the different colours they are using. Children enjoy the wide range of books provided and can access these easily themselves. Their repertoire of familiar rhymes is strong as they often burst spontaneously into song. The provision for children to engage in outdoor play is generally good, particularly in the warmer summer months when children are able to flow freely from the conservatory to the garden. However, the planning does not always make the most of the outdoor environment to inspire children's learning. There is scope to widen children's experiences across all areas of learning whilst they play in the garden and take walks in the local area.

Children are provided with very good opportunities to be independent and to take responsibility during daily routines. For example, they are very keen to take care of the toys and happily help to tidy these away when they have finished with them. The childminder actively praises each child for their efforts, ensuring they develop good levels of self-esteem and become aware of when they are behaving positively. Opportunities for children to learn about other people's cultures and differing needs are promoted generally well and a sound range of books and small world characters, depicting various languages and people from different cultures, are available to the children. The childminder supports the needs of children who have English as an additional language as she sources rhymes to sing in different languages with the children. The childminder successfully observes children's play and is able to link what she observes to the relevant areas of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, the assessments are not yet being reviewed as systematically as they could be to provide an ongoing summary of each child's progress and ensure that the next steps in children's learning are clearly identified in the learning journey records.

Children are skilfully supported to learn how to stay safe as the childminder makes the most of incidental opportunities to teach them important safety rules. For example, she provides them with gentle reminders to walk carefully down the stairs and gives them clear explanations so they understand why it is unsafe to stand up on the chairs. Outcomes for children's health are very good. They benefit from a healthy range of snacks and meals which are prepared safely by the childminder who has completed food hygiene training. Routines for hand washing

are well-promoted, as children have easily accessible facilities, such as, their own individual towels hanging on low-level hooks.

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	1
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	2

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	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
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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