

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY413027
Inspection date	18/01/2011
Inspector	Susan Marriott
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 2010. She lives with her husband and child aged two years in a house in the Great Ashby area, to the north of Stevenage. The childminder uses the ground floor of the property for most childminding activities, although children sleep in an upstairs bedroom. Toilet facilities are available on both floors. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than two may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding two children in the early years age group. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed into this loving family environment where the childminder promotes most aspects of children's care and education in an appropriately inclusive manner. Each child is valued as a unique individual and children make good progress in their learning and development. Emergent observation and assessment systems are in place but these are not yet sufficiently linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage. The childminder builds strong relationships with parents to underpin children's welfare. She has begun to use self-evaluation as a process for identifying strengths and weaknesses in her provision to support continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhance the provision of multicultural equipment and develop activities to help young children understand that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs, that need to be treated with respect
- link planning and assessment and learning priorities to secure children's good progress towards the early learning goals, for example, through the use of the criteria in the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder is confident in her childcare practice and is well organised, ensuring that she can devote her time and attention to the children so that they are happy and purposefully occupied. Children's welfare is properly safeguarded by the childminder who has a good knowledge of local safeguarding procedures and related issues, ensuring that all household members have suitable vetting checks.

Comprehensive risk assessment is in place and effective action is taken to manage or eliminate risks for children. The childminder has devised a clear procedure for evacuating her home and this secures children's safety in an emergency situation. The childminding service is supported well by a mixture of written and verbal policies and procedures and all required written records.

The childminder's home is welcoming and resources are well organised and accessible. Children are able to easily access toys from a storage area in the living room, enabling them to make independent choices about their play. The wide range of toys and activities stimulate their learning, growth and development and there is usually some type of messy play available daily. For example, children explore dry pasta shells and develop their play by scooping them up using the building vehicles. A number of educational posters are displayed on the walls and children's work is displayed on a pin board. The childminder makes good use of community facilities such as the local children's centre, which provides various social groups, messy play and a toy library. The childminder has built up a network of minding friends and they meet up during week to share ideas and discuss any issues.

The childminder's satisfactory understanding of anti-discrimination means that she provides a service which is inclusive for all children and their families. She ensures that she understands each child's background, cultures and beliefs. Through her self-evaluation process, the childminder has already identified that she wishes to enhance her provision of multicultural equipment. She plans to develop projects to help young children understand that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs, which need to be treated with respect. The childminder has established self-evaluation procedures to support the continuous development of her practice and has begun to use the self-evaluation form in an effective way to drive and sustain continuous improvement.

The childminder has a good understanding of the importance of maintaining close links with other professionals involved with the children to promote consistent care. She talks with nursery staff at delivery and pick up times to this end. The childminder works well with parents in order to promote children's welfare and development. During the welcoming process the childminder has many conversations and children have 'taster sessions' to assist with the settling-in process. Daily diaries and e-mails keep parents and carers up to date on their child's progress. Children's development is recorded in the learning journals and discussed with parents on a regular basis. The childminder has recently joined the 'buggy buddies' scheme that encourages children to take a toy home with them, interact with their parents and report back what happened via a record book. Effective verbal communication strategies are being supplemented with formal questionnaires to gather the views of parents and carers. Children are involved in the planning of activities, seem to enjoy their time with the childminder and do not want to leave at the end of the day.

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

This newly-established childminder has a good knowledge of child development which she has developed over many years of working with children. She thrives on the challenges which children present and treats children with warmth and kindness, nurturing their development through play. She capably draws the learning from child-led interests and play, sustaining competent levels of interaction with the children which develops positive attitudes to learning. She offers a continuous commentary upon the daily routine. For example, whilst the children enjoy their snack, children notice a man climbing over the garden wall. The childminder reassures them that this is the window cleaner. She explains what he is doing and introduces new vocabulary, such as 'squeegee'. The childminder includes teaching about colours, numbers and shapes as she involves the children in play with toys of their choosing.

Children clearly enjoy the planned activities and the adult interaction because they include their parents in continuing the activity at home. For example, children have recently learnt about recycling. The childminder took them to the recycling centre to see what happens to rubbish. Children now help to recycle in the childminder's home and they have made up a game about recycling. As a result, children are learning the difference between paper, tin, card and glass and some children have persuaded their parents to start recycling at home. The childminder finds that having a variety of activities to hand on a consistent theme helps to reinforce and consolidate learning whilst maintaining children's interests. For example, when learning colours children use paints, two sets of counters for matching the same colours and playing a game called 'Can you find something which is yellow?'

The childminder uses planning and assessment as a generally effective tool to help children learn and achieve. She uses her observations of children's learning to understand their current levels of achievement and amend their planning accordingly. The childminder monitors children's progress in their learning journals. She makes quick notes and completes planned observations, recording any milestone achievements. Observations are noted under the six areas of learning, but are insufficiently linked to the criteria in the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage to actively promote children's progress towards the early learning goals.

Children are becoming aware of healthy lifestyles and the relevance of hygiene practices. Ongoing discussions mean that young children understand the importance of daily practices such as washing their hands before snacks and meals. Robust documentation is maintained relating to accidents, medication and incidents and clear procedures are in place, protecting the children's health and well-being. The children learn about keeping safe inside and outside of the home. Children's behaviour is managed very well and effective strategies ensure their social, physical and economic well-being are met.

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	3
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	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	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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