

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	17/02/2011
Inspector	Hilary Preece
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 partner, one adult child and another aged 12 years in Royston, Hertfordshire. The whole ground floor of the house is used for childminding and there is an enclosed garden available for outside play. The childminder walks to local schools and pre-schools to take and collect children. The family has a pet dog and a rabbit.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range. There are currently four children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder also offers care to children aged over five years. She is registered on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory 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 satisfactory.

A sound knowledge of each child and effective partnerships with parents ensure children's needs are met well overall. Most policies and procedures effectively keep children safe and secure. However, welfare requirements are not fully understood and regulations not met. Children are happy, settled and appear to make steady progress in their learning and development given their starting points. There is a commitment to improvement although arrangements for evaluating the provision do not identify the most urgent priorities for development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- maintain a record of the risk assessment that identifies aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis indicating when and by whom they have been checked (Suitable premises, environment and equipment).
- 31/03/2011

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

- ensure there is up-to-date understanding of safeguarding children issues and how to implement the safeguarding policy and procedure appropriately
- develop more rigorous self-evaluation systems to assess what the setting offers against robust and challenging quality criteria such as the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and Practice Guidance

- develop more systematic observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles to identify learning priorities and match them to the expectations of the early learning goals.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding children are adequate. The childminder has a documented safeguarding procedure based upon the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance but her understanding of it is not entirely secure. However, she would not hesitate to seek appropriate advice if she had any concerns about a child. The childminder supervises children closely and protects them by ensuring all adults on the premises are vetted. She keeps children safe within the home by minimising risks and reports that regular risk assessments of the premises and equipment are made. Records to show when and by whom these are carried out are not maintained and this means regulations are not fully met. More effective arrangements exist to ensure children are kept safe on outings because she maintains comprehensive records showing when and how risk assessments are carried out and reviewed. Children's health needs are managed safely and in discussion with parents.

Effective partnerships with parents contribute to ensuring the needs of individual children are met. She facilitates good levels of communication with them in order for both parties to share information. Parents report that they are kept well informed because the childminder is always available for discussion and uses a daily diary to fill them in about daily routines and care. Information about the provision is given to parents initially and questionnaires are used to gather feedback from them to maintain good working partnerships. Specific arrangements are made to ensure the needs of all children are taken into account. Those with special educational needs, disabilities or from ethnic minorities are supported and their needs fully respected. The childminder acts as a link between other early years settings that children attend and there is a degree of communication with them which aids continuity of care and learning.

The childminder clearly enjoys her work and has developed her skills and knowledge by completing a number of training workshops since her last inspection. She has reasonable expectations and standards in wanting the children to be settled, secure and enjoy their time with her. She has only recently begun to think about self-evaluation so arrangements are not entirely effective in identifying priorities for development. Basic levels of monitoring are used to ensure children's needs are met but these do not extend to all elements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. There have been no significant changes or improvements made to the provision for some time. Nonetheless, she continues to provide a welcoming, bright and accessible play room for the children and makes good use of local resources to extend opportunities for children's learning and development.

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

Children are content and settled. The childminder focuses particularly on ensuring children feel comfortable and develop good relationships and social skills. They relate well to the childminder and clearly enjoy the company of other children as they talk about those that are not present today. Babies' individual care needs are met well. They wake with a smile and happily explore their surroundings and observe other children playing. Children understand behaviour expectations and respond positively to praise and encouragement. They are reminded that they must sit still on a big chair so they do not fall off, and consistent reinforcement of road safety rules on outings helps children develop awareness of keeping themselves safe. Children understand basic hygiene practices such as washing their hands at appropriate times and have personal care needs attended to. Healthy lifestyles are suitably encouraged by providing children with fresh fruit for their snacks and discussions about which foods are better for their health. They take regular exercise and fresh air as they mostly walk when out and about and age-appropriate equipment is used in the garden to develop physical skills. Babies are encouraged to crawl and develop confidence in movement by enticing them to reach out for toys or equipment.

The childminder supports children's learning and development by providing sufficient interest and challenge to engage children in meaningful play. She allows children to follow their interests and gently guides and extends their language, thinking and ideas. For example, she encourages children who particularly enjoy imaginative play to act out shopping and cooking role play situations. They experiment with dressing up in a variety of costumes and confidently explore the range of resources. Everything is easily accessible because low-level storage is used to encourage children to become confident and make independent choices in their play. Photographs of all the children and art work displayed on the play room wall develop children's self-esteem and positive self-image.

The childminder is developing observations of children to show what they have achieved and how she can build on their achievements. These demonstrate that children make steady progress in some areas of learning such as physical and creative development. However, identified next steps for individual children are not specifically linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and so it is difficult to monitor and track children's progress towards the early learning goals. Observations are not used in a systematic way to monitor children's learning across all six areas of learning.

Nonetheless, children enjoy suitable activities which promote appropriate levels of skills needed for future learning. They enjoy choosing stories, singing number rhymes and using flash cards and so begin to become familiar with numbers and letters. They use some simple technology in their play including interactive toys, telephones and cash tills. They become aware of the natural world and things around them on outings to the park and walks such as talking about the birds, the sun or the traffic. There are some opportunities for children to grow cress seeds and sunflowers. They begin to develop understanding of the wider world through

sharing stories about African cultures and children are encouraged to share what they know with others about their own cultural backgrounds. For example, a child teaches others some words in their second language and provides a traditional costume for dressing up. Children experiment with mark making by doing hand prints in paint and describe the feel of it on their hands. They enjoy colouring, drawing and using simple tools and materials to create collage pictures.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
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	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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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