

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY359632
Inspection date	01/03/2011
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
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 was registered in 2007. She lives with her husband and three children aged 11, 10 and six in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The childminder is able to take and collect children from local schools and pre-schools.

The childminder provides care on each weekday during term-time and school holidays. She is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of three children in the early years age range and is currently minding four children in this age group, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. She also offers care to children aged over five years and this provision is registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. There is currently one child on roll in this age group.

The childminder holds the Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education Level 3 Diploma in Home-based Childcare. She currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder works exceptionally well with parents and carries out thorough assessments of children's progress. This ensures that children's needs are consistently met and they are offered appropriate support and activities that promote their learning. Key strengths are the childminder's attention to detail with regard to children's safety and well-being and her excellent procedures for working with other professionals. Children therefore play in a safe, secure environment and their welfare is consistently promoted. The childminder implements thorough self-evaluation procedures, giving her a clear overview of her work and supporting her in implementing ongoing improvements and thereby offering a service which is responsive to children's needs.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the daily opportunities for children to gain an increased understanding of the importance of keeping healthy and those things which contribute to this.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is prioritised and is very well promoted because the childminder has an excellent understanding of her responsibilities relating to safeguarding children. This is supported by practical written procedures and a wealth of additional information, enabling her to identify children at risk and take immediate action. The childminder ensures that all suitability checks have been completed for household members, further promoting children's welfare. Exceptionally comprehensive risk assessments and thorough daily safety checks ensure that children's safety is well considered and promoted at all times. Children gain an excellent understanding of safety issues. For example, they learn about fire safety as they practise the emergency evacuation procedures, participating in child-friendly quizzes, which gently reinforce their understanding.

The childminder demonstrates a genuine enjoyment of her work and attends further training to support the development of her practice. She is committed to continuously reviewing this and to making changes that improve the outcomes for children. For example, recent changes include improvements to the short-term activity planning, which help the childminder to plan appropriate activities to further promote children's individual development. The childminder's good use of resources means that she is able to offer children a wide range of opportunities. For example, she uses community facilities, such as parks, a toddler group and the library.

The childminder has thorough procedures to obtain information from parents, supporting her in gaining a full understanding of each child's needs, culture and beliefs. She uses this knowledge when planning activities and to ensure that children are meaningfully included. The childminder's exceptionally positive relationships with parents and carers facilitate the exchange of information and mean that parents are fully informed of their children's progress and activities. For example, they receive regular newsletters and detailed daily updates in the communication diaries. The childminder also provides information about the current activities and themes so that parents can continue these at home. Consistency of care is further promoted to a high standard as the childminder has established purposeful working relationships with others providing care for the children. For example, she exchanges information with the nurseries attended by some of the children, so that they can work together to ensure that children are offered consistent support and activities that promote their development.

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

Children make good progress in all areas of learning because the childminder has a thorough knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She observes children as they play, assessing their progress and using this information to inform the planning of activities, thereby promoting children's individual development. The childminder's thoughtful attention to detail ensures that her home is safe and

children's behaviour demonstrates that they feel secure in this environment. They independently select resources and readily include the childminder in their play. They are therefore encouraged to take an active part in their learning and are developing positive attitudes towards this.

The childminder is flexible, encouraging children to explore the resources and develop their own play. They are well supported in this because the childminder joins in appropriately and further promotes their development. For example, when young children choose to play with wooden dolls, the childminder allows them time to explore these before encouraging them to count them into the container. The childminder's good interaction with children enhances their play and promotes their development. For example, young children choosing a favourite book are captivated as the childminder reads and sings to them, encouraging them to name the items illustrated and to learn new vocabulary. Children's learning is further promoted as the childminder makes use of incidental learning opportunities. For example, children learn about sustainability as they help sort out items to recycle, playing a 'recycling game' to reinforce their understanding.

The childminder's clear planning means that children are offered a wide range of activities and play opportunities. For example, their knowledge of living things and their environment is promoted as they help tend vegetables in the garden and enjoy woodland walks, where they collect leaves to make collages and leaf prints. Good planning and organisation also mean that children are offered additional opportunities. For example, they participate in specialist music sessions and enjoy visits to the farm and local places of interest. The childminder makes appropriate use of children's individual interests to help promote their development. For example, after noting that children like trains, the childminder extends their early reading and problem-solving skills by introducing associated books and counting games.

Children's emotional development is promoted and they gain skills for the future as they are supported in developing appropriate relationships with the childminder and their peers. The childminder acts as a good role model, remaining calm and polite and showing respect for all. Children mirror this and are therefore supported in gaining a respect and appreciation for others. Their knowledge of diversity and the world around them is promoted as they access relevant resources and participate in specific activities. For example, they engage in craft activities to celebrate a range of festivals and enjoy singing and reading in French. The childminder's excellent procedures for working with parents mean that she is able to offer appropriate support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

Children are offered regular opportunities to be active and explore a range of physical skills. Activities such as participating in action rhymes and using large play equipment in the park and garden help children develop skills such as control and co-ordination. Appropriate daily practice helps to develop children's awareness of healthy lifestyles. For example, they wash their hands before eating, referring to child-friendly posters to help reinforce their understanding. However, their wider understanding of the relevance of daily health practices, such as healthy eating and the importance of exercise, is not fully promoted. Children of all ages learn

about the uses of information and communication technology and therefore gain further skills for the future. For example, young children use age-appropriate computers and a digital camera.

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	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	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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