

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	23/02/2011
Inspector	Elaine Poulton
Type of setting	Childminder

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E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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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 2004. She lives with her family in a property in Lichfield, Staffordshire. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's home is used for childminding, with use of the upstairs bathroom and one of the bedrooms. There is a garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time and is currently minding three children in the early years age range and one child under eight on a part-time basis. She is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register.

The childminder walks to local schools to take and collect children. The childminder attends local carer and toddler groups. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Most children are making significant gains in their learning and development because they thoroughly enjoy their time with the provider. She has a secure knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage but observations are not always fully effective to inform planning. The childminder has good relationships with parents to secure knowledge of children's individual and needs. Most policies, procedures and permissions are in place to support her practice. Systems to monitor and evaluate practice are in their infancy but the childminder demonstrates the capacity and professionalism to secure better outcomes for children and for continual improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- clarify information obtained from parents regarding who has legal contact with the child and who has parental responsibility for the child
- improve the organisation of the setting by developing the use of self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- develop observations further to consistently make links to the 'Development Matters' prompts to plan the next steps in a child's developmental progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder knows of her responsibility to ensure continued suitability and that all people living in the house are vetted. She demonstrates a secure understanding of her role and responsibilities in safeguarding and the procedures she must follow if she were to have a concern about a child in her care. The childminder maintains a written risk assessment, carries out regular emergency evacuations of the premises and holds a current paediatric first aid certificate. All of these measures positively promote children's safety and welfare in the setting. Most of the policies, procedures and permissions in place are clear and support good practice. Not all details obtained from parents are recorded in a consistent manner. However, the childminder knows the children's families and home circumstances well and updates forms on a regular basis. There is a good settling in procedure in place and this helps younger children feel comfortable and secure in her home and with her family. Children are prompted to pick up toys from the floor and to help tidy away resources after use to keep the floor space free from tripping hazards. This helps children to develop their understanding of keeping themselves and others safe.

There is a good range of resources and equipment that are available for all children to use. Children's independence and freedom of choice is enhanced owing to toys and games being easily accessible, thoughtfully stored and well presented. This enables all children to make suitable choices and decisions in their play. The childminder provides ample opportunities for children to access a varied range of activities, 'small world' resources and books to support their developing awareness of other people's differences and similarities.

The childminder maintains good relationships with parents which in turn enhances children's individual care, learning and development. She communicates well with parents through many effective ways such as discussions, photographs in profiles, questionnaires and daily diaries. The childminder actively promotes equal opportunities, ensuring that all children and their families feel welcome, valued, included and safe. Letters received from parents are complementary and include positive comments such as 'We observed the easy transition to day care and to the childminders family centred approach, our child enjoys good routines varied activities and interaction with other children'. The childminder understands the importance of developing effective relationships with other professionals, agencies and providers who promote and deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. This in turn promotes consistency and continuity of care and learning for children during the transition from one setting to another.

The childminder informally considers what she does well and what she needs to improve. Systems for reflective practice are still in their infancy and do not effectively identify strengths and priorities for improvement in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She identifies her strengths as being well organised, being fair with setting boundaries for children, having a good settling in procedure and keeping on top of paperwork. She believes her areas for improvement are linked to recording observations.

She has fully addressed the three recommendations from the last inspection. For example, she now has a fully stocked first aid kit. Furthermore she has had the fence panel in the rear garden repaired and also has obtained written parental consent for seeking any necessary emergency medical treatment or advice. She has recently attended training sessions on safeguarding and paediatric first aid and she is working towards an appropriate early years qualification to level 3. This demonstrates a good commitment and professional approach to continual improvement.

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

Most children make consistently good progress in their learning and development because the childminder plans and organises a range of purposeful play experiences and activities. Most observations and assessments link to the early learning goals but do not always support effective planning. The childminder exchanges information with parents with regard to children's individual interests. Digital photographs capture planned and spontaneous learning activities in the setting. They are also used with effect in individual learning profiles to document children's progress and achievements.

Children make significant gains in their learning because they relish their time with the childminder. They are extremely confident, active and inquisitive learners because the childminder is skilled in asking open-ended questions and enhances children's communication skills and extends their thinking. Younger children's speech and language skills are well supported as they play because the childminder is on hand to model language and encourage their listening and communication skills. Older children are helped with recognising letters, words and sounds through activities and discussions. The childminder actively encourages children to be creative and to solve problems. For example, she encourages them to look at the picture on a forty-five piece jigsaw box to give them 'clues as to where the pieces go'. They are encouraged to find all the 'straight edged pieces that go around the outside'. They concentrate for long periods of time working independently on tasks. Children benefit greatly from a stimulating and challenging range of resources at their disposal and the child-friendly environment that helps them to feel welcome and secure. Resources are developmentally appropriate and include those that help children to develop an awareness of themselves and others. The childminder is mindful that when there are adverse weather conditions, she ensures that children are provided with plenty of opportunities to be active. For example, children benefit from a range of outings and activities outside the home such as visits to local play centres. They are happy to approach the childminder for reassurance and support. Affection is freely given and children relish their special one-to-one time with the childminder. They have lots of fun together and laugh when they make a joke that is funny. Children enjoy easy access to puzzles, imaginative role play resources, calculators and a range of battery operated toys that react when various buttons are pressed. Hence, most children are making rapid progress because they are fully involved in their learning. They are also developing skills for the future.

The childminder encourages good behaviour through gentle prompts and reminders that she gives during play activities. Children are learning to play well together, share and take turns and their behaviour is skilfully managed. The childminder sets realistic boundaries that children understand. This enables all children to be treated fairly and to learn to consider the needs of others.

Children's good health is well promoted. They engage in regular physical activity both indoors and outside. Children have good opportunities to come into contact with the outdoor environment and the natural world around them through walks and outings into the local community. Hygiene routines are thorough and routinely reinforced through discussion and everyday practice. Younger children's sleep and rest time routine closely mirror those of home. Children's dietary needs and preferences are met because parents provide food for mealtimes. The childminder encourages healthy eating as she provides snacks and drinks during the day. She praises children for eating healthily. This contributes toward children leading a healthy lifestyle.

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	3
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	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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