

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	24/02/2011
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.

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 2001 and holds several relevant childcare qualifications. She lives with her husband and four children aged 16, 14, 10 and 2 years, in a house in the Wootton Fields area of Northampton. The childminder uses the ground floor of the property for childminding activities and toilet facilities are also available on the ground floor. The family has a pet rabbit, a cat and a dog. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five 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 13 children in total, three of whom are 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 Northamptonshire Childminding Association Network and is a member of the 'Children Come First' quality assurance scheme.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The childminder demonstrates a highly professional and committed approach to her role and has enthusiastically embraced the essence of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She continuously applies expertise gained from her experience and extensive training to her daily practice and this enables her to offer an excellent standard of care and education to the children. Children clearly thrive and make rapid progress in this well-organised domestic environment where their uniqueness and individuality is truly recognised. The provider meets the diverse needs of children and ensures that children participate in all activities in a fully inclusive way. Through her passionate commitment, dedication and rigorous reflective practice, she demonstrates an outstanding ability to identify strengths and weaknesses, enabling the continuous enhancement of daily care and learning experiences for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- enhancing the range of activities to help young children understand that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs, that need to be treated with respect.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children enjoy an exceptionally high quality of care and education in this welcoming family home setting, supported by extremely well-researched, organised and individualised policies, procedures and records. The childminder demonstrates an extremely good understanding of the procedures regarding the safeguarding of children and a very high level of commitment to promoting children's safety. This is robustly secured by the childminder's attendance at training courses. She ensures that she obtains appropriate vetting checks for all relevant members of the household. There is a very clear complaints procedure and extensive risk assessment which is carefully recorded, consistently monitored and regularly reviewed. Exceptionally well thought through procedures are in place to maintain high standards of children's safety on a daily basis, in emergency situations and when on outings. Domestic safety measures are in place and fire evacuation plans are practised regularly with the children. Consequently, dangers are substantially minimised and children's safety is robustly secured.

The childminder is using a wide variety of resources in the home and in the community to ensure that children are learning in all six areas of learning and this is delivered through planned and purposeful play. A strong commitment is shown to inclusive practice and the childminder is skilled in including each child in the activities according to their ability. She has a good range of toys, books and equipment which reflect differences and promotes children's awareness of diversity through activities such as cooking, creative work and stories. The childminder has already identified this aspect of practice as an area for further improvement and has plans to develop the range of activities to help young children understand that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs, which need to be treated with respect.

Partnership working is well established. The childminder meets with school and pre-school staff to ensure smooth transition planning. She meets with the children's key person at pre-school to ensure goals are being met and attends social events. She works in partnership with parents to support children's speech and language needs. The childminder has outstanding partnerships with parents and carers. Robust documentation, policies and procedures ensure a positive start to the contract and the childminder keeps parents and carers well informed of their children's progress through daily diaries and regular discussions. Parents state that they never have to worry about their children's welfare and comment that their children love coming each day and seeing and playing with the other children. Parents report that the childminder provides more than they would expect from a childminder and would not hesitate to recommend her to friends.

The childminder demonstrates an infectious enthusiasm for her work and is highly motivated to make changes that drive improvement and improve the outcomes for children. She ensures that she keeps up-to-date with relevant training requirements by liaising with the local authority and professional organisations. She reads professional publications such as 'Who Minds' and liaises with other practitioners in the area through childminding groups and the local childminding

network. The childminder regularly attends regular training courses to promote ongoing development and support further improvement in her practice. The childminder uses her self-evaluation form as a working document to secure her outstanding capacity to improve. Following the last inspection, the childminder has embraced self-evaluation to develop her practice further. She now sets targets for improvement, draws up an action plan with timescales in which to achieve her aims and consistently identifies aspects of the provision for enhancement. This process has had a significant impact on the quality of provision for children. Recent improvements include the refining of planning, the introduction of new 'getting to know me' forms, and the use of a tracker to note children's starting points and to show their development through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Now that building work is complete, the childminder is able to plan activities for children to be involved with growing some vegetables to teach them about growth and promote an awareness of healthy eating.

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

Children and parents are placed at the very centre of this childminding setting. Emphasis is placed upon children having fun in this friendly and stimulating environment in which children feel safe and secure. The childminder always gives priority to the children, having a meticulously detailed knowledge of them as individuals and their interests. She talks with them continuously, skilfully exploiting the opportunities presented by child-led play to develop their learning. For example, after a planned printing activity using alphabet letters, children further explore the foam alphabet letters as they wash up. The childminder explains that these are capital letters rather than lower case letters which are more familiar. She helps them find 'M' for 'mummy' and gently talks about initial sounds, setting little challenges. For example, she asks 'Can you find the letter for your name?' The childminder offers copious praise for their efforts and responds very readily to the children's requests to play in the green water left behind after washing the alphabet letters.

Resources are organised well in the playroom, accessible and support children in making independent choices about their play. The childminder makes very good use of community facilities and children visit outdoor parks, indoor playgrounds and go ten-pin bowling. Children gain lots of physical enjoyment outdoors in all weathers, and the childminder is currently improving her garden to enable children to use it all year round now that building works have been completed. Children actively help to care for the childminder's pets and learn to wash their hands after handling. The children enjoy taking the dog to the park for his daily walk and throwing his ball. They also regularly visit the farm with the childminder to help look after the family horse. The childminder provides foods from a variety of countries and ensures children are given lots of time learning about food and handling it. Children help to prepare their own snacks and lunch. Mealtimes are a sociable time when they eat at the dinner table and the young children learn from older children and join in the conversation.

Robust policies are implemented consistently to help to keep children safe.

Children are encouraged to regularly discuss how they are feeling through role play, story time and small world toys. Children learn about crossing the road safely through talking about crossings and cars when they are out and about with their childminder. Children are encouraged to make a positive contribution through praise and rewards. Good examples are set through story time, discussing feelings and adults and older children setting good examples. The childminder has an equal opportunities policy and makes every activity accessible for all children regardless of age or stage of development or ability.

Children are developing effective skills for the future and prepare for transition to school. They are able to make independent choices and sort out their play, sharing and playing together. The childminder listens to children. She gets down to their level, gives plenty of eye contact and effectively communicates with them. Children have daily access to the information and communication equipment including toy computers, laptops, safe internet access and a camera. Children are actively encouraged to help choose menus. Children help to choose items in the supermarket and put them in the trolley and cross them off the shopping list. Children are involved in the local community by using the local resources such as the park and 'rhyme time' at the library. For example, children bring library cards to change books and they took part in the reading challenge during the summer. Children learn about sharing and taking turns at the local toddler group which arranges crafts such as cooking, messy play and painting. Children are given opportunities for problem solving through planned activities and making use of unplanned opportunities that arise throughout the daily routine.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
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	1
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	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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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