

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	08/03/2011
Inspector	Pauline Pinnegar
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 2004. She lives with her husband and two children aged 12 years and nine years old in the residential area of Sedgefield, County Durham. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding. There is an enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder cares for children on weekdays from 8am to 6pm for 48 weeks of the year. The family has a pet hamster.

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 range. She currently has three children on roll who are in the early years range. The childminder also offers care to children aged over five years to 11 years and currently there are four children on roll in this age group. The childminder is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She escorts children to and from the local school and nursery and attends several community groups.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder provides a very warm and inclusive environment where children feel a strong sense of belonging. Their needs are met as the childminder establishes good relationships with parents, and shares relevant information ensuring consistency of care for all children is assured; however, links with others involved in the children's care are not fully embedded. Policies, procedures and required documentation are all in place and used effectively to ensure the safety and welfare of children. Children make good progress in their learning as they engage in a wide range of experiences both indoors and outside of the home, and the childminder is establishing mainly good systems for observations and tracking children's progress. The childminder demonstrates a genuine commitment to improving her own skills and has established an effective system of self-evaluation to enable her to monitor her service and identify clear targets for future development, helping to ensure continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the processes for observing and recording children's development and progress ensuring this links effectively with planning and includes activities for individual children's next steps
- promote effective continuity and progression by sharing relevant information about children's learning and development with other settings.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded because the childminder has a secure understanding of child protection procedures. She is knowledgeable about the possible signs of abuse and has a clear understanding of what to do in the event of a concern. There is a robust safeguarding policy in place that is shared with parents. This means that they are made aware of her role and responsibilities in protecting children from harm. Effective vetting procedures are in place to ensure that adults in the household are suitable to be in contact with the children. The childminder is well organised and all required documentation is accurately maintained and stored safely. Children's play opportunities are maximised through the effective organisation of space, time and resources. The environment is bright, attractive and well resourced with a wide variety of good quality toys and equipment. Children can move freely between different areas of the house safely exploring their environment. They are introduced to, and become actively involved in, community groups as well as regular visits to the parks. This also helps to broaden children's range of experiences and supports their social skills and awareness of the wider world around them. The childminder is taking appropriate steps to ensure her provision and environment is sustainable. Children regularly re-cycle materials to make models and she also uses her local library for different books related to planning. The childminder completes thorough written risk assessments to ensure that hazards to children are kept to a minimum indoors, outdoors and for trips and outings, as a result, the safety of the children is further enhanced.

The childminder demonstrates a genuine commitment to promoting better outcomes for children. For example, since her last inspection she has attended several workshops relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage, and has completed a Level 3 certificate in Children's Care Learning and Development, a Cache Level 3 Diploma in Home Based Childcare and various other childcare related training courses. Systems for self-evaluation are effective with the childminder being able to identify her strengths and weaknesses well. She is passionate about the children in her care and gains written feedback from parents to give her an optimal view of the service she provides. She ensures that children have a variety of experiences that will enable them to progress in their learning. She also seeks further support and advice from other childminders within her network and her local authority. She has fully addressed the recommendations from the last inspection and this contributes significantly to improving outcomes for children.

The childminder works closely with parents to ensure children's individual welfare needs are met. She has effective systems in place to share information with parents. The childminder talks to parents before children attend her setting in order to find out about their children's individual needs and any relevant information relating to their children, such as special people in their lives and their favourite things. She speaks to them on a daily basis and parents receive copies of policies and procedures to make sure they are fully informed and of the experiences their children have enjoyed. Thereafter, daily discussions and written communication diaries keep parents informed of their child's progression towards

the early learning goals. Parents are able to take home their child's learning and development profile, and are actively encouraged to contribute to the records. They are very happy with the care the childminder provides and describe her as 'a very professional person who inspires confidence with parents' and 'she is very reliable and highly recommended. The childminder understands the need to build links with other practitioners, where a child receives education and care in more than one setting, to ensure continuity and cohesion. However, systems are not yet fully effective in this area for children who attend nursery and full time school.

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

Children relish their time with the childminder and the many skills they need in future life are being successfully developed. Through meaningful everyday experiences and general play children are making good progress in all areas of learning. The childminder knows their individual needs and personalities well and thoughtfully plans experiences that interest them. Children benefit from individual books which include examples of their work, photographs and observations which are linked to the areas of learning. The childminder clearly knows the children well and identifies their next steps in learning; however, it is not clear to see how these are used to inform future planning for individual children. The childminder promotes children's independence and confidence by ensuring that toys and resources are organised so that they can help themselves, allowing them to make choices about their play. She provides an inclusive environment where each child is valued and their individual needs are considered. Their efforts are consistently praised, which enhances children's self-esteem and confidence. Children behave well and are developing an understanding of what is right and wrong. They are learning to share, take turns and show care and concern for each other. They follow the sensible house rules established to promote safe behaviour and respond happily to gentle reminders when these are needed. The childminder has introduced a 'traffic lights' system in order to promote positive behaviour. Children are learning to be safe outside the home as they practise road safety on outings. They play floor games designed by the childminder and practise the emergency evacuation procedure. This helps children to develop an understanding of how to keep safe.

Children are developing a suitable awareness of the wider world and this is fostered in a range of ways. For example, children have access to books and puzzles that show positive images of diversity, and participate in some activities inspired by religious and cultural festivals. The childminder helps children to learn about the environment as they visit groups, the library and places of local interest such as the local country park. In this way the childminder uses natural opportunities to help children learn and explore wildlife. For example, newts, birds and ladybirds, the effects of the weather, and collecting natural resources for their creative work. The childminder has a calm and warm manner and children receive plenty of affection and a good level of interaction. She encourages young children's language and communication skills through speaking clearly, asking them

questions and introducing new words. Children enjoy easy access to a wide range of books including 'story sacks' and very young children particularly enjoy 'touchy feely' books. Their creative development is well supported as they use a range of media, such as paint, crayons and messy play. Children love to explore and investigate with a range of 'cause and effect' toys. They delight in pressing the buttons and listening to the different sounds. This helps them to develop skills for the future.

Children's health and well-being are well promoted because the childminder is a positive role model and helps children learn through daily routines. For example, children are beginning to understand why good hygiene and personal care routines are important to promote their good health and welfare. The childminder provides a selection of nutritious snacks and talks to children about the importance of having a healthy balanced daily diet. Children are given time to explore and practise new skills and begin to understand the importance of being healthy and active. Children's physical skills are enhanced as they access a range of play equipment in the garden and at local groups. Healthy snacks and drinks are provided by the childminder and highlight the importance of making healthy choices. Children explore healthy eating as they take part in cooking activities as they help to prepare banana bread. They plant and nurture tomatoes and strawberries in the garden. The childminder's good relationship with parents and her effective procedures ensure children are cared for appropriately when ill. This reduces the risk of the spread of infection. All relevant documentation with regard to health, including specific dietary needs and consent forms, is in place and up to date. These positively safeguard children's well-being.

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	2
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	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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