

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY350287
Inspection date	16/03/2011
Inspector	Anna Davies
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 2007. She lives with her husband and child aged four years in a township just to the south of Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The house is within walking distance of local amenities such as schools, the library, toddler groups, shops and parks. The family has a pet dog.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years register as well as the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She 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 two children in this age group. She also offers care to children aged over five years.

The childminder is working towards the Early Years and Childcare Quality Framework and is a member of an approved childminding network.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder offers a very safe, secure and welcoming environment in which all children clearly enjoy their time and their development is consistently promoted. She develops a positive relationship with parents, seeking and taking account of their views in order to provide a flexible service and to meet all children's needs. All of the required documentation is in place to promote children's welfare, and systems for observing and assessing children's development are well established.

Through successfully self-evaluating her practice, the childminder has a clear picture of her strengths and areas for further development. She demonstrates a firm willingness, commitment and enthusiasm towards continually developing her practice to ensure the best possible outcomes for the children she cares for.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- gather more in-depth information about children's starting points when they start so that the good progress they make can be clearly demonstrated
- consider ways to effectively use information given by parents about what they know their children can do, to further enhance assessment arrangements.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures ensure that children are exceptionally well protected at all times. For example, the childminder has an excellent understanding of child protection and has the required contact numbers and literature in place for dealing with concerns should they arise. The childminder uses clear and practical procedures such as daily safety checks and robust risk assessments for continuously monitoring and reappraising the environment. Therefore, hazards are minimised and children can move around freely and with confidence. For example, the childminder has secured temporarily uneven kitchen tiles with matting to prevent children tripping. The childminder ensures that the children's safety is her main priority and this is extended to activities outside of the house. For example, when out and about children wear fun back-packs with a strap attached so that the childminder can hold onto them whilst walking near lakes or roads. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures further help to secure and underpin children's safety and welfare.

The childminder provides a fully inclusive service; she has a clear knowledge about the individual children she cares for based on information gathered from parents and her own observations. She has carefully considered how she would provide effective support for children who speak English as an additional language. Children's individual development is well promoted because the childminder has effective procedures in place to support, monitor and evaluate their progress and plan for their future learning. The childminder is aware of her limited space to store toys and resources and continues to look at ways to ensure that children are able to make as many independent choices as they can about what they wish to play with. Toys are of good quality and condition and children tell the childminder what toys they wish to use and these are got out in the lounge for them. A story corner has been developed in response to one child's specific interest in books; this provides a comfy and welcoming area for all children to read and share stories. Children's artwork, photographs of past activities and images reflecting diversity, all ensure that children enjoy an inclusive and welcoming setting and are able to feel a strong sense of belonging.

A good relationship exists between the childminder and parents. This is evident from written feedback seen at inspection. For example, one comments that their child is 'loved and cared for as he would be at home' and that there is a 'relaxed and happy' atmosphere. Parents also appreciate the close relationship that the childminder and their children have with other local childminder's which provides continuity of care in the event that the childminder is ill. Organised social events such as a Christmas party enable parents, children and childminders to mix and build good relationships with each other. A comprehensive welcome pack gives parents a wealth of information about the childminder's service. The childminder communicates regularly with parents about their child's day and also records this in a daily diary. She has started to send home children's assessment files which includes information about children's next steps so that parents can support these aspects of learning at home. Parents talk to the childminder generally about their children's learning and development. However, these ongoing contributions from

parents about what they know about their child, are not evidenced in children's files in order to further enhance assessment procedures. Although the childminder does not currently care for any children attending other settings, she has been proactive in setting up clear information sharing systems for when the need arises. This will ensure a consistent experience for these children.

The childminder has a clear vision about providing high quality care for children with education built in through play and outings. The childminder clearly loves her job and is committed to attending training courses to keep her knowledge refreshed and up-to-date. She is currently looking at how to best attend further courses of interest whilst causing minimal disruption for parents. There are clear systems of self-evaluation in place demonstrating that the childminder is fully aware of her strengths and areas she wishes to develop. She has a positive attitude towards making changes that further enhance the already very good quality of care that she offers to children and their families.

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

Children are offered a good range of opportunities that support them in making secure progress across all areas of learning. This includes activities at the childminder's home, activities in the outdoor environment, at local groups and at other childminder's houses. The childminder skilfully supports learning, stepping back when appropriate during free play activities to allow children to explore and develop independence skills. For example, as children try to do up the restraints on their toy pushchairs, the childminder shows them how to do it, then steps back and enables the children to take their time in clicking the restraint into place, before praising their efforts when they succeed. The childminder asks open-ended questions such as 'what can you see?' and 'where are we going?' as children play with a toy bus. This promotes discussion and enables children to share and express their ideas. She makes good use of opportunities to encourage children to solve problems. For example, she asks 'are you going to strap him in or put his blanket on first?' as they take their doll for a walk. As children develop new fine motor skills trying to twist the top off an object, she offers effective support, for example, showing them where to place each hand and how to twist with their fingers. Children's language is developing well as the childminder talks to children at their level, responds to their chat and uses clear, simple language which children repeat.

Systems for observing and assessing children's learning are well established. Each child has an assessment file containing a variety of evidence to demonstrate the progress children are making. For example, regular observations are recorded covering all of the areas of learning. Next steps are identified and used to inform the planning and support of activities. A clear record is kept of these so that the childminder can monitor when and how these have been achieved. However, starting points are not evidenced to demonstrate the progress children have made whilst in the childminder's care. Children's individual interests are well supported which means that activities are meaningful for them. Planning is flexible so that spontaneous opportunities for learning can be used effectively. For example, after

enjoying watching worms wriggling on the ground, the childminder supports children in looking on the internet for pictures and information and sings songs using actions, pretending to move like worms.

Children behave very well and respond positively towards the childminder's gentle encouragement to share and use good manners. They spend long periods of time persevering during activities of their choosing and are clearly very happy and settled in the childminder's care. Children enjoy good opportunities to make marks. For example, they use chalks at an easel to draw a circular sun, before adding details such as eyes and a mouth. Children are becoming confident communicators as the younger ones repeat key words that the childminder uses and older children talk to the childminder about their ideas and thoughts. Print on posters and photograph displays around the childminder's home, encourage children to begin to understand that print carries meaning. Counting is filtered through into everyday activities and songs. Children use number language in their play. For example, younger children comment 'six, nine, ten' as they look at photographs, and older children use numbers in the correct sequence saying 'one, two, three, go'. Children are curious about things they observe. For example, they notice two blue plates before the childminder points out subtle differences such as that one is light blue and that the other is dark blue. They are beginning to learn about how things grow, such as pumpkins, and how to look at the soil to check whether they need watering or not. Further opportunities to grow seeds and tomatoes are being provided in the future. Children use a range of equipment to develop their early technology skills such as a computer, electronic toys and a digital camera to take their own photographs. Children have good opportunities to integrate in their local, diverse community and, in this way, experience different cultures and backgrounds. For example, children enjoyed watching local Chinese dragon dancing to celebrate the Chinese New Year. A good range of resources and images reflecting diversity are well used and displayed so that children receive positive messages about people's similarities and differences in their day-to-day play. All of these simple activities begin to lay secure foundations to support the children's future economic wellbeing.

Children enjoy regular activities to promote their physical health and development. For example, they enjoy many walks around the local area and lakes, walk the pet dog and visit the local gymnastic centre to use balance benches, boxes to jump from, ball pools and slides. The garden is well used and a barked area gives children a safe surface on which to use climbing equipment. Many local parks give children opportunities to challenge their physical skills. Children's creativity is promoted well through a good range of activities such as painting, gluing and cooking, as well as through role play and musical activities.

Children's welfare is consistently well promoted. Nappy changing procedures effectively reduce the risk of cross-contamination. For example, the childminder wears gloves and cleans the mat between changing two children. Parents make particular comment on the cleanliness of the house and the excellent food provision. The childminder works with parents with regard to the provision of food. She is happy for parents to provide their own but also happy to provide a good range of healthy, balanced and nutritional meals and snacks for children herself. Snack times are relaxed and social times where the childminder sits with the

children and they enjoy positive interaction and conversation. Children begin to understand about healthy lifestyles through activities such as sorting different foods into food groups and discussing healthy and less healthy choices. Children understand that they have to wipe their hands on a wet wipe before snack. At all other times, for example, after using the toilet, touching the pet dog, playing outside or before main meals, children wash their hands using running water and liquid soap. Young children spontaneously place their hand over their mouth when they cough, demonstrating that they are beginning to understand about personal hygiene. All documentation relating to the administration of any medication or recording of accidents when they occur, are kept appropriately, and these records are stored in children's individual files which ensures that confidentiality is maintained. Children show excellent safety awareness and recognise and understand how to keep themselves safe such as agreeing with the childminder that the best place to 'go faster' would be at the park later rather than in the lounge. Children are encouraged to tidy away toys so that they do not fall over and they discuss the consequences of this. They learn about road safety through activities, discussion and practice, and learn about seasonal changes relating to their safety such as not walking on the lakes when they freeze over in Winter. The childminder demonstrates a clear understanding of behaviour management, for example, calmly using age appropriate explanations such as 'look, we can have one each' to encourage children to share and respect one another.

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	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	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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