

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	04/03/2011
Inspector	Dianne Andrews
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 1994. She lives with her husband and five children aged 16, 13, eight, five and three in the Ashton Under Lyne area of Tameside. The ground floor rooms of the childminder's house are used when providing a care service. There is an enclosed garden for outside play. The family have a dog, two cats, two rabbits, a tortoise and some tropical fish.

The childminder is registered to provide care for a maximum of three children aged under eight years at any one time. She is currently caring for a total of five children within this age group who attend for a variety of sessions. She is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The childminder has a relevant childcare qualification and is a member of the local Childminding Network.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The childminder has an exceptional understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She uses this and her extensive knowledge of each child to ensure that their needs are consistently met and that they are offered a vast range of activities that very successfully promote their welfare and learning. The childminder's admirable professional approach to her work enables parents to feel confident in her. Excellent procedures support the exchange of relevant information about children and promote the provision of consistent care and support. The childminder diligently reviews her work and has a very positive approach to self-evaluation; she has outstanding vision and commitment to continuously improve, using training, reflective practice and quality assurance tools.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- developing risk assessments to cover all activities children take part in.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and practised effectively to ensure that children are very well protected. The childminder's excellent knowledge and understanding of signs and symptoms of abuse and her awareness of her role in protecting the children in her care ensures that their welfare is safeguarded. She fully recognises her responsibility to ensure all adults who have access to the children are suitable and have completed appropriate checks. Children's safety is enhanced by the exceptional organisation of the setting and is

very effectively considered in all areas, without limiting children's access to exciting learning opportunities. However, the recorded risk assessments do not cover all activities children undertake. The childminder proactively uses risk assessments to minimise hazards. She completes a 'risk assessment update book' to add unforeseen circumstances, such as adverse weather conditions or building work, noting additional action taken to keep children safe in these circumstances.

The childminder successfully manages daily routines effectively to accommodate the individual needs of the children attending. The environment is utilised to its full potential to provide children with choices about where and with what they wish to play. Children play a dynamic role in their learning. They eagerly develop their play as they spontaneously take their learning outside to the open air environment; they use both areas particularly well to extend activities. Children clearly benefit and thrive as a result of the setting they are in. Furniture, equipment and resources are of high quality and support children's learning and development exceedingly well. Through grant funding the childminder has provided a range of new, innovative equipment, such as a gazebo to provide shade and promote children's good health in the garden; audio resources and a dark den along with accessories to promote their understanding and use of information technology.

The childminder is very experienced, highly motivated and totally committed to providing a high level of care and education to ensure the best possible outcomes for children. She is passionate about training, using all opportunities to update her knowledge and expertise and to enhance her excellent practice. She implements ideas she gains through training to offer the best opportunities for children's development in all areas.

The childminder treats each child as an individual and has an admirable awareness of issues relating to anti-discriminatory practice. This supports her in providing a service which is inclusive for all children and their families. Her thorough procedures for gathering information about children mean that she gains an excellent understanding of each child's background and needs. This enables her to plan very relevant activities and to ensure that children are always offered superb personalised support. Children feel valued and their self-esteem is promoted because they are encouraged to understand and respect each other and are fully involved in decision making and activity planning.

An informative notice board at the entrance to the setting provides parents and visitors with a wealth of information about the provision. The childminder's highly positive relationships with parents supports the exchange of relevant information and means that parents are fully informed of their children's progress and activities. They relish the opportunity to see regularly updated photographs of their children at play.

Consistency is promoted very well as the childminder has established purposeful working relationships with others involved in the care and education of the children. For example, she has clear procedures for exchanging information with the school and pre-school so that she can provide complementary activities and they can work together to ensure that children are offered consistent support. She works extensively with outside agencies to meet the individual learning and

development needs of children in her care.

The childminder sets high standards for the quality of care she offers. She demonstrates a genuine enjoyment of her work and is highly motivated to further develop her practice and, thereby, improve the outcomes for children. She is proactive in working towards awards, such those to acknowledge the quality of the provision. She also uses her experience of external organisations' evaluation systems, actively seeks feedback from parents and children and attends an array of additional training in order to inform the evaluation of her practice. Her rigorous and honest approach and her positive attitude to feedback enable her to identify changes and prioritise areas for improvement. All improvements are directly related to her earnest desire to provide a service which is continuously evolving to meet children's needs and fully promote their development.

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

The superior organisation of the setting and provision of resources means that children are encouraged to explore and experiment, taking risks while being vigilantly supervised. Children thrive in the highly stimulating environment. They make excellent progress because the childminder has a comprehensive knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and fully understands how children learn through play and exploration. She makes excellent use of spontaneous opportunities within the daily routine to challenge and extend children's learning. Rigorous assessment procedures are implemented and the childminder uses the information gained from these to ensure that activity planning is well targeted and focussed to fully promote children's individual development.

Children play an active part in all aspects of this vibrant setting. They are encouraged to express themselves, and their opinions are genuinely valued. The childminder has an excellent awareness of their interests and needs, she includes this information in the planning to ensure that their development is promoted and they benefit from a rich and varied range of memorable experiences.

Children make choices about what they want to do next, respond with great enthusiasm to challenges and show high levels of independence, curiosity, imagination and concentration. They play creatively in all areas of the provision; painting a variety of sea shells with water in the garden area then expanding this to paint other items of their choice or threading the shells onto twine. Indoors, they sit together to explore with wonder and interest the items in one of the 'treasure baskets'; sparkly gems; laminated photographs showing images of a variety of emotions; 'magic keys'; shiny tactile material; silver utensils and aromas of lavender. The childminder skilfully supports children's play using effective questioning techniques to challenge their knowledge and understanding in areas such as number, colour, shape and size.

The childminder's excellent interaction with children aids the development of their communication skills. They use language confidently and imaginatively, explaining their views and often describing the intricacies of their activities. They are exposed

to a range of communication systems and use sign language to reiterate their verbal messages. Through planned activities they discover the Braille communication method, exploring their local environment for examples of the tactile signage and gaining an understanding of other people's lives. Children share 'something nice' conversations; taking turns; listening and valuing their peers' contributions and ideas about positive things that have happened to them during the day.

Children play an energetic role in their learning, eagerly voicing their ideas and working together to experiment and solve problems. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is enhanced through a spontaneous 'pirate' theme, initiated through an email from a child in the Hebrides who has found a message in a bottle sent by the childminder's family some two years beforehand. Maps display the route the bottle has taken; children see photographs and pictures and learn some simple Gaelic words used by the child as they form an understanding of the island she lives on; replies to the email are drafted; treasure maps are created and children dig for their bounty within the sand tray. All aspects of the theme help initiate discussions and encourage children to understand and respect similarities and differences.

Children's good health is promoted very well through the nutritious snacks and meals they share. They enjoy a wide choice and begin to make decisions about what they want to eat. They plant and tend seeds and help to grow their own vegetables at a nearby allotment, using their edible produce at snack and mealtimes, thus encouraging children to try new tastes and textures. They learn to practice good hygiene routines, which are backed up by health campaigns; using messages, such as, 'catch it, bin it, kill it' they begin to understand why the routines are important.

Children show a strong sense of security and their behaviours demonstrate that they feel safe. Their independence is promoted very well as they play an active role in the setting, tidying away activities after their use and dressing themselves for outdoor play. As a trained Community Sports Leader, the childminder enthusiastically helps children to learn about the positive benefits of exercise. They play actively and are inspired to move with control and coordination as they use scooters and wheeled toys in the garden, beginning to develop an awareness of space. They benefit from fresh air and exercise as they walk to school and have many opportunities to use larger equipment and space at local parks to develop their physical skills further.

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	1
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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