

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	260168
Inspection date	05/05/2011
Inspector	Donna Stevens
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 has been registered since 2001 and lives with her husband and three children aged nine, 12 and 17 years old in a house in Kingswinford, West Midlands. The whole of the ground floor of the house is used for childminding. There is a fully secure garden for outside play. The childminder is able to take and collect children from several local schools and pre-schools. The childminder is registered to work with an assistant. The family has a cat, two hamsters, giant land snails and fish.

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 age range when working alone and six when working with an assistant. There are currently eight children on role in the Early Years Foundation Stage all of whom attend part-time. The childminder also offers care to children aged over five years. This provision is registered on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The childminder has systems in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and the local childminding support group. The childminder is accredited to receive government funding for three and four-year-olds and is part of the Dudley Childminding network.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from the childminder's ambition, enthusiasm and commitment to providing high quality care. They enjoy a wide range of exciting and interesting activities that enable them to have fun and make excellent progress. Systems to evaluate her practice are extremely effective and help to identify training needs and areas for improvement that will positively impact on children's care and learning. The childminder is proactive in developing very good partnerships with parents, carers and staff at other settings to ensure continuity of care and learning, which enables children to feel happy, safe and secure.

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 further the partnerships with other settings including systems for regularly sharing children's development and learning records.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The children are extremely well safeguarded, with high quality, robust policies and procedures that are shared with parents. The childminder has an excellent understanding of her role and responsibilities with regards to safeguarding children's welfare and has recently attended advanced training on the subject securing her knowledge. She is confident in her ability to put children's safety as her paramount concern and clear about the steps to take if she was concerned about a child in her care. High quality risk assessments and ongoing safety checks ensure that both the indoor and outdoor play areas, as well as venues for outings, remain safe and risks to children are minimised.

The childminder is highly committed to her own self-development. She has attended a great deal of training to help her improve her practice and understanding of how children learn and develop. She is accredited to receive early years funding and is part of a local network of providers. This provides opportunities to share good practice and raise the profile of childcare locally. The childminder ensures that her assistant has a good knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and supports her in attending training and local events, such as, the childminding conference. She has completed the Ofsted self-evaluation system identifying that she would like to further increase her skills by working towards gaining her Early Years Professional status. She also continues to develop the opportunities for children, for example, increasing physical play opportunities indoors to provide exciting, enjoyable experiences for children when the weather permits extended outdoor play.

The childminder places a strong emphasis on developing close working relationships with parents and carers. They are provided with copies of all policies and procedures and complete a detailed settling in form when children first start in the setting. This allows the childminder to get to know children very well right from when they first start with her. Daily diaries are highly effective in exchanging information about children's welfare, activities and progress. Time is taken at each end of the day to exchange information and texts and phone calls are used when necessary. The childminder recognises the importance of promoting equality of opportunity, respects parents wishes, working with them to meet children's individual needs. She makes excellent use of local resources and facilities. She visits several groups at the local children's centres and uses the library to expand her resources and provide different activities for the children. Several of the children she cares for attend other local settings and, although, the childminder has good relationships with the staff, exchanging relevant welfare information she would like to develop these relationships further. Becoming accredited has given her the confidence to approach groups about using a local model which supports the sharing of children's learning and development information between key persons. Once embedded this will further support children in providing continuity of care.

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

The childminder has an excellent understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how children learn and develop, enabling her to provide wonderful learning opportunities that allow children to reach their full potential and make outstanding progress. Children are confident and articulate, excited and animated in their play as the childminder joins in enthusiastically, praising and encouraging them. She encourages their interest in recent national events, such as, the Royal Wedding providing dressing up clothes to allow them to re-enact the event. She follows their lead as they request a castle to play in developing their problem-solving skills as she questions them to think about what materials they could use to turn the outdoor climbing frame into a role play area. As their imaginary play develops she knows to stand back, allowing them to work together listening to each other's ideas, making suggestions and agreeing on how they will continue their play. These opportunities allow children to develop as independent, curious and co-operative learners.

Children demonstrate loving, caring relationships with both the childminder and their peers and are happy and confident in the setting. Older children are kind and considerate towards younger ones and children of all ages are able to share and take turns. They are polite and considerate and have excellent manners. During the group story time they take turns to answer questions and listen to each other attentively. The childminder is skilful at asking questions that encourage children to think and form ideas and opinions about how stories will develop or how characters in books may be feeling. Children have an excellent understanding of the world around them, they understand where they live and have a grasp of time talking about events that have happened in the past and differentiating between those that are recent and those that have happened some time ago. They experiment, allowing them to understand how the environment can affect movement and substances. While playing with bubbles they look at how far they travel outside where there is slight wind blowing compared to inside where the air is still.

The childminder is skilled at sensitively observing children during their play and assessing their level of development. She then uses these in her planning to allow her to provide activities that are stimulating and focused on children's interests while supporting their next steps in learning. She will summarise these observations and compare them to the early learning goals ensuring that children are developing as expected and providing support and encouragement in areas where they need to develop their skills. Children are very much in control of their own learning as they are encouraged to be independent and choose their own toys and resources. Their confidence is shown in their enthusiasm to try new skills and have a go at extending their knowledge. When playing on the trampoline they will count each other's jumps seeing how far they can get keeping numbers in the correct order. During stories they will confidently pick out written letters and attempt to sound out simple words. These important skills will form excellent foundations when they move onto formal schooling.

Healthy eating is actively encouraged and the childminder provides children with healthy lunches and snacks that they often help to prepare. Cooking activities are particularly popular and often organised by the assistant who has a love the home baking that has passed onto the children. They enjoy making pizzas, cakes and pastry for jam tarts and understand the difference between food that is good for them and food they can have as an occasional treat. They have an excellent understanding of personal hygiene washing their hands before eating and after playing outside, using the toilet or handling the childminder's pets without being prompted. They have opportunities to enjoy outdoor play on a daily basis and a good range of garden equipment as well as visits to local parks and soft play areas provides them with varied opportunities to develop their physical skills. They understand how to keep themselves safe in the home by picking up toys, not running and being respectful of each other and the toys and equipment they use. Outdoors they know to use equipment safely, such as, one at a time on the large trampoline and ensuring the safety net is shut. They follow basic house rules and, although, actively take part in the decision making within the setting, understand that there are restrictions and that the childminder's word is final to ensure their own safety.

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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