

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	03/06/2011
Inspector	Tina Kelly
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 2010. She lives with her partner and three adult children in Northwood, Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor of the property is used for childminding and there is a downstairs cloakroom. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The family have dogs, a cat, rabbits and goldfish as pets.

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 six children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding three children in this age group, two of which attend school. She also offers care to children aged over five years to 11 years. The childminder provides a flexible service known as The Lady Bird Club.

The childminder has a range of experiences in working in early years settings and local authority support services. She holds a level 3 qualification in Health and Social Care. She regularly works with an assistant. The childminder can support children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA).

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are very happy and content in the childminder's care. The childminder is beginning to use observations and planning effectively to plan for the next steps in the children's progress. She keeps parents well informed about the activities and events their children take part in. Excellent background information is gained from parents to ensure each child's care needs and personal routines are met in full. The documents, policies and procedures are very effective in maintaining the smooth running of the provision. The childminder has started to look at her practice and to evaluate the service she provides. She is committed to developing her childminding to improve outcomes for all children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review planning to focus on children's interests and learning needs to assist in planning 'what next' to promote their existing talents
- develop the process for self-evaluation to monitor practice and further promote outcomes for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder is very aware of her responsibilities with regard to safeguarding all children. She clearly understands the signs of abuse and has effective procedures to enable her to refer any concerns to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. She has previously worked in early years support for a local authority and so has maintained a very good knowledge of the local authority procedures that are in place to protect all children. She ensures parents are fully aware of her commitment to child protection, with clear procedures readily available. Relevant checks have been carried out on all adults in the household. Children's safety is of a very high priority. Their security and well-being are consistently monitored, with effective risk assessments to ensure all areas used by the children are safe and well maintained. The childminder has created policies to ensure the well-being of the children around the dogs and their feeding routines. She has health checks for the dogs and other pets to show they are healthy and fit. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place for walks in the local community, outings and events. During the school holidays, the older children take part in the daily safety checks and take part in a safety quiz outlining dangers in the home. They show a mature response to taking responsibility about their own and others safety. They are aware of how their actions may impact on others playing nearby. They are learning simple rules that will keep them safe in the future.

Very thorough and up-to-date information on the children's individual needs and personal care is maintained through well-organised use of records and documents. The childminder knows the children's individual characters exceptionally well. Relationships are very strong at all levels as she cares for a range of ages. The school age children take great pleasure in spending time helping and reading to the younger children. Their behaviour is exemplary because the childminder has clear boundaries in place. She explains clearly to the children what is expected of them. Positive behaviour is highly praised, children's kindness and helpfulness is acknowledged with certificates and sticker. Children take responsibility for feeding the goldfish. They help in every day routines such as setting the table and tidying away toys and resources. This gives the children a tremendous sense of belonging. They feel secure and their self esteem is promoted to an exceptionally high level. The children have free access to a wide range of very good quality resources around the play room and home. Toys are stored at low level and children are encouraged to make independent choices about their play. The sun-shaded terrace and large garden provide an interesting and well-managed area for children to play and explore.

Good relationships have been established with all families. The childminder has an instinctive understanding of the children's different needs which is based on her experience and the communication with parents and the children themselves. The childminder has not yet cared for children who have special educational needs and/or learning disabilities. However, she has a very clear understanding of the importance of working with other professionals to provide a good level of support for such children. The childminder has an excellent understanding of providing an interesting learning environment and emotional support for children of all ages.

She has a great deal of experience having worked in day care and early years support services.

Comments and compliments from parents are used to review her practice and show parents are involved in their children's care and learning. Regular newsletters, weekly updates and permission for specific outings are shared via email. Parents have opportunities through the year to discuss their children's progress with the childminder. Children's views are sought through a regular questionnaire and daily discussions. They are encouraged to talk about their interests and share in the decisions about the routines, activities and their own play ideas. Links with other early years settings are established. The childminder uses information from school diaries to support and extend the children's interests whilst in her care. She offers homework support for the older children.

The childminder has a clear sense of purpose about what she wants to provide for the children in her care. She uses the support services and training opportunities provided by the NCMA and the local authority early years partnership. She has just started to look at a self-evaluation process that will enable her to review her practice effectively. The childminder has a very strong commitment to extending and improving the service she provides. There is good evidence for continued improvement as strategies are in place to identify areas of her practice to be developed. She can also reflect on the many aspects of the provision that are of a good standard.

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

Children are very content and happy in the childminder's care. They are confident and competent in communicating their needs. Children chat and talk to their childminder about what they have done. They show great pride in showing their artwork with a wide selection of paper crafts, real leaves and grass. They are well supported by the childminder and the assistant who are fully engaged in the craft activities and in extending the children's overall play experiences. Equality and diversity is actively promoted through the varied range of resources and events planned throughout the year. Cultural events are included in the flexible themes and topics to extend and promote the children's understanding of the wider world. Frequent outings to a children's farm, local parks and lakes are an important aspect of the week's routines. A large display of photographs of the recent visit to the farm is used to promote and extend the children's interests in the animals and their care. Children talk about the day's events and can reflect on the experience they clearly enjoyed. Small books are made up for the younger children of outings and events. These may use photographs or pictures taken from the internet alongside the children's own artwork. This reinforces the experience and makes the memory unique for each individual child.

Effective observations, supporting artwork and photographs in the children's scrap books, show the childminder extends and promotes children's personal experiences and learning to a good standard. Children's starting points are used effectively to identify their level of achievement and to enable the childminder to promote their

learning based on their individual likes and dislikes. The childminder links both planned and spontaneous activities to the early learning goals. However, at this time she has not established a thorough process to extend and promote the children's existing talents and to plan for the next steps in their learning.

Children are learning about a healthy lifestyle through everyday routines. Independence in the cloakroom and gentle reminders about hand-washing promotes good practice. Children enjoy nutritious home-cooked meals and healthy snacks through the day. The childminder has a sample menu to share with parents, outlining the diet she provides. Children's physical skills are extended as they take part in a wide range of activities, both indoors and outside. Good quality resources in the garden provide children of all ages with challenging and interesting physical play opportunities. Children are beginning to appreciate the importance of regular exercise and enjoy being outside. This is reflected in their response to the questionnaire.

Children are secure and feel safe. Their self esteem is fully promoted as the childminder responds to each individual child and includes all children in decisions about what they would like to do. They are inquisitive and active learners. Versatile plans, well-thought-out, age-appropriate activities and outings are adapted and extended to meet the needs of the part-time children in her care. The childminder provides all children with an exciting range of learning experiences that establishes their skills for future learning.

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	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	1
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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