

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	17/10/2011
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 1995. She lives with her two adult children and two younger children aged 15 and 13 years in a village to the north of Cambridge. The whole of the childminder's house is registered for childminding but childminding generally takes place on the ground floor. There is a fully enclosed garden although this is not currently being used. The house is within walking distance of local amenities such as schools, the library, shops and parks. The family has two guinea pigs and two cats.

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 year's age range. She is currently minding six children in this age group, all attending on a part time basis. The childminder supports children 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 satisfactory.

The childminder provides a safe environment for children, which supports their welfare needs and ensures they feel happy and secure in her care. Children are provided with a suitable range of activities and make steady progress in their learning. She has developed positive working relationships with parents and this ensures children's individual needs are appropriately met. Systems for observing and assessing children's learning are less well established. Some systems of self-evaluation are in place although not always effective.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the use of observations and assessments to identify next steps across all areas of learning and use this information to plan and deliver activities that meet each child's individual learning needs
- record details of evacuation drills in a fire log book as well as any problems encountered and how they were resolved
- develop further the systems of self-evaluation to ensure that future developments and improvements can be effectively tracked and monitored with regards to their progress as well as their impact on outcomes for children
- develop closer links with other settings providing for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with specific regard to sharing information about children's learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder demonstrates an adequate understanding of safeguarding children; the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow should she have concerns about a child. She has the relevant literature and telephone numbers to support her in making a prompt referral. Children are cared for in a safe and secure setting. The childminder demonstrates that she understands potential risks to children's safety. For example, the garden is not currently being used by children due to the redecoration of upstairs and unsuitable items being temporarily stored in the garden. Both annual and daily risk assessments are carried out and records maintained appropriately of these checks. Children are beginning to understand about their own safety during trips out into the community where they learn about road safety. They also practise regular evacuation drills to build up their confidence in the event of an emergency. However, the childminder does not maintain a record of these drills in a fire log book along with any problems encountered and how they were resolved.

The childminder has a clear understanding of children's individual backgrounds and works closely with parents to support those children whom speak English as an additional language. She is then able to fully appreciate key words in the children's home languages as well as any specific dietary requirements and traditions. Although there are no children currently attending with special educational needs or disabilities, the childminder has displayed a positive attitude towards working with outside agencies in the past, to help support children's additional needs. A suitable range of toys and resources are freely accessible to children. They confidently self-select from a low level box unit and from the other pieces of play equipment and toys around the lounge. This enables them to make choices in their play which are fully respected by the childminder.

The childminder has developed suitable partnerships with parents and they provide positive feedback in questionnaire replies. They appreciate the childminder's 'incredible flexibility' and say that she is 'very approachable' and comment that their children enjoy going to the childminders. The childminder shares daily information with parents through diaries which detail the activities they have enjoyed. Together with daily discussions, these methods of communication ensure that both parties are informed and aware of children's changing needs and routines. A suitable range of written policies are shared with parents so that they are aware of the service provided. The childminder has developed a basic partnership with some local pre-schools to ensure consistent strategies are used to meet children's specific needs, for example, when they become unsettled. However, less information is shared with regards children's learning and development to ensure that they benefit from a consistent learning experience.

The childminder has completed the Ofsted self-evaluation form. This details what aspects of her provision she feels she does well together with some aspects she wishes to improve. However, this system is not altogether effective in enabling her to effectively track and monitor priorities for improvement to ensure that they are

addressed in a timely manner as well as assessed with regards to their impact on outcomes for children. The childminder displays a positive attitude towards continuous improvement. She has attended a suitable range of courses to develop her professional knowledge, including a behaviour management course which was a recommendation from the last inspection.

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

The childminder has a basic understanding of the Early Years Foundation stage and is keen to develop her knowledge further by attending more training. She provides children with a suitable range of activities which helps them make steady progress in their learning and development. Activities are recorded on planning sheets together with some notes about children's participation. However, observation and assessment systems are not yet firmly established. The childminder is fully aware of this and taking steps to improve these. Although the childminder displays a reasonable knowledge of where each child is in their learning and what she is working on next with them, this is not secure across all areas of learning to ensure they are equally planned for and covered. As a result, activities are delivered in a general manner rather than specifically focussing on individual children's next steps of learning. The childminder understands the benefit of activities such as rice play where she encourages children to feel and explore the texture of the rice, promotes discussion about how else rice can be used and the noise it makes as it is tipped from containers into the tray.

Children are happy and settled in the childminders care. They behave well and enjoy each others company, learning to take turns as they develop imaginative ideas together and play games. Children have suitable opportunities to mark make as they draw, paint and use stencils. They are encouraged to develop a love of books and reading through a suitable range of books in the childminders house and visits to the local library. Children confidently use their developing language skills to talk to each other and the childminder. The childminder ensures that she listens to children's views and ideas as well as asking questions to promote further discussion. Children demonstrate an ability to solve simple problems such as why they may need a ladder when building with bricks or whether they need a straight or rounded brick to build their tower. Children understand size and capacity as they discuss why the rice will not flow through the funnel easily as one child comments that they know that the same would also be true of wet sand. Children are beginning to understand about the world around them as they discuss why a giraffe has a long neck and what products comes from different animals. Children have previously grown flowers and vegetables in the garden and enjoy helping to care for the pet guinea pigs; this encourages them to learn about caring for living things. They develop an appreciation of different cultures through a range of resources reflecting diversity and activities about different faiths and celebrations. All of these simple activities begin to lay basic foundations to support the children's future economic well-being.

Children begin to understand about keeping healthy through daily fresh air and

exercise and discussions about healthy foods; helping to prepare snacks. They have opportunities both in the outdoor environment, for example, at the local parks and indoors through the use of rocker toys and push along equipment, to develop their physical skills. Children's creativity is appropriately promoted through a suitable range of art and craft activities and role play toys and resources. They very much enjoy dressing up and developing their imaginative ideas together.

Children learn appropriate hygiene routines, for example, washing their hands after petting or feeding the guinea pigs and before they eat. The childminder checks that children wash their hands after independently using the toilet. The risk of cross contamination is satisfactorily addressed with the use of liquid soap and a hand towel that is changed daily. Snacks provided by the childminder are balanced, consisting mainly of fresh fruit or items that children have helped cook such as cookies or buns. The childminder monitors packed lunch provision to ensure that children receive adequate quantities of food for the day. Water bottles brought in from home are easily accessible throughout the day enabling children to independently help themselves to a drink if they feel thirsty. The childminder has recently renewed her first aid qualification which enables her to deal with minor injuries and accidents effectively.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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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