

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	19/10/2011
Inspector	Amanda Tyson
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 1989 and is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She lives with her husband and two adult aged daughters in Chertsey, Surrey. The ground floor area of the house is used for play activities and the first floor is available for children who need to sleep. There is a secure garden available for outdoor play. The childminder has a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 and is an accredited childminder which means that she is able to receive nursery education vouchers as payment for childcare. One of her daughters, who is registered as her assistant, also holds a level 3 qualification in early years. Registration is for six children under eight years; of these, no more than three may be within the early years age group at any one time, and of these, one may be aged under one year. When working with her assistant the childminder may care for six children under eight years; of whom, all may be within the early years, and of these, two may be aged under one year at any one time. There are currently six children on roll in the early years age group, one of whom attends full-time school. Four children between the ages of five and under eight attend on an ad hoc basis.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy, well cared for and are making excellent progress in their learning and development. The childminder has an in-depth understanding of children's individual needs. Play and learning resources are of high quality and, overall, used to their full potential to support children's learning and development. Partnerships, with both parents and the other settings children attend, are highly effective. The childminder makes excellent use of self-evaluation to identify and target priorities for improvement. She is an experienced childminder with an excellent track record of sustaining ongoing improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- supporting children's communication, language and literacy development further through the use of technology resources, such as the electronic photograph album.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Comprehensive record keeping, rigorous risk assessment and firmly established policies and procedures keep children safe. For example, children wear high visibility tabards with the childminder's telephone number detailed on the back when they go on outings, and she carries photographic identity cards detailing pertinent health information and parents' contact telephone numbers for all children. The childminder updates her child protection training every three years and attends numerous other safeguarding related workshops.

The childminder organises the day to ensure a superb balance of time spent within the home and community. She has created a highly enabling and stimulating play and learning environment. High quality resources are stored in clearly labelled accessible containers, or set out to inspire children's ideas. Overall, the childminder uses resources brilliantly to support children's learning and development. The garden which is full of innovative play opportunities and challenges, such as for exploring nature and engaging in scientific experimentation, is awe-inspiring.

Equality and diversity is embedded within the childminder's practice. Activity planning is led by children's individual interests. Procedures for working in partnership with parents, pre-schools and schools that children attend, are highly effective in ensuring consistency and continuity of care and learning support for all children. For example, a daily diary is used as a two way communication process which supplements daily discussions between parents and the childminder. Both the pre-school and childminder contribute equally to one learning journey record. Bimonthly meetings take place to review children's progress and agree next steps for learning. The childminder also works closely with other agencies involved with children, for example a dietician. Parents are delighted with the service they receive. They say the childminder 'constantly amazes them with her ideas for supporting children's learning and development'. They comment how wonderful it is to see how and what children have learned each day through the photographs and written observations that the childminder documents. They marvel at her ability to install good eating habits, and describe her home as a 'secure, loving, family orientated' environment for young children.

The childminder is a highly reflective practitioner who consistently strives for further improvement. She reads widely and is proactive in attending training courses and workshops. Excellent use is made of the local authority quality improvement process and the regulator's self-evaluation form as the basis of ongoing internal review. Ideas for further improvement include attending specialist training on issues relating to supporting parents. Since the last inspection, in addition to transforming her garden into a haven of natural discovery and scientific experimentation, she has made sensory play a key feature and strength of her provision. Continuous improvement is driven by the high aspirations that she has for the children and sets for herself.

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

Key to the outstanding progress that children are making is the childminder's skilled use of observational assessment. Planning identifies a theme, such as 'minibeasts', which provides a flexible focus. When this includes nurturing the growth of a butterfly from eggs through to a caterpillar and finally to a butterfly which children then release, learning is brought to life and jolly good fun. Toddlers move freely between the indoors and outdoors showing a strong sense of belonging and high levels of interest in the environment. They know where everything is and are becoming very independent. Behaviour is exemplary and well supported by positive reinforcement, and consistent and fair boundaries. Babies play contentedly for sustained periods, for instance with large baskets of everyday resources, such as metal spoons, cardboard cylinders, wooden sticks and metal tins. Older children enjoy helping to make the play dough, to which they add things like cocoa powder to produce 'chocolate'.

Children weigh cooking ingredients, measure their sunflowers, build giant models with large foam solid shapes, and experiment with volume and capacity as they transfer sand, water or porridge oats into different sized containers. Children make models from recyclable packaging, and make marks with paint, chalks and pens, for example on the blackboard and white board outside. Pre-school children recognise their names and are keen to make books about their recent experiences using photographs and drawings which the childminder helps them to caption. Children use the computer with developing skill, although the uppercase lettering on the adult keyboard is not very helpful for the development of lowercase writing. They examine the inside of each other's ears and small living creatures using a portable microscope. When connected to the computer an enlarged image appears on the screen which children then print off to take home. In addition, children use microphones, cameras, sound amplifiers and metal detectors. The childminder also has an electronic photograph album which enables a voice message to be attached to photographs, thus, supporting speech and language development, but has yet to put this to use.

The provision for outdoor play not only keeps children healthy and active, but provides access to all areas of learning and development. Toddlers giggle as they look at themselves in the outdoor mirrors. They become excited by their success at making cogs and wheels turn by pouring sand and water over them. The ingenious life-sized structure of drain pipes and guttering with a bucketful of small balls intrigues and challenges children, from the youngest to the eldest. They learn how to create patterns as they weave ribbons through wicker butterfly templates.

Children have their own vegetable plot and grow a wide range of fruit which they pick, wash and eat. This encourages healthy eating habits. When toddlers eat their meals they blow gently on the spoon showing understanding that it might be hot, even though the childminder ensures it is not, and older children learn about kitchen safety. Children show bravery, but also an awareness of their own limitations, when they climb slides and trees. Fire safety is reinforced through stories, regular evacuation practice and visits to the fire station. Road safety and

stranger danger, as well as awareness of animals in parks and at the farm, are consistently reinforced. Overall, this is a truly delightful setting which provides exceptional quality of care and 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?	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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