

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	257341
Inspection date	26/01/2012
Inspector	Susan Marriott
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 2000 and holds relevant early years childcare qualifications. She lives with her husband and one child aged 12 years in a house in the East Hunsbury district of Northampton. She is able to walk to local schools to take and collect children. The ground floor rooms are available for minding activities, although she mostly uses a dedicated playroom at the front of the house. There is a safely-enclosed garden for outdoor play.

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, of whom two may be aged under one year. The childminder is also registered to provide overnight care for one child under eight years. The childminder is currently caring for four children in the early years age range, some on a full-time and some on a part-time basis. There are currently six children on roll altogether. She is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association, the local Childminding Network and is a support childminder.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

This well-established childminder has now gained a childcare qualification and has successfully consolidated her exceptionally high quality of care and education for children in this friendly, welcoming and child-friendly setting. A key strength is the fast pace of delivery of the indoor activities. She meets the differing needs of children with great success, promoting children's rapid progress towards the early learning goals and ensuring that they are able to participate in all activities in a fully inclusive way. Partnership with parents and others are excellent. She is passionate about her role and demonstrates an outstanding ability to identify areas for development, enabling the continuous enhancement of daily care and learning experiences for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extending further the resources in the garden.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder makes excellent use of her skills gained from her attendance at a multitude of training courses to offer an excellent standard of care and education to the children. Children clearly feel secure and settled within this extremely well-organised environment, supported by detailed documentation. The childminder demonstrates a robust understanding of the procedures regarding the safeguarding of children and a very high level of commitment to promoting children's safety. The childminder and her family members have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau and deemed suitable to be in regular contact with children. There is a very clear complaints procedure and thorough risk assessments are in place for the home, garden and outings. Domestic safety measures are in place and fire evacuation plans are practised monthly with the children. The identity of visitors is always checked and a record of visitors is kept. Consequently, dangers are substantially minimised and children's safety is fully secured.

The childminder is demonstrably enthusiastic about her work. She is highly motivated to make changes that drive improvement and improve the outcomes for children. For example, she uses her self-evaluation folder as a working document. Dated entries and amendments demonstrate that the childminder constantly addresses her identified areas for development. The childminder attends as many training courses as she can to ensure that she is constantly improving her knowledge and skills. Recent improvements to her practice include continually adapting resources indoors and outside. For example, the childminder is providing more opportunities for children to grow food, fruit and vegetables in the garden and has already identified that she wishes to create a habitat for tadpoles, so the children can experience first hand learning about the lifecycle of the frog.

The childminder has developed partnership working with others sharing the care and education of the children. For example, she speaks to staff at the school nursery about children's welfare and development, but she is keen to develop this aspect of her provision further. A very strong commitment is shown to inclusive practice and the childminder's planning takes account of a wide range of festivals and special events. Children are helped to understand differences in the society they live in because the childminder promotes learning about multicultural traditions, foods and religions to all children and their parents.

The childminder has established outstanding partnerships with parents and carers. Robust documentation, policies and procedures ensure a positive start to the contract. The childminder keeps parents and carers well-informed of their children's welfare and learning progress through daily diaries and regular discussions. Parents write overwhelmingly positive and complimentary references, stating that 'for us, this childminder is our very own Mary Poppins' as she is 'practically perfect in every way' and 'our children obviously adore her very much indeed'. They observe that 'on a social basis, our child is confident and happy and is in constant contact with new people and new social experiences, due to the fact that the childminder has a great network and extensive imagination.... just a walk in the park is made into a day out or an adventure'. Other comments include 'our

children startle us on a regular basis with the things they have learnt'.

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

Children are looked after by the childminder in an extremely safe, secure environment where they have room to develop their independence and knowledge in all six areas of learning through excellent planned experiences and purposeful play. The childminder talks continually with the children, totally devoting her time and attention to them. Time spent interacting with and supporting children's play enables her to effectively observe their abilities and assess the stage that they have reached in their development. She is then able to plan activities that will encourage their progress by building on what they already know and can do. She delivers extremely well-planned activities at a fast pace throughout the day, keeping children purposefully occupied, while enabling them to make choices and decisions based upon what they want to do.

The children willingly help to tidy and clear up the toys before going to wash their hands in the cloakroom. The children know why they must wash their hands and use paper towels to prevent the spread of infection. They invite the inspector to join in with snack and talk about eating healthy fruit with their toast. They independently butter their toast and talk socially as they choose marmite, lemon curd or jam. The childminder sits with them and wide ranging subjects of conversation include a discussion about the death of a mouse and tops of potato plants dying as the crop is ready to harvest.

Children initiate dancing like snakes and kangaroos and as the childminder joins in with their play, she reminds them to be careful and not to bump into the toy storage racks or the table. Children become familiar with information and communication technology while operating a program on a simple computer. The children ask to go out into the garden and show awe and wonder as they 'discover' laminated pictures of characters from a well-known story, hidden in the garden. Upon return to the playroom, the childminder sits to read the story about a mouse taking a stroll through the deep, dark wood. Inside the story sack are animal characters, cards and a jigsaw puzzle to enhance the story experience at differing levels for the ages and stages of development of the children.

The childminder gets out a basket of garden related items, including wildlife books, soft toy birds, soft wool balls, plastic insects, bugs and hedgehog finger puppets. She encourages children to describe, explore the textures and name objects. For example, children put their hands into the feely bag and see what they can find. A translucent rubber fly has 'maggots' inside and this stimulates discussion about what flies eat. Children find a ladybird and accurately count five spots on her back, comparing this with the number of spots counted on another ladybird and deciding which has more or less. An activity to make bird food involves recycling the left over porridge from breakfast and left over toast and apple cores from snack to keep the birds warm in winter. A painting activity invites children to paint characters from the story. The childminder introduces new vocabulary, talking

about the creatures 'sharp claws and terrible teeth'.

Children play with a vast array of highly stimulating play equipment in the outdoor environment, including musical percussion. They develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they explore the heuristic area, the sensory garden, the little wooded tree area and the secret garden. They learn to stay safe because they know to walk on the decking as it gets slippery when wet. They recycle the left over contents of their lunch boxes. Photographs show children enjoying the challenge set through an obstacle course. Indoor and outdoor activities cover several areas of learning simultaneously, so that the children benefit from enriched learning experiences and social interaction. Their physical co-ordination skills develop as they thread shapes and cotton reels. They develop social skills and develop their interests because they regularly meet other children at the childminding home, at toddler groups and outside venues. Children are polite and respond well to high expectations for their behaviour. Children benefit from varied activities and resources, which help them value diversity. For example, they develop an understanding about other cultures through art activities and access books, dolls and dressing-up resources, which help them to develop a positive awareness of the differences and similarities between people.

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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