

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	22/03/2012
Inspector	Veronica Sharpe
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 2007 and lives with her husband in the village of Linton, Cambridgeshire. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding with the exception of the adult bedroom and an office. Children also have use of a purpose-built playroom in the garden. The garden is fully enclosed.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. When working alone, she may care for a maximum of six children under eight years, of these, three may be in the early years age group and of these, one may be under one year old at any one time. This number increases to 12 children under eight years, of these, six may be in the early years age group and of these, two may be under one year old at any one time, when working with an assistant. The childminder can offer overnight care for two children under eight years. There are currently 15 children on roll, of these, nine are in the early years age range. A small number of children attend who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The childminder lives within walking distance of local schools, pre-school groups, play areas and shops. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and is part of an accredited childminding network. She provides funded early years education for three- and four-year-olds. Both the childminder and her assistant hold relevant early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The childminder has highly effective partnerships with parents and others, which enables her to meet children's individual needs extremely well. Exceptional organisation of the premises, resources and equipment means that children benefit from rich and varied experiences both indoors and outside. The childminder is very well organised in her business practices and constantly strives to improve her systems. The childminder's excellent commitment to her own training and development significantly enhances her ability to ensure continuous 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:

- enhancing children's opportunities to extend all aspects of their learning by exploring other outdoor environments.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder has established extremely close two-way partnerships with parents, which enable her to offer a fully inclusive service. Parents praise the childminder and say that she has a child-centred environment with exceptional opportunities for outdoor play. Parents find her co-operative and flexible. They say that she strives to meet their children's needs, especially where there are allergies or other additional needs. Highly effective communication means that parents have a full understanding of the provision. The childminder talks to parents each day and uses day boards, written diaries, as well as text and email according to parents' individual preferences. The childminder is very well organised in her paperwork ensuring records, such as, registers, contracts and parental permissions are kept up to date. Close links have been developed with other agencies involved with the children, such as speech and language therapists. The childminder works hard to develop effective links with other providers who care for the children, for example, she develops summaries of learning to share with local nurseries and pre-schools. The childminder works hard to learn about and support the care of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. She has clear policies in place to ensure any additional needs would be recognised and met.

The childminder attends child protection training on a regular basis and has recently completed an advanced level training to extend her understanding. She and her assistant work to clear policies and procedures that ensure children are fully safeguarded at all times. Thorough risk assessments and ongoing checks of the premises and equipment means that children can play and explore independently without encountering any hazards. Children show that they understand risks themselves, for example, they navigate the steps in the garden with care. The childminder has recently extended her provision into a purpose built play house in the garden. This, combined with the childminder's house and garden offers children an excellent learning environment, where high quality resources are readily available. The free-flow play environment means that children follow their own interests and as a result, they are highly capable, inquisitive learners.

The childminder collects the opinions of parents and children to assess the quality of the service and target improvements. She has an excellent capacity for continuous improvement demonstrated by her high commitment to professional development. She and her assistant constantly reassess their skills and the provision, in order to implement new ideas, such as the digging area for children or redeploying the weaving frame to attract children's interest. Self-evaluation shows that the childminder strives to implement developments to an already high quality provision. For example, the current focus is to introduce children to other outdoor environments, such as the local woods.

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

Children thoroughly enjoy their time with the childminder and her assistant. They quickly become active, inquisitive learners due to the superb range of resources and activities deployed. The free-flow play environment means that children make their own choices and have excellent opportunities to develop their own learning. They seize upon spontaneous opportunities with enthusiasm, for example, seeing a ladybird prompts children to find their magnifiers. One child finds an improvised bug box and together, they carefully capture the insect. Once they and the childminder have discussed the little insect's characteristics, it is safely released into the garden. Children show excellent behaviour, rare disputes are resolved promptly, with them agreeing to negotiate sharing of a toy or by asking an adult to find another pair of fairy shoes.

As the childminder knows the children very well, plans and resources fully support inclusion and reflect their interests and abilities. For example, a flexible pipe enables children to explore what happens when golf balls are put in one end. A collection of ladles, spoons and trowels means that curious children can dig with enthusiasm, finding carrots buried below the soil. Children paint freely and enjoy seeing their work displayed. Children show they use their imaginations well. They particularly enjoy dressing-up as fairies and wave their wands to make magic spells. Resources are not necessarily used for their intended purpose, for example, younger children find cars and other wheeled objects to find out what happens when they are pushed down a small slide. Adults encourage them well, asking them to speculate about what could happen next.

To support children's progress, the childminder and her assistant collect observations rigorously and have daily discussion to ensure each child has experiences that meet their individual learning needs. Frequent input from parents ensures that the childminder understands what children do and enjoy at home and what they need to do next. Each child has their achievements recorded, so their learning can be shared effectively with parents and others, who care for the children. Adults are imaginative in their planning, for example, they take the children to the local woods to act out the story of Goldilocks and the three bears or use some plastic netting as a base for weaving experiences. All this ensures that children make rapid progress towards the early learning goals.

The childminder promotes healthy eating by ensuring children learn to enjoy a broad range of foods and recognise, which foods are good for them. Children are fully involved in food preparation. They help to wash carrots, cut them up and serve them with dips and breadsticks. Parents provide a lunchbox for their children and receive clear guidance to ensure the contents are appropriate in content and quantity. Children cook frequently, for example, they make oatcakes to eat with their snack. They learn about diversity by exploring fruits, vegetables and recipes from other countries and cultures. Children show a very good understanding of personal hygiene, such as washing their hands before eating. Even very young children are encouraged to wash their hands with water and soap, so that they develop good habits. Each child has their own hand towels, which helps to avoid

cross-infection.

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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