

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	19/03/2012
Inspector	Julie 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 1984 and has a National Vocational Qualification at level 2. She lives with her husband in Stoke-on-Trent. The whole ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder has a pet dog.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding three children, of which one is under one, two under eight. She also offers care to older children, before and after school and during school holidays. The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The childminder accesses a local parent and toddler group, has close links with the local school.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder supports every child through her good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She routinely meets the needs of children through clear observation and assessment, although there is an imbalance in the child-led and adult-initiated learning activities provided. Planning is individualised and overall, children make good progress in their learning and development. Children's welfare is well promoted and they are effectively safeguarded as a result of the childminder's clear procedures, practice and understanding. Strong links with parents allows them to contribute to their child's care and education, and they are well informed about their child's progress. The childminder shows a consistently high commitment to continuous improvement, although there is scope to improve access to regular training opportunities so that her knowledge is regularly updated.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- implement a programme to regularly update skills, particularly in relation to safeguarding, so that knowledge is further enhanced and reflects current best practice
- improve the balance of child-initiated and adult-planned learning activities provided for children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder demonstrates a good knowledge and understanding of her responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children. Written records and procedures include relevant contact details, and these are shared with parents when their children start at the setting. The childminder's suitability and those of others living on the premises are checked appropriately. There are effective procedures in place for dealing with complaints; as a result children are safe and parents are kept well informed. Robust risk assessments are in place and health and safety checks are completed daily and reviewed regularly. Consequently, children feel safe to explore the environment independently, both indoors and out. The childminder performs and records emergency evacuations and sets clear boundaries to help children develop a clear understanding of possible dangers.

The childminder demonstrates a good understanding of equality and diversity and this is reflected throughout her practice. The childminder provides a fully inclusive environment, where children are seen as individuals, and ample resources are provided which are appropriate to the age and stage of the children attending. Children are active, creative and enjoy their learning. Play space is used well and reflects children's interests, so that they are challenged and motivated to learn. Children express themselves confidently and communicate their needs well because the childminder listens to them and enables them to be actively involved in their learning.

The childminder understands that continuing professional development has a positive impact on children's outcomes, however has struggled to access training opportunities, in order to ensure her knowledge reflects current best practice. She reflects on advice and guidance from her local authority and, as a result, the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework has become an integral part of her practice. The childminder identifies areas of her practice to develop as a result of parents suggestions and uses an action plan to ensure these are implemented.

A regular two-way flow of information regarding children's learning and development means that partnerships with parents are strong. Good information is shared verbally about children's health, care and learning, and parents continually contribute to their child's learning by informally sharing things that happen at home. This information is acknowledged and used well by the childminder. Information regarding children's education and their general disposition is obtained from local schools and the childminder ensures there is a good flow of information between herself and the other professionals involved in children's learning.

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

Children make good progress because observation and assessment systems are effective. A wealth of information is gathered about children's developmental starting points, the next steps in their learning are planned for, and children are challenged to learn new things. Effective use is made of the Early Years Foundation Stage practice guidance to plan learning opportunities. Play is mostly child-led and consequently, children are learning independence. However, there is a need to readdress the balance between child-led and adult-initiated activities so that children can achieve their full potential. The childminder is dedicated to planning and facilitating children's learning and regularly monitors how well toys and equipment is used and how children respond to these. She sits at child level, joins in with their play and effectively supports them so that they maintain interest and concentration. The childminder communicates very well with children; the effect is happy and contented children who confidently vocalise their feelings and ideas.

Children display appropriate behaviours as a result of the childminders consistent attention to boundary setting. If children show unwanted behaviour, the childminder challenges their thinking and talks to them about making good decisions. As a result, children feel supported and safe. Many interesting play opportunities, such as tents, dens and treasure baskets are provided, and this ensures children's interest is sustained. Pop up toys and activity gyms encourage children to problem solve and outside, children enjoy water, sand, climbing and an easel for mark-making.

The childminder demonstrates a commitment to equality and diversity and ensures children are fully included in all activities. Children play with toys that reflect a diverse society and, as a result, children are accepting of others and have a strong sense of self.

Children's health and safety are well supported. The childminder understands the value of physical activity on children's health and well-being and encourages healthy eating, weekly walks and the use large apparatus in the garden. Consequently, children are physically active and move around with increasing skill, control and coordination. For example, they enjoy crawling and climbing, are keen to investigate and confident to challenge themselves and try new things. The indoor space contains safe, clean surfaces, and outside there is a safety surface that allows children to take risks in a safe environment. The childminder maintains good hygiene practices by cleaning equipment after use and changing children when necessary. There are effective written procedures in place in the event of a child becoming ill, and the childminder follows guidelines from the Health Protection Agency and this is shared parents. As a result the risk of infection is minimised.

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	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
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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