

Inspection date	31/10/2012
Previous inspection date	03/11/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- Children are happy and settled with the provider and her staff. They have secure and close relationships with the attentive childminders.
- Staff work hard to develop their knowledge and understanding of children's welfare and development and some have successfully completed early years qualifications.
- There is a close relationship with parents and their praise of the provider and the staff reflect they value the service highly.

It is not yet good because

- The provider has not established a rigorous system with which to monitor and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, which would help to identify areas for future improvements.
- Routines such as meal times are not used to effectively promote children's independence.
- Assessment of children and the two-year-old progress checks are not always used effectively to identify children's individual needs and the next steps in their learning and development.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the playroom, the conservatory and in the craft and dining area.
- The inspector spoke to the provider and staff at appropriate times and looked at a selection of policies and children's records.
- The inspector gained parents views through thank-you cards given to the provider.

Inspector

Maura Pigram

Full Report

Information about the setting

Funny Farm was registered in 1992 on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is operated by a registered childminder and her husband who is registered as an assistant. The provision runs from a large detached home in a rural area of Bedmond, Hertfordshire. All areas of the property are included in the registration and include a playroom, a conservatory, a dining/art room and a downstairs bathroom. The family living room is available for occasional use. Facilities for the babies and younger children requiring a sleep during the day are available on the first floor. The outside play area consists of a secure garden and running adjacent to the house

is a large field which is available for use by the setting. Access to the front of premises is via a flight of steps. There is wheelchair access through three other entrances. Also living at the property are two budgies, a dog, fish, African snails, ducks and chickens. The provision serves the local area and the wider community and provides a flexible service.

The setting is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm throughout the year, closing only for public holidays and one week at Christmas. A maximum of 16 children under eight years may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 26 children attending who are within this age group. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The provider employs six other childminders one of whom acts as the manager and holds appropriate early years qualification at level four. A further two members of staff hold an appropriate qualification at level three.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- improve the link between observations and planning so that these are used to shape learning experiences for each child taking into account their starting points, what they can do at home, their interests and learning styles
- review children's progress between the ages of two and three and provide parents and/or carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the prime areas.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- encourage children to develop independence skills during meal times
- develop further the self-evaluation process to take into account all staff's, parents' and children's views and use these to identify areas to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, and to help ensure the needs of all children are met.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Overall, staff provide a range of activities to support children's development. Planning is based on themes such as festivals and the time of year and covers all areas of learning. A high emphasis is given to the recognition of numbers, letters and shapes. Children's interests and starting points are gained on entry and used well in the settling-in process. Staff know the children well and carry out observations and assessments. However, these

are not yet linked to the revised Early Years Foundation Stage to support children's individual learning needs. Staff are able to discuss what children in their care are able to do. However, they are yet to implement the progress check at age two to provide them with a clear assessment of the children's progress. Documentation to support staff with the revised Early Years Framework is available and training to support this is being sought. Children are generally working within the typical range of development expected for their age.

Children are provided with some interesting experiences such as the development of a 'vets', following a visit to the setting by the vet to visit a poorly animal. They enjoy bringing in their soft toy animals to recreate the scene and to develop their own stories. This promotes their imagination and active learning takes place as they are interested in what they are doing. The introduction of a teddy bear which children can take home further promotes children's learning and self-esteem. Parents write in 'teddy's diary' which involves parents appropriately in their children's learning and development. Children have ample opportunities to mark make such as using pens and crayons during art and craft activities. They particularly enjoy using chalks and easels. When playing outdoors they enjoy 'painting' the fence with water and appropriate sized paintbrushes. This develops their coordination skills and promotes early mark making skills.

During story time children are able to choose their own books to share with their friends or the attentive staff. Children enjoy listening to stories about well known children's characters. Following these stories they colour in pictures of the characters which are displayed on the craft and dining room. Photographs and displays show that children have many opportunities to develop their creative skills. They actively take part in the many parties and plays that staff create for children and their parents. For example, the annual Christmas play takes place in the village hall. All children are fully included which promotes their self-esteem and provides them with an opportunity to visit their surrounding area. Mark making and creativity is further supported through the mainly adult-led art and craft activities. Children paint, draw and experiment with colour, texture and a range of materials. This promotes children's concentration skills and self-esteem as ample praise is provided for all work undertaken. Younger children, such as babies and toddlers, are able to freely explore the playroom and the conservatory. They enjoy playing with a wide range of toy animals and are beginning to recognise the names of these. They enjoy some sensory play such as the exploration of rice. During snow conditions staff bring boxes of snow indoors so that babies and toddlers can experience this sensation safely. The routine of singing songs supports children's language development. Children particularly enjoy action songs, such as 'row, row your boat' and 'jingle, jangle scarecrow'. These are also used to help children develop an appropriate awareness of numeracy. Other resources, such as interactive toys and construction, promote children's awareness of technology and introduce children to a varied aspects of mathematics, such as measuring and space.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children enjoy coming to the welcoming environment. They develop secure bonds with the provider and the staff, who are attentive to their needs. On arrival children are able to

choose individual bright boxes to place their belongings, such as coats and bags. Appropriate procedures are followed to ensure children are kept safe at all times. For example, sleeping children are carefully checked every fifteen minutes to ensure they remain comfortable and settled. Comforters are easily available for children when they need them. Staff are attentive to children's care needs and respond quickly to them at all times. For example, children are helped to attend to their own personal needs. Babies and toddlers enjoy having soothing cuddles on the rocking chair which helps to calm any unsettled children. Staff supervise children according to their individual needs. For example, older children are able to use a separate smaller room, staff are nearby to offer support or to join in when needed. This promotes children's self-esteem. Risk assessments are carried out daily to ensure all areas are suitable for the children.

Children are helped to develop good behaviour skills. Babies and toddlers are supervised closely to ensure that any unwanted behaviour is managed effectively such as distracting them to engage them in play. Older children demonstrate that they are kind and caring towards each other, they listen to each other and are able to take turns in their play. This means that they are developing positive social skills which contribute effectively to some aspects of their readiness for school. Ample praise is freely offered during the day and stickers promote children's self-esteem. However, staff do not use opportunities such as meal times, to promote children's independence skills. For example, children are not provided with opportunities to pour their own drinks and all older children are provided with training cups. This means that there is scope to further prepare children for independent steps when they go to nursery or school.

Staff ratios are monitored to ensure there are always met and staff are deployed appropriately. Children are developing an effective understanding of keeping themselves safe. For example, they enjoy special visitors such as police officers who arrive in their police cars. Reminders to children about always sitting in their 'special seats and wearing a seat belt' contributes effectively to them developing an appropriate understanding of how to stay safe. There are a wide range of resources available. There are plans to review the organisation of these so that they provide a good learning experience for the children. Outdoors, children enjoy practising their physical skills on the climbing frame and enjoy learning about the environment through feeding and observing wildlife and ducks in the garden.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The provider has an appropriate knowledge of the requirements to safeguard and promote children's welfare. She ensures staff are fully aware of the child protection procedures and information to support them in this is easily available. The provider monitors the use of mobile phones and cameras so that children are safeguarded. The manager is becoming familiar with the revised Early Years Foundation stage and she has information, such as Development Matters, to support staff in the implementation of this. Staff are aware of the need to carry out two-year-old assessment checks although they have not yet started this.

Staff are committed to improving their knowledge. They work hard and are guided by the

provider and designated manager, who both have a clear vision for the setting. There is evidence that the action and the recommendations raised at the last inspection have been mostly addressed. For example, there is now a named deputy in place who is responsible for ensuring children's progress is assessed, monitored and recorded. These records are shared with parents. Staff have worked hard to implement assessment systems which are linked to the areas of learning. Some staff have completed childcare qualifications. This has a positive impact on children's care and learning as they have introduced a unit where children can easily access some resources independently. Some monitoring takes place through informal discussion and parents are included in this process. However, this is not carried out often enough to identify areas to improve such as the layout of resources and the promotion of independence skills during meal times.

The provider and the staff have a close relationship with parents and carers. They share information about the children's day through diaries and daily record sheets. Information in these are mainly care related, information about children's learning and developmental progress is generally shared through daily discussions. The broad range of postcards from children's holidays and thank-you cards indicate how highly parents value the service provided. The provider has a clear understanding of the importance of building relationships with other settings who also deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, she takes children to visit their proposed school and ensures future teachers are aware of her role in children's lives. She also demonstrates a clear understanding of the need to work with other professionals to make sure that appropriate interventions are in place to give children the support they need.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in

	order to be good.
Grade 4 Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met	The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met	The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY390423
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	821772
Type of provision	Childminder
Registration category	Childcare - Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	16
Number of children on roll	26
Name of provider	
Date of previous inspection	03/11/2009
Telephone number	

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
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