

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	05/10/2011
Inspector	Moira Oliver
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 2005. She lives with her husband, who works as her co-childminder and two children in Maldon, Essex. The whole of the ground floor, with the exception of the office, is used for childminding and there is an enclosed garden for outside play. The family has a dog, 9 chickens, three gerbils and a hamster as pets.

The childminder is registered to care for six children at any one time. There are currently eight children attending, all of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage and attend on a part-time basis. The childminder also offers care to older children and is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

The childminder shares overall responsibility for the childminding practice with her co-childminder. When working together, they may care for a maximum of 12 children aged under eight years. The childminder walks to a local school and pre-school to take and collect children. She takes children to the library, park, shops and toddler groups.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, have fun and settle with ease in the welcoming, inviting and inspiring setting. Highly effective observations ensure that the childminder knows each child very well and plans for their individual needs. Very close partnership working with her co-minder, parents and other settings ensure children make very good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's health is promoted well and effective systems ensure that they are safe and secure. The childminder is dedicated to her role and keen to improve her high quality practice further through reflection and training.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend opportunities for children to practice and extend their skills of problem solving, allowing them to try things out and learn by their own mistakes.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are protected from abuse and neglect due to the childminder's comprehensive knowledge and understanding of her roles and responsibilities in

safeguarding. She has completed recent training and clear policies and procedures support her practice and are shared with parents. Children are supervised at all times and receive high levels of care and attention. Thorough risk assessments take place and are recorded with actions identified. She has made her home safe by ensuring hazards are minimised and by using gates to prevent children from accessing the upstairs and the office. The doors are secure and clear procedures ensure that only authorised persons are able to collect the children.

The good quality care is a result of the childminder's dedication to her role. She keeps up-to-date with developments through training and works closely with the local authority and the National Childminding Association, discussing good practice. She is very keen to learn and make improvements and has worked exceptionally hard putting new systems into place. For example, she keeps detailed and beautifully presented observations and photographs of children's play, achievements and interests. These are now completed electronically and emailed to parents regularly, keeping them informed of their child's progress and the next steps in their development. She uses the observations to plan exciting and age appropriate activities for the children, to ensure progression through the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The childminder and her co-minder work as a very close team, providing a consistent approach for the children. Their individual skills complement each other providing the children with a full range of play activities. They are highly committed and share the responsibility, paperwork and planning, supporting each other, ensuring children's needs are identified and met.

Partnership with parents is a key strength and their views are encouraged through regular information sharing and questionnaires. The childminder communicates daily with parents through a range of methods including daily conversations, text and picture messaging and a daily diary. The diary entry is sent to all the parents via email every day and details all activities, visits and food that is offered along with photographs of the children taking part. This provides parents with valuable information and opportunities to discuss the day with their child. The childminder celebrates children's achievements with the parents, providing very positive feedback. Parents are very happy with the care and education their children receive in the setting. They state that they value her friendship and advice and know that she genuinely loves and cares for each child.

The childminder promotes equality and diversity through a range of resources and uses the children's own experiences to add to their understanding. For example, she learns about each child's background and shares photographs of their holidays and visits with family. The children learn about other countries and flags which are displayed in the garden. They dress-up in a range of costumes and good quality books are used to promote discussions about similarity and difference, encouraging respect and acceptance.

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

Children are happy, confident and have fun in the rich and stimulating learning environment. They build close, trusting relationships with the childminder and it is clear that they are very fond of each other. They have lots of opportunities to make choices and decide on their play activity as they select the train track and put it together, co-operating very well with each other. They are provided with challenge and asked appropriate open ended questions about what they think will happen when water is poured onto the ice in the play tray. However, they are not always allowed to learn by testing things out and making their own mistakes. For example, by adding black paint to the corn-flour mix as it might not mix well with the other colours.

Children enjoy books and know how books work as they turn the pages one at a time and talk about the title. They are introduced to new words, such as, 'alphabet' helping to develop their vocabulary further. They enjoy stories as they make up their own using picture cards adding ideas as the story develops. Babies are encouraged to communicate as the childminder chats to them, encouraging them as they make sounds. Children have lots of opportunities to learn about weight and measure as they regularly take part in cooking activities and prepare the ingredients. They use mathematical language as they compare the shape and size of the differing containers that the ice is made in for their science activity.

Children explore their local community as they go on many outings. They enjoy shopping for their snacks and meals, choosing the food to bring home to prepare. They explore nature and the seasons and celebrate festivals, such as, Chinese New Year and Christmas. They take part in many exciting craft activities, exploring the textures of a range of media and using paint in a variety of ways. For example, with brushes, fingers and a range of printing methods. The childminder takes time to research ideas on the internet getting new and varied ways to encourage children to express themselves through art. Children enjoy music and push buttons on a toy to make the music play. Their physical skills are developed through outdoor activities, such as, jumping on the trampoline, scooting around on ride-on-toys and climbing the slides. Babies have space to crawl as they move around accessing the toys. They pull themselves up on the furniture as they begin to build confidence to take steps.

Children's welfare is well promoted. They receive a variety of healthy, home cooked snacks and meals. Children take part in the preparation of the food which encourages them to try a range of tastes and textures. Children know the routines for hand washing and wash after feeding the chickens and before eating. They learn to keep themselves safe through taking part in regular fire drills and learn about road safety. Babies are content and settle well because their health, physical and dietary requirements are well met. For example, they eat, sleep, rest and play according to their home routines and these are adapted as their needs change.

Children are cared for in an exceptionally warm, calm and caring environment where the childminder is genuinely interested in them and their lives outside the

setting. They are treated with kindness and respect providing a good role model for the children to follow. Simple, age appropriate explanations are given to the children to support them to understand right from wrong. They are kind to each other, share the toys and play extremely well together, co-operating and building close friendships with their peers and the childminders.

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

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met