

Inspection date	16/01/2014
Previous inspection date	02/12/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- The childminder plans effectively to promote and extend children's learning based on their starting points. Children are fully involved in making decisions about their play and what they want to do.
- Children demonstrate very good social skills and are cared for in an interesting and stimulating environment. Resources are of good quality and suitable for children of different ages and stages of development. The childminder knows the children well, as she has strong links with parents.
- The childminder is well informed as she is involved in the local childminding network. She has a strong commitment to training and a secure knowledge of how to keep children safe. Effective daily routines and risk assessments monitor and maintain their well-being at all times.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to further strengthen the communication links with parents to enable them to support continuity of children's learning.

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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled 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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector talked to the children and was involved in their play. She observed them in the playroom, taking part in a planned activity, having a snack and lunch and settling to sleep.
- The inspector looked at the planning, assessments and records of children's progress.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the childminder on the morning's planned activity.
- The inspector talked to the childminder about the daily routines and how she plans for the needs of the children in her care.
- The inspector looked at a selection of documents to ensure the safety of the children through robust safeguarding procedures, and to ensure the childminder meets the welfare requirements.

Inspector

Tina Kelly

Full report

Information about the setting

The childminder was registered in 2000 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. She lives with her husband, one adult child and three children aged 15, 14 and 12 years in Marshalswick on the outskirts of St Albans, Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor, including a playroom, is used for childminding. There is an enclosed garden for outside play. The family has a pet dog.

There are currently four children on roll in the early years age group, who attend for a variety of sessions. The childminder operates all year round from 7am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, except Bank Holidays and family holidays. She holds a National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 and is a member of the local childminding network.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen further the communication links with parents, for example, by encouraging and enabling them to support continuity of children's learning.

Inspection judgements

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

The childminder plans a broad educational programme for children of all ages. She uses the information from parents on the 'All about me' form to find out about the children's likes, dislikes and interests. The childminder uses this information as the starting points for their continued learning. She has identified the different styles of how children learn with schemas for each child, and this means she can plan effectively to progress all children's learning to a good level. The progress check at age two is well documented. Parents have opportunities to make comments about the young children's developing skills. The childminder uses a daily record sheet to inform parents about the activities the children have enjoyed, alongside notes on their personal care routines. Parents have opportunities to respond to these comments and share information from home with the 'parents said' comments box. The childminder builds on the events and experiences from home to support and extend children's learning. However, there is scope to strengthen the communication links with parents to enable them to further support their children's learning at home.

Young children make independent choices about their play as they can reach and use a very good selection of toys and resources in the playroom. The childminder plans activities and events around themes to support children's learning. The theme of winter and cold weather is supported with adult-led activities, such as collecting leaves, fir cones and

conkers on walks to parks and woodland. The childminder extends the children's learning as she plans to teach them about the natural world with activities and events which promote all areas of learning. When the weather is very bad the activity planned for the garden is brought inside. The childminder asks the children what they think is in a large carrier bag, and she helps them to tip the contents into a large floor tray. Laminated cards with pictures and numbers are used as a focus for the children to find the conkers and fir cones as well as the large play insects. The childminder teaches children to think for themselves as they search for the correct items in the leaves. They learn to count and to look for more conkers to match the number on the card.

Children's language is developing well as the childminder introduces new words as the children play. She teaches them to scrunch the leaves and to feel the hard conkers, and asks them to describe the fir cones. Children express themselves well; they are able to make their ideas and needs known as they tell the childminder they are crunching the leaves and the fir cones feel spikey. The childminder encourages children to move the leaves to look for insects, talking about their different bodies, wings and legs. The well-presented activity is extended as the childminder tells children to save the fir cones as they are going to be made into bird feeders for the garden and for the children to take home. Children are encouraged to sit and walk in the tray, and they stomp around and lay down amongst the dry, crispy leaves. Children are given the freedom and time to feel the texture of the dried leaves and to experiment on how they can move them as they help select different sized leaves to be used in a sticking activity. Younger children are fully involved in the planned activity as they take the conkers to put them in small pots, to use the home play area and extend their own play ideas. They select more conkers, managing to hold pots, conkers and spoons with great dexterity and excellent support from the childminder.

Young children's language and communication skills are further supported as the childminder plans a quiet time in the morning session for children to sit together, look at books and talk about the activity they have taken part in. They choose large soft toys to sit on, select books from the bookcase and those which are specially selected to link with the theme. Children show great concentration skills and they handle the books with care as they settle down and pretend to read. The childminder teaches the children about animals that live in cold climates, and she relates the stories and characters to the artwork on the wall display. Children can identify penguins and whales and they make links with previous learning experiences as the childminder adapts and extends the activities to meet the developing needs of the children in her care. Regular outings to local children's farms, the zoo and butterfly centre provide children with opportunities to take part in new experiences and learn about the wider world. The well-resourced garden is included in the planning. The area provides children with a range of play and learning experiences which promote their physical skills. The sensory area encourages children to use natural materials and to explore. They learn how vegetables grow as they help to dig in the garden. Children are gaining the skills and taking part in a range of interesting activities which support their learning and prepare them for nursery and school.

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

Children form strong bonds with their childminder, her family and other children cared for. Children are kind and gentle when playing alongside each other. When planning and setting up activities, the childminder ensures all children have opportunities to share, take turns and start to be aware of how their actions impact on other children playing nearby. When helping to tidy away leaves after the morning's activity, children are keen to sweep them into the carrier bag, to move chairs and to set out paper and glue for the next activity. The childminder supports this positive behaviour with praise, and thanks the children for helping each other. Children are learning to keep themselves safe as they move around the home because the childminder has simple rules which she reinforces with gentle reminders. Children are asked not to run and to take care when manoeuvring pushchairs and push-along toys around the playroom and along the hall.

Children learn about a healthy lifestyle through well-planned activities and everyday routines. Children clearly enjoy nutritious, home-cooked lunches and they manage cutlery and eat well. At snack time children's independence is promoted to a very high level. They are encouraged to choose fruit, to cut bananas, to share and to serve each other. Children are keen to try new tastes and the childminder talks to them about the fruit, introducing new words, such as satsuma, while explaining how to peel them. Children learn simple counting and colour recognition at this time as they are asked about the colours of cups and plates and to think about how many are needed for the children at the table.

The childminder plans weekly physical play experiences with trips to parks, play areas, toddler groups and indoor adventure sessions. These trips provide challenging experiences which give children opportunities to move freely, dance and take part in group games. The childminder works closely with parents in supporting young children's personal and social skills. This ensures they have the confidence to join in new experiences and builds on their sense of self-awareness and self-esteem.

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

The childminder is aware of the importance of reviewing and updating the documents she uses. This enables her to monitor the well-being of the children and for the smooth running of the childminding arrangements. Children are protected as the childminder has updated her knowledge of safeguarding issues throughout her registration with regular training. She uses the Local Safeguarding Children Board documents as the basis for her own safeguarding policies and procedures. Effective risk assessments are in place to ensure the children's safety around the home and on outings. The childminder uses the internet to access site specific risk assessments for the zoo and farm.

The childminder has a strong commitment to training, which enables her to develop her professional skills. She has well-established links within the community as she is part of the local childminding network. She runs the local childminding group, planning activities to share with other carers. Through the childminding network she liaises with the children's centre services to plan training and support events. Effective planning, assessment and evaluation of activities enable her to review the activities and learning opportunities to promote children's learning to a good level.

The childminder has well-established partnerships with parents. She shares information with them on a regular basis with daily notes, text messages and emails. Parents' views are sought through discussions and questionnaires which tell the childminder they are exceptionally pleased with the care she provides. The childminder has cared for many families during her registration. She keeps in touch with families who have moved, planning summer events so all parents can meet and socialise together. The childminder currently has no children on roll who attend any other settings, but understands the benefits of working in partnership with these when required.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory 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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. 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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	123478
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	870952
Type of provision	Childminder
Registration category	Childminder
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	6
Number of children on roll	4
Name of provider	
Date of previous inspection	02/12/2009
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, which are usually the childminder's 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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