

Inspection date	24 February 2015
Previous inspection date	8 December 2009

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

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- The childminder has a secure understanding of the learning and development requirements and displays a consistently good quality of teaching. She extends children's play by demonstrating how to use various tools to fill containers so that they can explore a selection of cereal during sensory play.
- Children enjoy their time with the childminder and strong attachments have developed quickly. Parents express how happy they are with the care provided and say that they have positive relationships with the childminder.
- Partnerships with parents and the other settings that children attend are well established. Therefore, the childminder effectively plans individual activities to complement children's learning and parents are fully involved in supporting their children's learning so that they make good progress.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust as the childminder completes regular training and reads a selection of relevant publications to ensure her knowledge remains up to date. Furthermore, she practises evacuation procedures using various exit routes and teaches children road safety to heighten their awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The childminder does not make the best possible use of the outdoor area to support children's learning at all times of the year. This is because she does not regularly use the garden during the winter months to offer a range of activities and experiences to further support children's development across all areas of learning.
- There is occasional inconsistency in some safe hygiene practices, particularly with regard to dealing with children's runny noses.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- maximise children's opportunities to enjoy outdoor activities and build upon confidence even further by, for example, making the best use of the garden during the winter months
- strengthen the good hygiene practice even further to minimise the risk of cross infection by, for example, consistently washing hands after dealing with children's runny noses.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed general play and the lunch time routine. She talked with the children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector held joint discussions with the childminder in relation to observations of the children's play, learning and progress.
- The inspector sampled the childminder's documentation including policies, a hard copy self-evaluation, training certificates and children's learning journals.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents through discussions on the day and from written references.
- The inspector saw evidence of the suitability of all persons living on the premises and other documentation in relation to the safeguarding and welfare requirements.

Inspector

Rachel Pepper

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

Children self-select activities and direct their own play with confidence as they use the wide range of stimulating resources available. They welcome the childminder into their role-play where she shows playful teaching techniques as she engages them in conversation. The childminder speaks clearly and correctly pronounces difficult words for younger children, supporting their communication and language development. She responds to their cheerful chatter as they use the play food and telephone to act out narratives and develop their imagination. The childminder gives children time to respond to questions and values any contributions that they make to increase their self-confidence. She supports them to use numbers for counting and uses focus activities to develop their smaller physical skills. As a result, children are eager to learn and acquire the essential skills needed as they move on to school. However, children only have access to the outdoor garden occasionally during the winter months. This means that the childminder does not maximise their opportunities to continue their games outside so that they can gain even more confidence in their learning.

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

Children behave well as the childminder teaches them the house rules and maintains clear boundaries for expectations. She offers regular praise when they use socially acceptable phrases, raising their self-esteem. Children are encouraged to manage their own personal needs as they collect their belongings and use the toilet independently. They use separate hand towels and wash their hands before all mealtimes. However, the childminder does not always wash her own hands after she supports the younger children to wipe their noses. Therefore, on occasion, the childminder does not minimise the risk of cross-infection in accordance with her safe hygiene practices. The childminder walks to and from school with the children each day so that they have regular access to fresh air and exercise. Furthermore, she takes them on nature walks and to the local parks and provides balanced, nutritious snacks to promote their healthy lifestyle.

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

The childminder has successfully addressed both of the previous recommendations. She now conducts rigorous risk assessments in the home and on outings to ensure any hazards or risks for children are minimised. In addition, she has made significant improvements to her systems for observing and assessing children to show accurate progression. The childminder is in the process of refining this even further and uses self-evaluation effectively. Therefore, she reflects upon all aspects of her practice to support continuous improvement. Her network of other providers assists her to share best practice and feedback from recent training. This helps her to plan improved experiences for children and maintain her good quality teaching.

Setting details

Unique reference number	149593
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	874968
Type of provision	Childminder
Registration category	Childminder
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	6
Number of children on roll	9
Name of provider	
Date of previous inspection	8 December 2009
Telephone number	

The childminder registered in 2000 and lives in Hitchin. She operates all year round, from 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, except for bank holidays and family holidays.

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