

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	10/01/2011
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
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 has been registered for over 25 years. She lives with her husband and four adult children in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and children have access to the fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The childminder is able to take and collect children from local schools and pre-schools.

The childminder provides care on four days a week, Monday to Friday during term time and school holidays. She is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of three children in the early years age range and is currently minding three children in this age group, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. She also offers care to children aged over five years and this provision is registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently no children on roll in this age group.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder is experienced and maintains an enthusiastic approach towards her work, continuously reviewing her practice. She uses appropriate procedures to evaluate her work, enabling her to gain a clear overview of this and to make relevant improvements. This supports her in providing a childminding service which remains responsive to the needs of children and their families. The childminder's good partnerships with parents support her in obtaining a thorough understanding of each child's needs. She uses this information to ensure that children's needs are consistently met and they are offered appropriate support so that they are meaningfully included and make good progress.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the assessment and planning procedures to show how children's next steps are consistently fed into the overall planning in order to provide further experiences which are appropriate to each child's stage of development
- improve further the systems for organisation of the setting by continuing to develop the use of self-evaluation to support ongoing improvements.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder is able to promote children's welfare at all times as she has a thorough understanding of issues relating to safeguarding children. This is further supported by a clear written procedure, enabling her to identify children at risk and

take any necessary action. Appropriate risk assessments have been carried out, ensuring that children's safety is consistently promoted. Ongoing explanations and good daily practice help children build up their understanding of safety issues. For example, during a craft activity young children competently explain how to use scissors safely.

The childminder has been providing a childminding service for many years and demonstrates a genuine enjoyment of her work with children. She is committed to continuously reviewing her practice and to making changes that improve the outcomes for children. Recent improvements include the introduction of written assessments of children's progress. These enable the childminder to obtain a greater understanding of children's developmental needs and to plan specific activities to promote their individual development. Although the childminder has a clear vision for the future, the self-evaluation process is not fully utilised to inform the overall review of practice. Children are offered a variety of activities that support their learning because the childminder makes good use of resources. For example, she uses community facilities, such as, the library, parks and a nearby farm, in order to provide an extended range of opportunities.

The childminder demonstrates a good awareness of issues relating to anti-discriminatory practice. This supports her in ensuring that her own practice is inclusive to all children and their families. She implements thorough procedures to gain relevant information from parents, helping her to build a clear knowledge of each child's background and needs. Children are respected as individuals and are supported in gaining an understanding of the cultures and lifestyles of others. The childminder has good relationships with parents. She keeps them well informed of their child's progress through daily discussions and the sharing of children's assessment records. Consistency of care is promoted as the childminder has a good understanding of the importance of maintaining links with others caring for the children. For example, she has thought through the procedures to work with local pre-schools.

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

Children make good progress in their learning because the childminder has a thorough understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She makes appropriate observations of children as they play, assessing their progress and using some of this information to inform the planning of activities, thus supporting children's individual development. However, this is not fully promoted because the assessment and planning procedures do not clearly show how children's next developmental steps are consistently fed into the daily planning. Children's behaviour demonstrates that they feel secure. They independently select resources and readily including the childminder in their play and discussions. They are, therefore, encouraged to take an active part in their learning and are developing positive attitudes to this.

Children's emotional development is promoted and they learn skills for use in future life as they are supported in developing appropriate relationships with each

other and the childminder. The childminder's gentle explanations and encouragement help children to appreciate other people's feelings and to learn to work together, thus developing their understanding of appropriate behaviour. Their awareness of diversity and the world around them is promoted as they participate in discussions and access relevant resources. For example, when they play with toy fire engines, children talk about the fact that both men and women can be fire fighters and drive fire engines. The childminder's good procedures for working with parents mean that she is able to offer appropriate support to children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The childminder is flexible, encouraging children to explore the resources and develop their own play. They are supported in this because the childminder joins in appropriately and further promotes children's development. For example, children choosing to play with toy vehicles extend their imagination as the childminder helps them to create an imaginary scenario involving the vehicles and using additional props, such as, a construction set and play people. The childminder's good interaction with the children and her knowledge of each one means that their learning is extended and they thoroughly enjoy their time with her. For example, when she suggests a favourite story, children eagerly settle down with her, helping to tell the story and discussing the different characters and their roles.

The good planning and use of resources mean that children's learning is further extended. For example, they gain a knowledge of wildlife and their environment as they put out food for the birds, watch them through binoculars and then use a reference book to look up the different species. The childminder gently reinforces children's learning. For example, when they read a story incorporating a medal for bravery, the childminder explains what this is and helps children to make their own medals using craft materials. The childminder also makes appropriate use of children's individual interests to help promote their development. For example, after noting that children liked a particular television character, the childminder purchased additional associated resources; children become engrossed as they use these, making tunnels for the vehicles and using their problem-solving skills to work out what size these need to be.

Children of all ages learn about the uses of information and communication technology and therefore gain skills for the future. For example, young children use interactive toys and age-appropriate computers. Children's awareness of the relevance of healthy lifestyles and practices is promoted. For example, their understanding of healthy eating is extended as they discuss why it is important to eat a selection of five fruit and vegetables each day. They are offered regular opportunities to be active and explore a range of physical skills. Activities, such as, using large play equipment in the park and garden help children develop skills in control, balance and co-ordination.

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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