

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	202805
Inspection date	19/05/2009
Inspector	Hazel Meadows
Type of setting	Childminder

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.

Description of the childminding

The childminder was registered in 2002. She lives with her husband and three children, aged eight years and 12 years, plus an adult son, in a house in Brightlingsea, Essex. There is level access to the premises and childminding is contained to the ground floor. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The family has two pet guinea pigs and fish.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding eight children in this age group, all of whom attend part-time. The provision is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register and she also offers care to children aged over five to 11 years. The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and holds a relevant early years qualification. She takes and collects children to and from local schools and pre-schools, attends a local childminding group and local toddler groups. She also takes children to local parks and play areas and to nearby places of interest.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. The childminder provides a warm and welcoming, home-from-home environment where children flourish. She knows the children well as individuals and has a very inclusive approach, seeing each child as unique. Children are offered an excellent variety of fun play and learning experiences, both in the home and on outings, and make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). All documentation is organised and well presented and safety requirements are in place to promote children's welfare. The childminder maintains very positive and trusting partnerships with parents to ensure continuity of children's care. She is at the early stages of developing a written record of children's progress towards the early learning goals. She reflects on her practice to make ongoing improvements and is considering methods of self-evaluation.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the method of recording observations and assessments and use these to inform planning and identify next steps for child, as they progress through the EYFS
- develop a method of self-evaluation to highlight strengths and identify areas for development.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder organises her home, resources and time well to meet children's individual needs and routines. She takes steps to ensure children are cared for in a clean, safe and secure environment and has written risk assessments for her home and garden and for different types of outings. She has a positive and inclusive attitude and approach to diversity, recognising that each child is unique, which is reflected in her well-written policies and some resources and activities. The childminder has a secure knowledge regarding safeguarding children and has attended relevant training. She is clear of her role and responsibilities and knows what action to take if she has concerns about a child. She regularly informally reflects on her practice and is considering methods of self-evaluation to highlight strengths and identify any areas for improvement.

The childminder has considerable childcare experience and a good knowledge of child development. She ensures all required training is up-to-date and is considering attending further training to enhance her knowledge and skills, particularly with regard to recording children's progress through the EYFS. The childminder is already very skilled at observing individual children and planning and providing for their ongoing development. She is now beginning to develop a system of recording her observations to monitor children's progression in the EYFS, using a variety of written observations supported by photographs and samples of the children's artwork. She understands to link these to the areas of learning and to identify next steps in children's individual learning and development. The childminder has initiated links with local pre-schools also delivering the EYFS, to try to promote continuity for the children.

The childminder develops positive and trusting relationships with parents. She encourages frequent two-way communication to ensure each child's individual needs are met and to promote continuity of care. Daily diaries are maintained for babies and toddlers, which give an outline of the child's day. The childminder has very organised and thorough documentation, which is well-presented and maintained. She gathers relevant details about the children and has signed, written parental consent forms to ensure they are cared for according to their parents' wishes. Each child's records are neatly presented in a personal folder which also contains their EYFS progress record. Clear, written policies, which are relevant to the setting, are shared with parents, ensuring that practice and procedures are understood. Parents' comments, on recently written references, endorse the good quality of the childminder's care and the activities provided for their children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are very happy and settled in the childminder's care and at ease in her home. They confidently explore the wealth of good quality resources in the large conservatory, which is well-equipped with child-sized furniture. Toys are easily accessible in multi-tray units, plus storage boxes on the floor, enabling children to self-select and make their own choices and discoveries. Children have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise and have free-flow access to the garden.

They use ride-on toys with increasing confidence and skill and manage to climb the mini climbing frame, with the childminder hovering discreetly to ensure their safety. Toddlers have space to move around and develop their coordination, gaining confidence with walking, supported by push-along toys. In warm weather children delight in playing with the water slide and in the supervised paddling pool.

The childminder has a secure knowledge of child development and clearly understands that children learn best through play and hands-on activities. She provides a fun and stimulating variety of play and learning experiences to support and extend children's learning and development. Children learn more about the world around them as they grow flowers, herbs and vegetables in a designated bed in the garden and how to care for living things as they help feed the guinea pigs and fish. Imaginative play is promoted and well supported through dressing up clothes and many props such as the play kitchen, food and utensils plus dolls and buggies. Children's creativity is encouraged through a variety of craft activities and musical instruments and they have fun doing cookery and sampling the results. Toys and resources from the local toy library provide additional interest. Children learn about their local and wider community through a selection of books and experiences plus simple explanations from the childminder. They visit local places of interest and mix with other children, learning to appreciate and value differences, encouraged by the childminder's positive and open attitude towards diversity. All children are included and valued and encouraged to participate and progress at their own level.

Children confidently communicate with the childminder, who naturally uses opportunities through conversation during play to support and extend their speech and vocabulary plus promote good manners. Books are readily available and frequently shared with children. Children develop positive relationships with the childminder and interactions between her and children are warm, fun and spontaneous. She devotes much of her attention to the children, playing with them at their own level to focus their play and support their learning whilst giving them freedom to discover and explore for themselves. Children's behaviour is generally very good and the childminder has a calm approach and encourages mutual respect. She offers explanations according to each child's level of understanding to help them manage their own behaviour and works closely with parents to promote a consistent approach.

Parents provide all children's meals and snacks and drinks in cool packs but the childminder promotes and encourages healthy options. Children can easily access their drinks when they are thirsty, ensuring they are well hydrated. Regularly reinforced hygiene routines, such as hand-washing before meals, help children develop an understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. Wet wipes are used by toddlers and older children independently access the low-level sink in the cloakroom, where a picture of hand washing acts as a gentle reminder. Road safety is routinely practised with the children on visits and outings, to raise their awareness and understanding. Fire routines are practised to ensure all children are familiar with the procedure in an emergency. The childminder uses situations as they occur to develop children's understanding of safety, for example, explaining to them not to throw sand as it may go in their eyes.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	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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