

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	208463
Inspection date	31/08/2011
Inspector	Mary Henderson
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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the childminding

The childminder was registered in 1993. She lives with her husband in Telford. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outdoor play. The childminder takes and collects children from local schools and pre-schools.

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. There are currently six children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage, who attend on a part-time basis. The childminder also offers care to children aged over five years. She is registered on the Early Years register and compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

She is a member of the National Childminding Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder provides a range of age-appropriate activities and play opportunities, enabling her to promote children's learning and development effectively. Children's individual needs are catered for through continual engagement with parents and frequent observations. This enables the childminder to plan and adapt activities accordingly. All children are encouraged to participate in activities at their own level. The childminder evaluates her practice, identifying her strengths and ongoing areas for improvement. She has successfully addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection, ensuring that outcomes for children are positive.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop observations further to consistently make links to the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage to plan the next steps in a child's developmental progress
- update the risk assessment record to cover anything with which a child may come into contact.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are effectively safeguarded because the childminder demonstrates a clear knowledge and understanding of possible signs and symptoms of potential abuse. She has written policies and procedures to support her in protecting children from harm and neglect. She holds contact details for the appropriate agencies should

the need arise. Appropriate checks are undertaken for all adults in the household to ensure they are suitable to have contact with children. The childminder is keen to ensure that children are safe whilst in her care. Children are supervised and the childminder has safety equipment in place, creating a safe environment where children can move freely. A risk assessment supports the childminder in promoting children's safety, particularly when on outings in the local community and places of interest. However, the written record does not identify all hazards within the home and garden to demonstrate how these are minimised.

The childminder develops exceptionally positive relationships with parents and carers. She provides them with a wealth of information to ensure they are familiar with the service provided. The childminder works closely with parents to develop links with other early years settings that the children may attend. For example, she has visited the local school to share and glean information about children's transition to school. She has shared this with parents so that they can help to prepare their child accordingly. This ensures a cohesive approach to children's learning and development. Written daily diaries provide opportunities for the childminder to record children's care and welfare needs, such as nappy-changing and sleeps, along with any specific individual needs. Each child has their own learning journey to include numerous examples of their work, photographs and observations. These are shared with parents to ensure that they are involved in their child's learning. Whilst the childminder is not caring for any children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, she understands the importance of working closely with outside professionals to support children's welfare and development. Parents are complimentary about the childminder's services and this is evidenced in numerous testimonials.

The childminder regularly evaluates and reflects on her practice and is keen to enhance the service she provides. She seeks the views of parents and children through questionnaires and discussion to make ongoing improvements. She has recently obtained funding to make significant improvements to the outdoor play area, taking account of the children's needs, interests and preferences. Excellent use of the garden and outings in the local community develop children's sense of curiosity and awareness of the wider world. Space within the home is used well to create different learning opportunities. For example, in the dining area, children have access to a range of art and craft materials to explore and promote their creativity. A designated playroom stores an extensive range of resources to promote all areas of children's play and learning.

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

Careful planning and the childminder's knowledge and understanding of children's individual needs and interests means that they are provided with engaging and interesting activities, both in and out of doors. Observations, photographs and examples of children's paintings, drawings and other work is recorded in individual scrapbooks. Whilst this information is used to assist the childminder in making links to the six areas of learning and assess the learning taking place, the records do not clearly outline the next steps for children's learning using the Practice Guidance

for the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, it is evident that the childminder knows the children well and is able to adapt activities to extend their learning according to their individual needs. The childminder does not currently care for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, she fully understands the importance of working closely with outside agencies to ensure children's needs are met effectively.

Children benefit from the warmth and reassurance provided by the childminder and are happy and confident in her care. They express themselves freely, talking confidently with each other and engaging adults in conversation. They display a keen enthusiasm for learning, exploring and investigating their environment, thereby developing their sensory skills. They learn how to care for living things as they grow fruit, vegetables and herbs. They know that their plants require water in order to promote growth and regularly fill their watering cans to perform this task. They keenly observe the butterflies as they rest on the buddleia bush or the birds as they eat seeds from the bird feeders. When out and about, children collect treasures for their 'discovery jar', such as stones, shells, fir cones and feathers. These are used to good effect when making and decorating their 'wind dancers' to suspend from the trees in the garden. Whilst making these, children count how many shells they need, or discuss which fir cone is larger or smaller, helping to develop their problem-solving skills.

Numerous outings enable children to develop their sense of adventure and awareness of the wider world. The childminder prepares children for each trip, talking about where they are going, therefore helping children to feel safe and secure. They develop a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe as they listen clearly to instructions from the childminder and implement strategies, such as routinely holding hands when near the road. One child demonstrates this by saying 'I hold your hand and sometimes I hold the pram'. Regular time spent out of doors, climbing up and rolling down hills, running through tunnels listening to echoes or playing and balancing on large equipment, ensure that physical development is well advanced. Binoculars and reference books help children to identify various birds and wildlife and they create paintings and drawings of their observations to display on the wall. This helps to develop a sense of belonging.

Children are encouraged to develop a strong exploratory instinct as they move around their environment enabling them to have choice. The childminder follows the children so that she can engage with them and provide support. They are encouraged to be very independent. For example, the childminder teaches children how to use scissors and then leaves them to practise their skills. The childminder recognises that some children have yet to decide which hand they prefer to use, so ensures a range of left-handed equipment is available. This encourages children's confidence and self-motivation. Children are encouraged to find out what happens when they put different things together, such as sand and paint. Children then develop a problem-solving approach as they work out that it is easier to dab the mixture onto their painting rather than using a brush. Children test out their ideas. For example, a child uses black paint on black paper. Together with the childminder, they talk about the effects and why the paint is difficult to see. They repeat the activity using white paint to observe the contrast.

Children readily adopt healthy lifestyles. They implement good hygiene practices, take regular exercise and enjoy growing and preparing their own food. They demonstrate a clear understanding of health issues, such as the importance of washing their hands after using the toilet. They talk proudly of having their own hand towel to dry their hands, therefore minimising the spread of infection.

Children behave well in the setting and respond to the clear boundaries within the childminder's home. Children are well mannered and readily take on responsibility. They demonstrate a strong sense of care for younger children, willingly helping them in everyday tasks. For example, they alert the childminder when babies wake from their sleep and help with nappy changing. They engage them in their play, saying 'come and see what we are doing' and handing them toys. They develop a strong understanding of and respect for the lifestyles of others as they make use of a good range of resources and activities that provide positive images of different cultures and beliefs. Burn's Night, Groundhog Day and Diwali are just a few of the festivals that children celebrate. Children also learn about significant events in their local community and visit a nearby airfield to observe the last ever flight of the 'Hercules' aircraft.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

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	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
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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