

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	219642
Inspection date	02/12/2010
Inspector	Susan Ennis
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 registered in 1998. She lives with her husband and three children aged five, six and 13 years in Bedford, Bedfordshire. The whole of the ground floor and two bedrooms of the childminder's house are used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. There is level access to the premises. The family has two cats.

The childminder provides care on each weekday term-time and during 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 range. 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 five children on roll in this age group. Children on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register share the same facilities as those on the Early Years Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The dedication demonstrated by the childminder enables her to offer an excellent standard of care and education. Children clearly thrive and make excellent progress across all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage because the childminder has developed highly effective practices and procedures for planning, assessing and promoting their learning. She values diversity and is highly effective in ensuring that children's uniqueness and individuality is recognised. She ensures that all are fully integrated and achieving as much as they can. Excellent partnerships with parents contribute significantly to ensuring that the individual needs of each child are fully met. Thorough and effective monitoring of the setting ensures that the childminder has a comprehensive overview of her strengths. She demonstrates a high commitment to her childminding and is enthusiastic about making and sustaining improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- enhancing further the use of observation, assessment and planning by demonstrating how children's next steps of progress are incorporated.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder demonstrates a very high level of commitment to promoting and maintaining children's safety. She has a robust understanding of the procedures regarding safeguarding children, having attended additional training to increase her knowledge and has all the relevant documentation in place for reporting concerns. She ensures that anyone coming into contact with the children is suitable to do so and her effective and well thought out procedures for dealing with emergencies comprehensively promote the children's welfare. For example, all her emergency helpers know where the parents' contact numbers are stored enabling her to more efficiently deal with any accidents that may occur. Children are cared for in a very secure environment in which their safety is of paramount importance at all times. The home is checked on a daily basis and comprehensive risk assessments are regularly carried out on all areas used by the children, including individual risk assessments regarding new children as they start at the setting. This ensures that the environment is effectively adapted to meet their needs. For example, when younger children start with the childminder, some resources played with by the older children are moved from the floor to the table to prevent the younger children putting the small pieces in their mouths. Resourceful procedures also ensure children's safety when on outings. Children wear wrist bands containing the childminder's contact details and are taught to approach a uniformed member of staff if they become separated from the childminder and other children.

The childminder's enthusiasm for her work and her genuine aim to provide high quality care means that she continuously evaluates her practices and makes changes to improve the outcomes for all children and parents. For example, she has adapted her documentation to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage regulations and has fully incorporated them into her outstanding day to day practice. She has an excellent attitude to training which also leads to rich and varied experiences for the children. She is very receptive to advice and regularly asks for comments from parents, children and other childcare professionals to enhance her role. Following a recent questionnaire, parents and children demonstrated their contentment with her through comments such as 'the childminder creates a home from home atmosphere for the children. Each day is always exciting and enjoyable. I would recommend the childminder's care to anyone' and 'our childminder is the best!'

The childminder provides a very welcoming and stimulating environment which is exceptionally conducive to children's learning and development. Resources are very well organised and storage is at child level, encouraging their self-selection and independent choices. The childminder makes excellent use of the available space by providing quiet areas for children who wish to do their homework or read a book by themselves while still ensuring that those who wish to play together have the space to do so. She is planning an extension to the play area to enhance the space available and to enable the children to flow freely between inside and outside in all weathers, thereby stimulating their experiences further.

The childminder consistently and actively promotes equality and diversity and tackles unfair discrimination. She therefore offers a service that is extremely inclusive for all children and their families. She works very closely with parents to ensure that she understands each child's background, needs and beliefs. For example, for children for whom English is an additional language, she makes imaginative use of hand gestures, picture signs and familiar words in the child's home language to make them feel secure and settled. The childminder effectively helps the children learn about their own and their friends' cultures by being enthusiastic and interested in learning new experiences. For example, children are encouraged to teach the childminder and other children words in their home language. During celebrations of Christmas the childminder makes cakes from different countries such as Italy and encourages the children and parents to become involved by bringing foods that they would eat at this time. Some parents contribute Polish sweets and make a traditional Polish Christmas cake which the children thoroughly enjoy.

The childminder's dedication to building and maintaining trusting and professional relationships with the parents and others involved in the children's lives ensures that children are consistently cared for. For example, parents complete a transition form at the outset which enables them to share information about the child. This enables the childminder to effectively promote the children's needs and welfare. The childminder also ensures that parents fully understand her working ethos and excellent practice. She fully discusses all policies and procedures with them and offers support, for example an interpreter, to make the process easier and clearer for them. Parents are routinely informed about their child's learning through use of a daily diary, continual interaction with the childminder and looking at the children's learning journals which contain examples of their creative skills plus photographs and assessments. The childminder also includes the parents in their children's learning by giving them copies of her activity planning so that they can compliment the activities and themes at home. For example, following an activity at the childminder's where children play with leaves and look for hidden objects under them, parents collect some leaves with their child and make a leaf collage which is then brought in to show the childminder.

The childminder has forged professional and sharing relationships with other settings attended by the children. She works closely with the pre-schools and schools attended by the children, sharing information where relevant to ensure that a consistent and continuous level of care is given to the children. She makes herself aware of the themes that, for example, the schools are covering and carries them on in her own home. When children discuss the seaside at school, the childminder develops the idea further by encouraging the children to think about under the sea. Their interests are stimulated by sea creatures such as sharks and visits to the local library to look at books on the subject enhance their experiences further.

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

Children are consistently offered highly appropriate experiences that support them in making excellent progress in all areas of learning. The exceptional range of child-initiated and adult-led activities ensure that children's interests and knowledge are continually being extended. All activities are clearly linked to the areas of learning and planning is rotated ensuring that the children experience a broad range across all areas of development. The childminder discusses children's starting points with the parents and immediately records this information, together with her own initial observations, to plan for children's further progress. Use of observations and assessments then enable her to build on what the children know and plan for their continued development. For example, when children who are really settled in the childminder's home demonstrate unease in other settings such as toddler groups, the childminder builds the child's confidence by planning visits to the groups for short periods of time. The childminder encourages the child to slowly explore their surroundings by firstly sitting on her lap and then slowly moving to sit next to her on the floor. This will be built up over time until the child is able to explore the visits with more confidence. However, it is not clear from the systems currently in place, how children's next steps are incorporated into the planning.

The childminder uses her comprehensive knowledge of child development to draw out the learning experiences from every day activities. When children enjoy practising their writing skills, the childminder encourages them to write letters to their parents. These are then posted to the children's home addresses where they all enjoy anticipating the letter's arrival. The children then extend the activity further by sending the childminder postcards from their holiday travels to be shared and read with the other children who also attend. Children further develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they make homemade binoculars to use for exploring the garden and learn about times gone by as they make iron man suits out of cardboard and foil. Younger children develop their problem solving as they learn which buttons to press to make various characters speak and stimulate their listening skills as they listen to the instructions given. Children's physical skills develop as they play in the garden with activities such as blowing and catching bubbles and visit nearby amenities such as soft play areas. They also enjoy helping the childminder to pick and store the fruit off the apple trees which they later use to make crumble for pudding.

Children's emotional development is extremely well promoted as they develop secure and trusting relationships with the childminder and each other. The childminder ensures that they all have some one to one time with her, perhaps helping to set the table for tea. During this time, they can discuss, for example, what they have done at school or any issues that may be concerning them. They are able to have input into the activities provided especially those planned for the school holidays. The children are also learning to be considerate of others. For example when the older children suggest activities that everyone can participate in, such as a visit to the farm, whilst waiting for an appropriate time to visit somewhere more suitable for their own age group alone such as ice skating. The

childminder acts as a very positive role model praising children's good behaviour and helping them make the right choices. The childminder uses house rules to help children learn the boundaries and other strategies to maintain their interest. For example, to stop children from becoming bored with activities such as shopping, they are all given their own shopping list encouraging them to look for the required items whilst helping the childminder at the same time.

Children's health and hygiene is actively promoted as the childminder takes very effective steps to minimise the spread of infection and develop children's understanding of healthy living. For example, all children have their own individual face cloths and know to wash their hands before eating. When they start to forget about washing their hands, the childminder introduces an activity to show them the relevance of germs and staying clean. She encourages all the children to cover their hands with butter and chocolate. She then asks them to wash their hands in the normal way. Children are really interested to see how much butter and chocolate residue is left in between their fingers. The childminder then explains that this is how germs are formed. She also encourages the children to look at pictures of germs on the internet to reiterate the importance of good hygiene. Children are also learning about their own safety and that of others. During a practice of the emergency fire drill the childminder makes the children leave the house without their shoes to demonstrate how quickly they must act if there is a real emergency. They also discuss road safety and know not to get out of the car until the childminder has put the younger children into the pushchair.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
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

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
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	1

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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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