

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	219662
Inspection date	27/04/2009
Inspector	Susan Marriott
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 2001. She lives with her husband and one child aged 12 years in their house in Harpenden, in Hertfordshire. Access to the three storey town house is gained from a short flight of stairs. The childminder uses the whole of the first floor, plus one bedroom on the second floor for childminding, and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four 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 two children in this age group. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The family have a pet cat. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the provision is good. Children are happy and confident in this home from home environment where the childminder uses her considerable experience to effectively promote most aspects of children's care and education in a fully inclusive manner. Every child is truly valued as a unique individual and children make good progress in their learning and development, although observation and assessment systems do not yet clearly show progression. The childminder builds positive relationships with parents and other professionals involved in the lives of children to underpin their welfare. She has not begun to develop processes for identifying strengths and weaknesses in her provision to support continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- clarify the wording of the permission sought from parents to the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future
- develop a culture of reflective practice to identify strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision for all children
- develop use of the Practice Guidance document to link observations of children's learning and to clearly show progression.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children experience a good quality of care and education in this family home, supported by clear policies and procedures and most required written permissions. However, the wording of the existing request to seek emergency medical treatment lacks clarity and may not fully secure children's welfare in an emergency situation. Activities involve all the children at their individual developmental level and the childminder makes good use of the local library to actively promote

children's positive attitudes to diversity. For example, children go to the library to find books about 'Bodhi', the Buddhist festival of Enlightenment. They talk about being kind and doing good things 'to promote good karma'. Photographs show the children making crowns to celebrate the Spanish festival of 'Los Reyes' and colouring a picture of a Menorah whilst listening to the story of Hanukkah.

Extremely effective communication strategies demonstrate the value placed upon partnership working by the childminder who makes every effort to keep parents informed about details of their child's time with her. Children's individual needs are discussed in depth with parents at the pre-placement stage. Documentation is available for parents and the partnership is strengthened by daily diaries and detailed dialogue on delivery and collection of each child. Children's welfare is properly safeguarded. The childminder is extremely vigilant and preventative action is always taken to address identified hazards and effectively minimise the risk to children. Written records of these risk assessments are in place. The childminder implements improvements as she deems appropriate but has not developed a regular reflective process to monitor her own practice and secure continuous improvement in the future.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children have lots of fun in this home from home environment where age appropriate toys and resources are readily accessible, educational and support learning. Children develop independence and the ability to make choices and decisions and the childminder readily responds to child-led play, sustaining a high quality of interaction with the children which develops positive attitudes to learning. Children become active learners who explore from the security of a close relationship with the caring and enthusiastic childminder. For example, they are happy to refer to her and readily respond to the animated smiles and cuddles which she offers. They show increasing confidence in new situations as they are introduced to visitors and demonstrate flexibility, adapting their behaviour to different events, social situations and changes in routine. Children form firm friendships with other children and engage in imaginative play and role-play based on their own first-hand experiences. For example, they enjoy using a pop-up tent as a house and dress up in princess gowns and slippers.

Children clearly enjoy a wide range of activities which cover the six areas of learning. For example, children show an interest in the world in which they live through a trip to the bakery and the experience of a bus trip to Luton, returning by train to Harpenden. They learn about staying safe through a fire inspection and they find out about the features of living things as they grow cress, lettuce, carrots, tomatoes, runner beans, sun flowers, sweet peas, and black currants. Planning details a wide range of interesting activities and an analysis of learning linked to the 'Principles into Practice' cards. However, the childminder is not linking her observations to the Practice Guidance document effectively to demonstrate the progress children make.

Children stay healthy and have daily fresh air and exercise because they regularly play in the local parks and walk home from nursery. The childminder provides

different experiences such as play on the trampoline and ice skating which support children's physical development. She takes the children to the parks and to social groups where they can interact with other children and develop their skills in building relationships with a wide range of people. Generally suitable documentation is maintained relating to accidents, medication and incidents and clear, robust, procedures are in place, protecting the children's health and well-being. The children learn about keeping safe in the home and beside the road. Children's behaviour is managed well and effective strategies ensure their social, physical and economic well-being are very well met.

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.	3

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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