

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	250694
Inspection date	12/05/2009
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 1993. She lives with her husband and two children, aged 16 years and 11 years, in a house in north-west Ipswich. There is a small step to access to the premises. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding activities. There is a downstairs cloakroom. An upstairs bedroom is available for daytime sleeping if required. A fully enclosed, terraced garden is available for outside play plus children have supervised access to the childminder's adjacent allotment. The family has pet tortoises and fish plus chickens on the allotment.

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 five children in this age group, most of whom attend part-time.

The childminder's sister works as her assistant when required. When working with an assistant the childminder may care for six children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than six may be in the early years age range.

The provision is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. 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.

She takes and collects children to and from local 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 outstanding. The childminder provides a welcoming, stimulating and inclusive environment where children flourish. Children are offered a superb variety of play and learning experiences, both in the home and on outings, and make very good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The childminder has an excellent understanding of the children's individual needs and effectively monitors and promotes their progress. Stringent safety measures and hygiene procedures are in place to ensure children's welfare. The childminder maintains very positive and trusting partnerships with parents and robust documentation is in place, including written parental consents as required. She regularly reflects on her practice, and is considering methods of self-evaluation, to support her positive, proactive approach to make ongoing improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person

should consider:

- explore methods of monitoring quality and further develop self-evaluation to effectively and consistently highlight strengths and identify areas for development.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are very well cared for by an experienced childminder who has a secure knowledge of child development. She is dedicated to offering high quality care and has a commitment to ongoing training and development. All required training is up-to-date and she ensures that she is well-informed of current issues and requirements. She reflects on her practice and liaises with other registered childminders to share ideas and promote high quality. She is beginning to evaluate her practice, using the Ofsted self-evaluation form to highlight strengths and identify areas for further development. The childminder organises her home, resources and time very well to support the children's individual needs and routines. She has a positive and inclusive attitude and approach to diversity, which is reflected in her policies, resources and activities.

Robust, written risk assessments are in place both for her home and for each type of outing to promote children's safety in all situations. The childminder always carries contact details on outings, to ensure children's parents could be swiftly contacted in an emergency. She promotes children's safety further by collecting safety data relating to all the cleaning chemicals she uses in the home. The childminder has a thorough understanding of safeguarding children and has recently updated her training. A clear safeguarding policy and statement are in place. She fully understands her role and responsibilities and is confident of the action to take if she had concerns about a child.

Children benefit from the positive and trusting partnerships the childminder develops with their parents. She encourages frequent two-way communication to ensure each child's individual needs are met and to promote continuity of care. All documentation is efficiently organised and very well presented. The childminder has written her own policies which work effectively in practice to provide clarity of expectations and to enhance the quality of care of the children. Each parent initially receives an introductory booklet containing the policies plus additional information. The childminder gathers all essential details about the children, and obtains signed, written consents, to ensure children are cared for according to their parents' wishes. Parents' comments and feedback are encouraged and reference letters from parents are extremely positive, endorsing the excellent quality of care the children receive.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The childminder is warm, caring and attentive and children are very relaxed and happy in her care. They develop trusting and positive relationships with the

childminder and their peers and are learning to be considerate of one another and to share resources. Children are well occupied and fully engaged and absorbed with the activities available. Consequently, their behaviour is very good and this is further supported by clear and secure boundaries of acceptable behaviour. The childminder plays with the children at their level, for example, all sitting together on the floor to share expressively read stories at the start of the day. She skilfully and naturally uses opportunities as they arise, to promote and extend children's learning and vocabulary. For example, she counts items in a shopping trolley whilst joining in with the children's imaginative play, making it a fun part of their game. Also, children match their fruit snack with colourful, laminated pictures of fruit and vegetables displayed on the garden fence. They begin to learn the shapes and sounds of letters, and that text has meaning, as the childminder writes their name in chalk on the path outside. A wealth of good quality toys, props and resources, which positively reflect diversity, are easily accessible to the children. These promote and extend children's imaginative play and they readily make up their own games.

Children benefit from frequent visits to the childminder's allotment where they learn first-hand about the natural world. They grow their own vegetables and flowers and are able to see developing and newly hatched chicks and learn how to handle them with care. Further supervised exploration of the allotment communal area enables children to discover wild flowers and birds, frogs and tadpoles as they go pond dipping, and to enjoy picnics and rhymes in the willow hut. They delight in many tactile activities such as playing with shaving foam mixed with pasta and sand and have opportunities to enjoy a variety of crafts, water play and messy activities, such as playdough and painting. All children are included and encouraged and enabled to participate at their own level. Examples of their artwork and photos of previous activities and outings are displayed in the home, helping the children feel valued and prompting discussion.

The childminder has a thorough understanding of how children learn and has established an attractively presented method of observing and assessing each child's progress in the EYFS. She clearly records observations, supported by photographs and examples of the children's artwork in individual folders. These observations are clearly linked to the five EYFS principles and cross referenced to the areas of learning. They are used to effectively plan the next steps in each child's learning and development. The children are well supported in their play and learning and make very good progress. There is a good balance of adult and child led activities. The childminder has plans of activities and events which are very flexible to accommodate children's interests and ideas and spontaneous events. For example, she enabled the children to make a penguin picture after they had been inspired by a penguin story book.

Children develop an understanding of good eating habits as the childminder provides healthy snacks and meals, with many fresh fruits, vegetables and eggs from the allotment. Drinks of water are readily available, ensuring children are well hydrated. Excellent routines and explanations help children understand the need wash their hands after toileting, before eating and when they come in from outside. Children relish being in the garden, wearing sun hats when required, and

many activities are experienced outside, offering them frequent opportunities for fresh air and exercise.

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?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	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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