

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	251015
Inspection date	14/03/2011
Inspector	Hazel Meadows
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 was registered in 1994. She lives with her husband and two children aged 18 and 16 years in a house in Ipswich, Suffolk. There is one step to access the premises and a downstairs cloakroom is available. Most of the ground floor is used for childminding and children predominantly play in the dedicated playroom and conservatory. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The family has two pet cats, three chickens and an African land snail.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years of age at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding a total of six children in the early years age range, most of whom attend part time. She also offers care to children aged over five years. The childminder supports children with special educational needs 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 to Level 4, having completed the first year of an early years degree. She is an Accredited and Quality Assured childminder and part of the Suffolk County Council childminder network. She has passed the assessment for 'Every Child a Talker' training and is currently studying towards a special educational needs co-ordinator qualification. She walks or drives children to and from local pre-schools and attends local childminding groups and activity groups. She takes children to local parks, to the library and to nearby places of interest. The childminder offers placements for students from Suffolk New College who are attending either Cache or BTEC Level 3 training courses.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy and thrive in the welcoming, stimulating and fun home-from-home environment. They are offered a wealth of play and learning experiences and are making excellent progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. The childminder develops a thorough understanding of children's individual needs and personalities and has very effective methods to monitor and record progress in their learning and development. Extremely positive and trusting partnerships are established with parents and excellent communication is maintained. Exemplary documentation and procedures are in place to promote children's welfare and safety. The childminder continually reflects on her practice and evaluates activities weekly to facilitate continuous development and high quality.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- reviewing the meals and snacks offered to ensure children are offered healthy and nutritious options
- implementing plans to further develop the use of the garden as a play and learning environment for children using all their senses.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder is very attentive to children and watchful of them to ensure their safety and well-being. She undertakes thorough written risk assessments of her home and specific types of outings, to ensure risks and hazards to children are minimised. Evacuation procedures are regularly practised and recorded, ensuring children are familiar with the procedure without being fearful. The childminder has a robust understanding of safeguarding children and is very clear about her responsibility to protect children. She has attended relevant training and has a thorough written policy, which is routinely shared with parents, and a clear safeguarding statement is on display in her lobby. She has the local safeguarding flowchart and contact details to hand and knows what to do if she has concerns about a child. Both the childminder and her husband were police checked through the local authority prior to 2001. The childminder has ensured her daughter has a Criminal Records Bureau clearance and is making arrangements for her son to undergo clearance when he becomes 16 years of age.

The childminder organises her home, time and resources extremely well to support children and meet their varying routines and needs. She has all required equipment to support the care of the children and an almost overwhelming selection of high quality toys and resources are available in the dedicated playroom. The childminder gets to know children very well as individuals. She values all children, embracing their differences, and has a positive and inclusive attitude and approach to diversity. This is sensitively reflected in her childminding practice and policies and in many of the resources and activities on offer.

The childminder strives to provide high quality and has a strong commitment to ongoing improvement and to personal and professional development. She has undertaken a considerable number of training courses and workshops in recent years and uses these to enhance her practice and to improve outcomes for children. Just prior to this inspection she completed an Ofsted self-evaluation form. However, she evaluates her practice on an ongoing basis, through weekly activity sheets and ongoing reflection, to maintain continuous improvement.

The childminder has excellent documentation which is well organised, neatly presented and stored securely. Clearly written policies support her childminding, apply to her own setting and are reflected well in practice. These are made available to parents, who receive their own copies. A well-presented parent information folder, containing information about her setting, her training

certificates and other relevant information, is also shared with parents. The childminder gathers comprehensive details about children and has obtained signed parental consents to ensure children are cared for according to their parents' wishes.

The childminder develops positive and trusting partnerships with parents and welcomes and encourages feedback and comments, both verbally and through questionnaires. She promotes frequent two-way communication, and has a daily diary for children under three years, to ensure individual needs are met and to promote continuity and quality of care. An annual parents' morning enables parents to meet other parents, review their child's learning journey scrapbook in depth and discuss any queries with the childminder. Written comments from parents, gathered for the inspection, are very positive about the care and information provided and they feel well informed through newsletters and regular dialogue. Parents are pleased with the progress their children make and with the variety of activities and outings offered. No children currently attend other settings but the childminder has previously endeavoured to forge links with a local pre-school to encourage continuity of care and to aid transitions. The childminder closely follows any recommendations from health professionals to support children with any additional needs and encourage their progress.

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

Children are happy and relaxed with the childminder and are settled in her home. She gets to know children's individual needs and personalities very well and values the uniqueness of each child. She ensures children are all included and able to participate in activities on offer, for example, offering craft activities to children of all ages. Numerous examples of children's artwork are displayed around the playroom, helping children feel their efforts are valued.

Children are generally very well behaved and respond well to the childminder's firm but kind manner. They are offered clear explanations to help them understand the consequences of their actions and positive behaviour is acknowledged and praised. Children learn to keep themselves safe through explanations and reminders, for example, discussion about road safety when on outings. Under supervision, children are able to take achievable risks. For example, on climbing equipment they develop their skills and coordination whilst learning about making judgments and their own limitations.

The childminder effectively utilises her childcare experience, training and skills to provide a high quality, secure and stimulating play and learning environment. She provides many adult-led activities, such as crafts and cookery, to offer some focus. However, these are flexible as she readily follows, and responds to, children's interests. For example, getting out farm animals to support a child's interest in animals. Children make their own decisions and selections as many resources are stored at low level, which promotes independence and enables them to initiate their own play. The childminder regularly rotates and varies the toys to promote

ongoing interest and challenge for children, who make excellent progress in their learning and development.

The childminder enthusiastically plays alongside children, to enhance their learning and help focus their attention. She constantly talks to them to broaden their vocabulary and learning but is also attentive to their conversation and comments. A wonderful selection of books is available and children are very engaged at story times as they are involved through questions, comments and the use of props, to bring stories to life. The childminder is making up story sacks with props, reflecting particular stories, which parents are invited to borrow. The childminder encourages parental involvement by offering prompt cards to support them.

The childminder clearly understands that children learn best through fun activities and hands on experiences. For example, they increase their problem-solving and numeracy skills as they enjoy cookery activities, help weigh out and mix ingredients and help sort laundry as the childminder hangs it out. They delight in exploring different media such as water, sand and play dough and enjoy a broad variety of craft activities. Activities in the home are supplemented with regular outings to local toddler groups and children's activity centres and to nearby animal parks. Here children can exercise, engage with other children and adults and learn more about living things and the community and world around them. They are encouraged to note the changing seasons and emerging plants. They learn how fruit and vegetables grow at the childminder's allotment and are able to sample the harvested produce. Children are delighted as they go to see newly acquired chickens in the garden and help to collect eggs.

The childminder records children's progress towards the early learning goals in Learning Journey scrapbooks. Relevant, succinct observations for each child are supported by photographic evidence and examples of the children's artwork. They are clearly linked to the appropriate areas of learning and children's next steps are identified. Next steps are transferred to weekly planning to promote each child's progress and development. The Learning Journeys are regularly shared with parents, who are encouraged to make their own contributions.

Children have frequent opportunities for fresh air and exercise which promotes a healthy lifestyle. They have access to a safe garden where there is space to run around and use ride on toys which improve their balance and coordination. They also regularly attend a music and movement dance class and go to local active play facilities. Excellent hygiene is effectively promoted through reminders and regular routines. For example, children wash their hands prior to eating and after toileting and when they come in from the garden. Children have a predominantly nutritious variety of snacks and meals, supplied by the childminder. Children are encouraged to regularly access their beakers of water, and frequently do so, ensuring they are well hydrated. They are able to sleep and rest according to their needs and regular routines are maintained to enhance continuity.

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	2
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	1
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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	2
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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