

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	300531
Inspection date	02/12/2008
Inspector	Jill Lee
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 report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

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 1998. She lives with her husband and two daughters, aged 12 and 16 years, in Sheffield. The home is accessed by one step. Schools, shops and parks are within walking distance.

The downstairs of the home is used mainly for childminding, although children use the bathroom on the first floor. One bedroom is available if overnight care is offered. Children have access to a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The childminder is registered to care for six children under eight years. She offers a full time service, including after school and school holiday care. She is currently caring for four children of pre-school age and five school aged children. She is a member of the National Childminding Association and is involved in a childminding support group.

The childminder is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Children's safety and well being are promoted very well. The childminder provides well-planned, open-ended play activities, based on children's interests and supported by 'real life' experiences in the local community, so that children make good progress in all areas. There are clear systems to observe children as they play and the childminder is working on improved ways to link these more actively to planning next steps in learning and enhancing challenge in the daily environment. Close liaison with parents and other providers helps her to support individual needs with sensitivity and plan well to ensure all children are fully included. The childminder evaluates her practice effectively and demonstrates a strong commitment to continuous improvement, by accessing a wide range of training to further develop her skills.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- consolidate further the developing good practice in using observations to plan next steps in learning, so that children are fully challenged in the daily play environment.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder adopts a professional and highly organised approach to her role. The childminder fully understands her responsibility to safeguard children and all required policies and procedures are in place, ensuring that children's welfare is

effectively promoted. Thorough risk assessments are conducted and effective action taken to maintain children's safety at all times. Children are always fully supervised in their play, whilst being actively encouraged to develop safe levels of independence, for example, climbing the stairs to go to the toilet and using large play equipment in the park. Awareness of risk and safety is raised very well in everyday routines, like the walk to and from school. Planned activities, like 'road safety' week and discussions about 'stranger danger' help to extend their awareness. Children talk about the risks of fire and emergency evacuation procedures are practised with them regularly.

Parents share detailed information in the 'All about me' booklet, so that children settle quickly and the childminder is fully informed about their starting points. There is an ongoing dialogue with parents, supplemented by use of a journal, so that information is shared effectively about daily events and children's progress. The childminder has even text messaged activity pictures to parents. Questionnaires are used as a way of seeking parents' views, and they express very positive comments in references and thank you letters, valuing her 'brilliant care' and the 'welcoming warmth of her family home'. They appreciate the daily communication, ensuring that care is shared fully with them and helping to promote consistency and continuity. There is clear recognition of the importance of partnerships with other settings involved in children's care.

The childminder places a high priority on planning for inclusion and supports children very effectively where there are additional needs. She responds quickly to any concerns and reflects the child's home background within her planning. She is fully committed to her own professional development and strives actively to provide high quality care. Her practice has been enhanced by her attendance at a wide range of training opportunities and she is eager to develop her skills further. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed exceptionally well, with a very positive impact on the outcomes for children. She is hesitant about identifying her own, many strengths, but reflects sensitively upon her practice and is beginning to make very good use of self-evaluation to target areas for improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children love spending time with the childminder, where they enjoy a well balanced range of enjoyable and stimulating play experiences. The daily environment reflects children's observed interests well. For example, the childminder knows which toys and activities children particularly enjoy and organises these attractively to capture children's interest when they first arrive. The childminder plays and talks with children constantly, listens closely to their ideas and encourages their suggestions for activities. She is fully attentive to their conversations, effectively promoting language and social skills. She provides lots of open-ended resources, so that children's creativity and imagination develop well. They enjoy lots of painting, collage and model making and are fascinated by the colourful, swirling lights in the sensory 'dark den'. Music and movement is a favourite activity; children enjoy dancing to Eid music and making their own instruments.

Children access available resources freely, enabling them to explore and enjoy experiences in all areas of learning, both indoors and out. Many resources are stored at child height, in clear plastic boxes, so they are visible to children and enable independent selection. There are colourful displays, which include examples of children's art work and model making. For example, the children have made play dough handprints as Christmas gifts for their parents and have fun making glittery Santa Claus pictures.

Planning clearly reflects the childminder's awareness of children's individual needs and interests. She constantly observes children and shows a clear understanding of their stages of development. Planning and assessment systems appropriately reflect the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the childminder is using guidance materials appropriately to help her differentiate planned activities. She has formulated monthly plans, reflecting the seasons, festivals and planned visits as a broad structure to enable her to introduce new learning. Photographs are used very creatively in records to reflect the wide ranging experiences enjoyed by children. She observes children routinely, linking her observations to the areas of learning and planned next steps. This process is well considered and is helping her begin to evaluate children's progress, but it does not yet consistently impact on planning for individual challenge in the daily environment.

Children are relaxed in their play, confident of support but able to develop their own ideas. The childminder gives them confidence to be themselves, express their individuality and share their feelings. She enables them to play and explore freely. Children receive lots of praise, as the childminder warmly values their achievements, for example, using a star chart to recognise success in 'potty' training. She skilfully helps children be proud of their own unique qualities and to value the different characteristics of others, encouraging them to share their home language and culture in their play.

Children love reading stories and use books to find out about things that interest them, like Christmas, autumn and animals. The childminder spontaneously introduces maths language into everyday play, as children fit together jigsaw pieces, count the different lights in the dark den and compare their height on the height chart. Children have lots of opportunity to explore shape and size and to solve problems in their construction, creative and imaginary play. They plan lots of outings in their local community, using public transport, observing the natural world and experiencing the changing seasons. They plant sunflowers, visit the animals at the farm, go bowling and enjoy a Chinese meal. Cooking is a favourite activity and children enjoy making pizzas. The childminder offers gentle, consistent support so that children learn to think of others and respect their environment, for example, cooperating to tidy away toys. They participate confidently, learning to how to share and take turns. Older children are very caring towards the younger ones.

Children make friends and become active, independent learners as they play. They think about how to keep themselves healthy and stay safe within everyday routines, enjoying lots of fresh air as they walk to and from school each day. Even the youngest children know why they use the anti-bacterial hand-spray before they

eat snack and where to get the tissues for runny noses. They frequently visit the park, where they enjoy 'chasing each other around the statues or balancing on the obstacle course'. They love 'wearing their 'wellies' to jump in puddles and run through crunchy leaves'. Younger children extend their physical skills at the soft play centre. Children enjoy healthy, nutritious meals and lots of fruit snacks, learning about which foods are good for them. They talk about the golden rules, like 'being kind and helpful', consider why rules are needed and how best to keep themselves safe, so that they learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour. They thrive, developing high levels of confidence and self-esteem in an environment where the childminder puts their needs first.

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.	2

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?	2
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

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.