

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	24/01/2011
Inspector	Patricia Webb
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 has been registered since 1999. She lives with her husband in Wallasey on the Wirral peninsular. Her husband acts as an assistant in the childminding practice. The majority of the ground floor of the property is used for childminding purposes with additional use of the bathroom and a front bedroom on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed rear yard for outdoor play. The family has two cats.

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, with one aged one year or younger. However this is increased to no more than four in the early years age range and no more than two aged one year or younger when an assistant is present. There are currently six children on roll in the early years age group. The childminder is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

The childminder receives support from the local authority and holds a 'Quality First' quality assurance award.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children thrive and blossom in the care of this extremely experienced and caring childminder and her assistant. Such strong and passionate interaction in the children's care and welfare helps them make exceptional progress in all aspects of their development and learning. The childminder has embraced the Early Years Foundation Stage and demonstrates a very clear vision through reflecting on the impact the provision has on enhancing children's lives. Partnerships with parents are highly effective in identifying and meeting the individual needs of each child in her care.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extending inclusive practice further by exploring strategies to promote non-verbal communication.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder has maintained her exceptional practice through engaging in reflective consideration of how she works in order to improve outcomes for every child. She states that her aim is for all children to have fun, learn new skills and

stay safe in her care. To this end, the childminder is highly successful, working strongly as a team with her assistant to support each child. Parents are reassured that all adults in the household have undergone suitable checks and have undertaken updated training in relevant issues such as child protection and first aid.

The children are fully safeguarded as the childminder has a sound knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. She is aware of the known indicators of abuse and neglect and has relevant information readily to hand to report any concerns swiftly if necessary. Children are guided to become aware of their own safety as the childminder undertakes stringent and detailed risk assessments both on and off the premises. These are regularly updated and reviewed as necessary and the childminder acts instinctively to address any concerns. For example, the children now wear high visibility tabards when out and about to contribute to their safety.

Children enjoy selecting from the vast range of resources and equipment on offer. They make choices about their play and activity, with some children clearly articulating their wishes to the childminder and her assistant, confident in the response they receive as resources stored up higher are made more easily available. Resources are plentiful, well-maintained and the childminder considers children's ages and stages of development as she purchases and presents them to the children. Positive images of diversity are reflected in the selection of toys as children are encouraged to become aware of their world and the childminder exploits local resources to develop this. Children visit amenities and venues in the community and delight in visiting the city to explore museums and parks to expand their experiences. The childminder has not, as yet, catered for children from families where English may be an additional language. However, she is keen to expand this aspect and explore a range of strategies to improve her well-established inclusive practice further. Some children enjoy copying 'Mr Tumble' on children's television as they use simple sign language.

Extremely effective links with the parents and carers are fostered and contribute very strongly to the true sense of partnership that exists. Parents comment in questionnaires and cards expressing their great satisfaction and pleasure at the effort the childminder and her assistant put into the care and welfare of their children. Some comments include: 'my child's needs are truly provided for, including a sense of family'; '(child) is often brimming over with conversation about his day' and 'I am more than satisfied with care (child) receives; to (child) its like being with family'. The childminder is acutely aware of developing effective partnerships with other providers and professionals who may be involved in the children's early years experiences. This enables children to make a consistent and more sensitive transition to settings such as pre-school and nursery.

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

The childminder and her husband give outstanding support to each child's development and learning, sustaining a high quality of interaction throughout the

day. They work extremely seamlessly as a team ensuring that each child's needs are addressed, mindful of their individual moods, experiences and wishes. The childminder has high expectations of what children can learn and plans accordingly to ensure each child is challenged, extended and engaged purposefully in their activities. She is an intuitive practitioner, reacting to children's interests and levels of ability. Each child's developmental record is a clear indication of where they are in their development and learning. Clear reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and direct, personalised information is highly effective in promoting the next steps in their progress.

Children are extremely settled, content and busily engaged in their play and learning. Using her innate sense of how children learn effectively through play, planning is highly targeted at setting appropriate challenges to engage each child. Any gaps in attainment are easily identified as the childminder knows each child exceptionally well, responding to their intrinsic characters with intuition and care. For example, she modifies the activities presented for one child due to the child having had little sleep during the night. The indoor environment together with equipment and toys is exceptionally well planned. For example, the toy room is large enough to site a large plastic playhouse offering children a space where they can engage in imaginative role play and also secrete themselves, as they believe, from adult eyes. Such concern for children's emotional development demonstrates how the childminder respects and values each child as a unique individual.

Children are active learners and are encouraged to analyse and think critically. They sit with the childminder and her assistant to build the marble rally, knowing that they need to refer to the 'instructions' to get it right. This activity is also used by the childminder to promote turn taking, the development of concentration and patience and enjoying the sense of achievement when it works. The delight is shared by all as the marbles are then sent off on their journey down through the intricate path to the bottom. Again, they consider the safety aspect of this activity, being encouraged to consider the presence of a younger child with regard to possible hazards with the marbles. Further extension is planned as children learn to recognise and identify shapes and they not only have the usual resources of laminated cards and inset puzzles. Intuitive use is made of a looped and tied piece of string as children work together to hold the loop and pull it into the required shapes. When creating a square, one child also identifies that, from her perspective, it also looks like a diamond.

Children's communication, language and literacy is very well developed. The childminder repeats words as a young child paraphrases her conversation. One child spells his name out phonetically, from memory, and receives well-earned praise from the childminder for being able to do it without seeing the letters written down. Where children excel in key aspects of their learning and development the childminder is instinctive in extending this. She is also very mindful of where gaps may appear, for instance, in a child's creative and imaginative play. She then plans activities in partnership with parents to engage children in key activities that will promote such aspects of their development.

Children delight in watching films of themselves as they go on various visits. One child vocally seeks out the childminder's assistant calling him to come and see the

film when he held the child's hand during a visit to the museum. Conversations are sparked off as children identify each other on a recent visit to the local fire station and one child's confidence is boosted as they are assisted by a fire-fighter to activate the hose. Some children show exceptional skills regarding information technology, using a computer and managing their own suitable games. One child demonstrates how the game is loaded and the mouse is used with dexterity to achieve. Care is taken in such activities as the childminder works closely with parents to ensure that children do not monopolise the computer activities, learning to share and ensuring that their all-round development is promoted too.

Children gain a practical insight into the merits of following highly effective personal care routines. They eagerly show visitors their individual towels, identifying their designs and knowing why hand washing is important in keeping germs at bay. They know the routines well, arriving at lunch time from their other settings and preparing for their lunch. After lunch, children brush their teeth and refer to the attractive posters that remind them of such routines. Balanced and nutritious meals are prepared by the childminder who discusses dietary needs with parents. They enjoy the social interaction as they sit together around the table and request their favourite flavours of yoghurt.

The childminder describes her role as being 'the best job in the world'. She is justifiably proud of the impact her extremely effective practice has on children as they develop skills for the future and become contributing citizens in society.

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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