

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	307802
Inspection date	11/06/2009
Inspector	Valerie Block
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 and lives with her husband in a bungalow in Slyne, Lancaster, within walking distance of local amenities and schools. She always works with her husband, who is also a registered childminder. The two childminders work closely together, with this childminder taking overall responsibility for activity planning and general organisation. Very occasionally they employ an assistant. There are two assistants available. When working alone, she is registered to provide care for up to six children under the age of eight. When working together they can mind up to 10 children under the age of 11 years. Currently they are minding 13 children under the age of 11, mostly in the early years age group. Three of the couple's grandchildren are included in this number. The childminder is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

All areas of the property, apart from the front garden and the main bedroom, are used for childminding. There is a designated indoor playroom available that is directly accessible to the garden that is fully enclosed.

Both childminders are accredited members of their local network offering nursery granted places. They support children with additional needs. Both childminders have professional qualifications in early years care and education.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is outstanding as the childminder and her co-worker provide a really stimulating, welcoming environment in which children thrive and make good progress. The childminder uses parental information as well as observations and assessments to acquire an excellent knowledge of children's unique qualities and provides activities that build on children's knowledge and interests. This childminder has a wealth of experience as well as qualifications in childcare and education. She is well aware of the areas of strength and areas for improvement using information from children and parents, as well as using knowledge from the many courses attended, to improve practice at this setting.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- taking advantage of further training and information about the Early Years Foundation Stage
- reviewing the risk assessment regarding children's access to unregistered parts of the house.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminding provision is very well organised and all documentation is in place to promote the welfare of children. The childminder, together with her co-minder, has developed many other records and policy statements that enhance this provision for the children's benefit. The organisation of the premises is outstanding, for example, there is a designated playroom with an area for messy and creative play where children can access a good amount of interesting, varied toys and play materials. This room opens directly to the garden where there are many opportunities for outside exercise and physical challenge, as well as a vegetable garden for the children. Within this children's area is a child-sized toilet and basin that children are able to access without difficulty themselves. There also is a very welcoming reception area where there is a wealth of information for parents as well as child sized coat hooks for children to hang their coats and bags. Health and safety procedures are very robust so the children's health is well protected and information is researched about childhood illness and shared with parents. Risk assessments for the premises and outdoor visits are in place and regularly reviewed to keep children safe. The childminder has a very robust understanding of child protection procedures as she has attended courses on this subject over her many years of childminding, so protecting children from harm.

The childminder has excellent relationships with parents who advise that they are extremely happy with the service offered and the care and attention that their children receive at this setting. Children with additional needs are given very attentive and professional support from the provider and parents are most grateful for this support. Information is received from parents to ensure that the providers know about children's individual interests, development and needs so they can provide continuity for each child's care. Information is exchanged with other childcare and education providers to enhance the coherence of care for each child. The childminder gives verbal and written feedback each day so that parents are well informed of their child's progress. A diary has been developed that includes pictures of areas the child has been learning about so children can talk to parents about what they are doing at the childminder's home. Parents are also included in the learning and development of their child as the two parties have excellent communication processes to achieve this. For example, photographs are kept on children's individual memory sticks for parents' information and there is a digital photograph frame in the reception area, showing new photographs of what the children have been doing that day. The setting has an anti-discriminatory policy and the childminder shows an active attitude towards ensuring children and families are made welcome and included.

The childminder and her colleague have very good systems to work together and have used information from the parents and children to closely consider their working practices using the Ofsted self-evaluation tool to good advantage. They have an action list to improve their setting that has considered strengths and areas for improvement very well. They have both attended a very good amount of courses over their time as childminders and continue to show a great interest in continued learning for the benefit of the children. As part of their network they

regularly meet with advisors to consider their practice and also research the internet and read childcare publications to improve their practice.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make very good progress as their starting points are well known and their next steps are very clearly understood, documented and regularly discussed with parents. Observation, assessment and planning are very robust and a range of interesting activities reflect children's individual interest and learning needs.

Planning is done for the group and for each child attending to ensure each child's learning needs and any additional needs are met. The childminder has an excellent knowledge of the early learning goals and is very imaginative and thorough about providing an exciting, challenging programme whilst providing very warm, sensitive care.

Children enjoy playing with play dough, using shaped cutters and rolling pins so developing their manual dexterity. They creatively try to make different shapes without cutters and enjoy making big and little worms with the help of the childminder. She talks to them about what they are doing and extends their learning by introducing new words to their vocabulary and encourages communication skills as they talk about the shapes of the cutters and the children's homes and recent events. As part of their recent activities around the theme of growth, they have been doing a gardening project planting seeds and they are planning together to make scarecrows using hay to keep birds off the strawberries they have planted. The childminder has laid out specially chosen books to help children understand about growth, including a South African counting book about seeds. As part of this theme, the children are asking parents for photographs of themselves as babies so they can see how they have changed and grown. To increase their understanding of the children and to help forge links that are understandable to children between home and the setting, the childminders have asked parents to keep a diary, including photographs, to show what the toy 'honey bear' does when he goes home with each of the children in turn.

Children are kept very healthy as the childminder employs robust practices to reduce cross-infection. For example, she encourages people who visit to use hand cleaning gel and also to wear over-shoe covers to keep the floors clean for crawling babies. Children wear hats and sun cream on sunny days to keep them healthy and drinks are available at all times. Children are encouraged to have regular outdoor exercise in all weathers as the childminders provide wellingtons for children's use. The children know they are washing away germs to keep healthy as they wash their hands after using the toilet because the childminders regularly talk to children about how to keep safe and healthy. The children understand about fire evacuation procedures as they regularly have fire drills together. Children talk about how they must be quick and leave things behind.

Children are developing skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being as they become increasingly confident in information and communication technology, using the family computer and other electronic equipment. Children also behave very well as they are encouraged to respect other people and be kind

to one another. Children ask if toys can be out when younger children get up from sleep, so showing care and concern for other children. The childminders have used training in the use of persona dolls to help children express their feelings and to consider other people's feelings when there is conflict. Children begin to learn about diversity as they have a very good amount of available toys and books showing positive images of diversity and the childminders plan activities to help children consider differences 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

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?	1
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?	2
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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