

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	04/03/2010
Inspector	Eileen Grimes
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 1992. She is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She lives with her husband and grown up children. They live on the outskirts of Durham City, close to schools and local amenities. The childminder uses the whole of the ground floor for childminding. There is an enclosed play area to the rear of the house which children are able to access for outdoor play.

There are systems in place to support children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. She attends the local toddler groups and takes children to the park and local facilities.

The childminder is registered to care for six children at any one time. She is currently caring for 10 children, of whom three are within the early years age range. The childminder's mother works as an assistant.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder provides a caring and comfortable family environment and acknowledges that each child is unique, with their own needs and interests. Children are very settled and play happily together, and relate well to the childminder's grown up family. She has a clear knowledge and understanding of her role and responsibilities to protect children and safeguards them very well. Children are making visible progress in their overall learning and development as they enjoy activities within the home. The childminder builds and maintains very good relationships with parents and the local schools. She has started the process of self-evaluation as a way of developing and improving her practice to promote outcomes for children effectively. She has good capacity for continual improvement and has met the recommendations raised at the last inspection. She has a clear understanding of her strengths and weaknesses and is taking purposeful steps to improve her practice.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to develop observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles
- ensure an accurate record is kept of children's attendance.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder demonstrates a sound understanding of the clear child protection procedures that are in place to protect children. All adults living in, or regularly visiting the childminder's home have complied with the required suitability checks. The premises are secure to prevent children from leaving and unauthorised persons from entering. The childminder supervises children closely at all times and they play safely with age-appropriate toys. She has detailed written risk assessments in place to identify and minimise hazards to children both within the home and on outings. She encourages children to learn about possible dangers, especially when crossing roads, as well as keep themselves safe through house rules within the home. Fire evacuation procedures are in place and are regularly practised with the children and recorded. All required documentation and parental permissions to support the care of children and to safeguard their welfare are in place, although the attendance register does not clearly reflect when children are at school.

The childminder uses the space within her home well to create a welcoming, homely environment, where children enjoy a broad range of interesting activities. Children settle quickly into a secure routine for their care, learning and play. At present, the number of children in place at any one time is low and this allows children to have appropriate individual attention according to their needs. The childminder has established sound relationships with schools and other agencies. She understands the importance of partnership working and ensures that these are in place for continuity of care. The childminder is developing very positive working relationships with parents. She shares a well-presented, comprehensive file with them, which includes general information on herself, her setting and the childminding policies and procedures. Regular discussions take place about the child's day and parents receive a very good verbal information on their child's activities, food and routine. The flexible settling period helps children to quickly become comfortable in their new surroundings. Parents are at ease about leaving them in the childminder's care and have positive comments on the care their children receive.

The childminder shows good commitment to extending her knowledge by researching on the internet and attending further training, to enhance the quality of care the children receive. She monitors children's progress closely and reflects on the activities she provides, in order to provide the children with further challenges. The childminder is beginning to reflect on her practice and seeks the views of parents to support her evaluation. This means that the childminder can target areas for improvement, to have the greatest impact on the outcomes for children.

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

Children are extremely happy and relaxed as they play and learn in the comfortable, child-centred environment. They smile, laugh and dance with no inhibitions. They are developing very good self-esteem as a result of the praise, warm eye-contact and cuddles they receive from the childminder. Children are very confident of their place in the setting and play very cooperatively. They have access to a good range of toys and resources, many of which are available for them to access themselves.

For much of their time, children are free to choose their own activities and the childminder supports them by sitting with them to extend their play, for example, reading stories or playing with small world activities. However, the childminder also plans a range of activities, such as outings to local places of interest and playgroups. In addition, she makes good use of naturally occurring events, such as the snow, to offer children the opportunity to explore with the snow and to build snowmen. Children are able to experience a wide range of activities and resources which reflect the wider society. The childminder has a range of resources available and supplements these through the use of the local toy library. This reflects her positive approach to inclusion and equality.

Young children play with small world activities, construction toys and wooden train tracks, which encourage them to develop their problem solving and reasoning skills. They are also learning to understand concepts, such as, matching, sorting and sequencing, as they explore different colours, shapes and sizes. All children enjoy very regular opportunities to express themselves creatively through music and song and all children take part in arts and crafts activities. The childminder plans a range of activities which are linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage and carries out sensitive observations which are then linked to the areas of learning. However, these are not transferred to children's files on a regular basis.

Children are given an excellent level of support to understand the benefits of healthy living. They are encouraged to wash their hands before eating and also learn about the importance of good food hygiene. They have constant access to drinks and are reminded to take a drink after physical exercise. Children are provided with nutritious snacks and meals. They are aware of the effect of foods on their bodies, they talk about drinking milk for strong bones and teeth and that some foods are good for your blood which helps you stay healthy. Children take regular exercise both on outings and within the childminder's home. Young children have a good amount of clear floor space to practise their mobility.

The strong promotion of children's self-esteem and social skills, together with the high levels of independence they are developing, helps to prepare them for the future. In addition, they learn how to manage their own behaviour effectively in order to keep themselves safe, for example, to behave sensibly in crowded places and to cross roads carefully. Appropriate procedures are in place to deal with sickness and to administer medication. The childminder maintains a current first-aid certificate enabling her to deal with minor accidents.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

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	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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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