

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	25/11/2009
Inspector	Angela Rowley
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 2000. She lives with her husband, and two children, one who is of adult age and one aged 13 years. They live in the Thatto Heath area of St. Helens, Merseyside, close to shops, parks, schools and public transport links. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's home is used for childminding, except the lounge. The childminder does not use her garden for childminding purposes. She is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA) and holds an early years qualification to level 3.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, no more than three of which may be in the early years age range. She works at times with her husband and her daughter as assistants and during these times she may care for a maximum of six children in the early years age range. She is currently minding nine children in total in this age group, most in part-time places. She also offers care to children aged over five years to 11 years and has five children on roll in this age group. The childminder is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

The childminder has a clear knowledge of each child's family background and so every child is valued and their individual needs are met. She liaises sufficiently with parents and with others to meet children's care needs and to promote children's general learning and development. Mostly effective implementation of a comprehensive range of policies and procedures means that outcomes for children, their learning and their welfare are satisfactory. Most requirements are met though a small number of records have not been clearly maintained. The childminder is beginning to consider basic self-evaluation although the monitoring of children's progress or quality of the provision is not yet systematic enough to target specific areas for development. Some appropriate plans to further develop the provision for children are in place which demonstrates a sound basis to maintain a capacity for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure written consent is requested from a parent of every child to allow the seeking of emergency medical treatment and to allow the assistant to be in sole charge of the children for short periods. (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)

23/12/2009

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

- develop further the systems for observing what children can do so they can be used to plan a range of activities that help each child take the next steps towards the early learning goals
- improve partnership working to share more information about children's progress and future plans for learning to promote consistency and continuity
- develop further systems for self-evaluation using quality improvement and monitoring processes to identify priorities for development, including weaknesses in the educational programme, and further improve the provision for children
- develop further the system for planning children's experiences to ensure all areas of learning are delivered through purposeful play with a balance of adult-led and child-led activities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are suitably safeguarded. The childminder has established a broad range of policies and procedures which generally work effectively to promote their welfare and keep them safe. She has a clear understanding of her duties and responsibilities with regard to child protection issues and works in partnership with other agencies to safeguard children's welfare. The childminder is vigilant about safety issues and conducts suitable risk assessments both indoors and on outings. Her clear routines, on school runs, for example, help children learn how to keep themselves safe. Attention to managing children's safety is hindered, however, because although the childminder maintains a suitable range of appropriate record keeping systems she has not routinely requested written consent to allow her assistant to care for children unsupervised for short periods. She has also not maintained clear written consent to allow the seeking of emergency medical treatment from a small number of parents, which is a breach of requirements. The childminder promotes children's good health effectively. She has clear procedures to ensure she and her assistants know about and meet individual health needs. She ensures they are well nourished through the provision of a varied, nutritious diet. She implements and encourages good standards of hygiene to prevent the spread of infection and help children learn about healthy lifestyles.

Children are well supported in the setting as the childminder effectively uses her time and that of her assistant. The childminder strives to provide a service that meets the needs of every child. The environment is made welcoming through displays of posters depicting positive images of diversity, interesting toys and open shelving enabling children to access resources of their choice. The home is very clean and well maintained and is used suitably to promote children's care and learning. All facilities are on the ground floor which enables children with physical disabilities to play a full and independent part in the setting. The childminder supports them well thus helping to narrow gaps in achievement. Mostly suitable documentation systems mean parents are well informed about how the setting operates. Discussions about children's needs and activities means children are well cared for and the childminder supports basic learning, though she lacks confidence

in sharing concerns about children's development and is not yet using her observation and assessment systems to plan for children's learning with parents. The childminder has developed some basic partnerships with other providers of children's care and education to help provide a cohesive approach to learning.

The childminder is motivated to continually develop her provision. She has begun to evaluate her provision and developed her documentation systems in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. She keeps in contact with other childminders and services and through this she recognises some appropriate ideas for improvement. However, systems to inform her self-evaluation are not yet sufficiently robust to ensure that she focuses on some of the most significant areas for development in order to provide consistently well for children's care and learning.

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

The childminder's sound knowledge of the EYFS requirements, along with her experience in childminding, means children are suitably cared for and have their individual needs met. The provision is relaxed and so children develop at their own rate making generally suitable progress across most areas of learning. They develop confidence as they feel safe in the supportive environment where they are able to operate independently, freely accessing toys and following through their own ideas. The childminder and her assistant question children in play to extend their thinking. As they are involved in play with the children they make some observations of what children can do and use the play to assess children's abilities. The childminder has a sufficient and growing understanding of the learning and development requirements. She is beginning to implement systems to record her observations to ensure she knows how children are progressing across all areas. However, assessment arrangements are not yet robust or systematic enough to inform specific plans for each child's learning across all areas or to ensure a balance of adult-led activities to optimise opportunities for learning. As a result, opportunities for children to develop an awareness of and begin to use information and communication technology (ICT) is not as well promoted as other areas and children have limited opportunities to use the outdoor environment to support their exploratory impulses. This means children do not always make as much progress as they could.

Children develop some skills for the future. Their understanding of the world they live in is broadened through regular trips and outings and as they recycle general household rubbish. They count routinely in their play and use mathematical language as they discuss making a 'long' line. Children have free access to books and use language to develop their play. Through the well-planned environment they are able to operate independently and think creatively. They decide to use long strips of matting as sticks to make a fire. Playing co-operatively they collect them and make a pile. Children see the written word, numbers and letters all around the environment.

Children happily spend their time in the childminder's care and have developed

secure relationships. They benefit from the well-organised environment which provides them with consistent routines and care. Consequently, children develop confidence as they feel safe and have a clear sense of security in the setting. There is a clear emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development and, as a result, children make some good progress in this area. They know what is expected of them and their behaviour is generally good. Their self-care skills are well developed and they learn to recognise and meet their own health needs independently. For example, children access the bathroom freely. They know to wash hands at key times using anti-bacterial soap and disposable towels to prevent the spread of infection. They see posters as reminders to wash hands and keep themselves clean in addition to images of fruit and vegetables as reminders about healthy eating. These consistent self-care routines, along with some interesting activities and experiences, help children adopt behaviours associated with healthy lifestyles from an early stage. They exercise vigorously during play on the park and on weekly outings to children's music and physical activity sessions.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

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	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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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