

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	506834
Inspection date	22/03/2011
Inspector	Susan Ennis
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 registered in 1997. She lives with her husband and four children aged 15, 17, 18 and 19 years in Watford, Hertfordshire close to shops, parks and schools. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is access to a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The family has no pets.

The childminder supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children with English as an additional language

The childminder provides care on each weekday during term-time and school holidays. She is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of three children in the early years age range and is currently minding three children in this age group. She also offers care to children aged over five years and this provision is registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Children on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register share the same facilities as those on the Early Years Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The dedication demonstrated by the childminder enables her to offer an exemplary standard of care and education. Children clearly thrive and make excellent progress across all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage because the childminder has developed highly effective practices and procedures for planning, assessing and promoting their learning. She values diversity and is highly effective in ensuring that children's uniqueness and individuality is recognised. She ensures that all are fully integrated and achieving as much as they can. Excellent partnerships with parents contribute significantly to ensuring that the individual needs of each child are fully met. Thorough and effective monitoring of the setting ensures that the childminder has a comprehensive overview of her strengths. She demonstrates a high commitment to her childminding and is enthusiastic about making and sustaining improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhance further the partnerships with parents to ensure that they feel fully included in their children's learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder demonstrates a very high level of commitment to promoting and maintaining children's safety. She has a robust understanding of the procedures regarding safeguarding children having attended additional training to increase her knowledge, and has all the relevant documentation in place for reporting concerns. She ensures that anyone coming into contact with the children is suitable to do so and has arranged emergency cover should she ever not be able to care for the children herself. Visitor's attendance is recorded and they are made fully aware of the emergency evacuation procedure should it be needed during their stay. Children are cared for in a very secure environment in which their safety is of paramount importance at all times. The home is checked on a daily basis and comprehensive risk assessments are regularly carried out on all areas used by the children, including individual risk assessments regarding particular activities such as using scissors and the paddling pool. The childminder is also very vigilant about the children's use of computers and the internet. She has purchased a laptop for the children's personal use making it easier for her to monitor the sites available. She has a full range of security programs on the laptop and it makes an alarm noise if the children should try to enter an unauthorised site. All this is fully discussed with parents and the children and parents have to give their written permission for their children to use the laptop at the childminder's house further promoting their safety.

The childminder's enthusiasm for her work and her genuine aim to provide high quality care means that she continuously evaluates her practices and makes changes to improve the outcomes for all children and parents. For example, she has updated her documentation to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage regulations and has fully incorporated them into her outstanding day-to-day practice. She has an excellent attitude to training which also leads to rich and varied experiences for the children. She is very receptive to advice and regularly asks for comments from parents and children to enhance her role. Following a recent questionnaire, parents and children demonstrate their contentment with her through comments such as 'She is very loving, caring and fun. I would recommend the childminder to anyone in need of a fantastic childminder'. Children share their views through pictures made for the childminder. These include comments such as 'I love you and the other people' written next to a picture of the childminder.

The childminder provides a very welcoming and stimulating environment which is exceptionally conducive to children's learning and development. Resources are very well organised and storage is at child level encouraging their self-selection and independent choices. The childminder makes excellent use of the available space by providing, for example, areas for older children who wish to play with resources such as building bricks. They make effective use of the conservatory which is fitted with a safety gate to prevent the younger children accessing the area and potentially picking up the small pieces of brick. The childminder has also recently fitted blinds to this room to make it more comfortable for the children to play in. They delight in using it as a bird hide, watching the family of Robins who

moved into the childminder's old Christmas tree. The children are able to observe the birds building their nest and hatching their young, developing their understanding of the natural world as they do so.

The childminder consistently and actively promotes equality and diversity and tackles unfair discrimination. She therefore offers a service that is extremely inclusive for all children and their families. She works closely with the parents to ensure that she understands their and each child's background, needs and beliefs. For example, she supports parents with limited use of English to access all the relevant information they need and helps the children with their written homework when parents find it difficult to understand the content. For children for whom English is an additional language, she makes imaginative use of hand gestures, picture signs and familiar words in the child's home language to make them feel secure and settled. She also encourages the children to play together harmoniously. She teaches them sign language so that they can comfortably communicate with each other and enables them to contribute to the setting rules. For example, they decide together that during free play everyone can choose whatever toys they want to play with despite social conventions and also that no-one is made fun of for the choices they have made. The childminder also effectively helps the children learn about the world in which they live. She provides resources such as puzzles, dolls and play figures that reflect our diverse society, and encourages celebrations of festivals such as Chinese New Year when children colour in pictures of a Chinese Dragon.

The childminder's dedication to building and maintaining trusting and professional relationships with the parents and others involved in the children's lives ensures that children are consistently cared for. For example, when starting their child with the childminder, parents complete a form which enables them to share information about the child enabling the childminder to effectively promote their needs and welfare. The childminder also ensures that parents fully understand her working ethos and excellent practice. She fully discusses all policies and procedures with them and makes copies available if they would like them. Parents are routinely informed about their child's learning through use of a daily diary and continual interaction with the childminder. However, this is an area to be further developed to ensure that parents are fully involved in their children's learning and development. The childminder has forged professional and sharing relationships with other settings attended by the children. She works closely with the pre-schools and schools attended by the children, sharing information where relevant to ensure that a consistent and continuous level of care is given to the children.

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

Children are consistently offered highly appropriate experiences that support them in making excellent progress in all areas of learning. The exceptional range of child-initiated and adult-led activities ensure that children's interests and knowledge are continually being extended. All activities are clearly linked to the areas of learning and planning is rotated ensuring that the children experience a broad range across all areas of development. The childminder discusses children's

starting points with the parents and immediately records this information together with her own initial observations, to plan for children's further progress. Use of observations and assessments then enable her to build on what the children know and plan their next steps. Once achieved, children's development is recorded using the Early Years Foundation Stage development sheets to demonstrate their progress. For example, when children show an interest in threading the childminder plans their next steps to include giving the child more time to pursue their learning without interruption and to return to activities and to provide more materials and activities that they can experiment writing with. The childminder is very aware of the learning intentions to meet each child's individual needs and concentrates on these enabling her to use flexible planning and to follow the children's interests.

The Childminder uses her comprehensive knowledge of child development to draw out the learning experiences from everyday activities. Children thoroughly enjoy helping the childminder pick fruit from a nearby bush. They then develop their weighing, measuring and cooking skills to make jam and home-made bread to eat it with. Children further develop their problem solving as they work out how to turn on a musical toy by pressing the relevant buttons. Once confident, they repeat the action more than once dancing along to the sounds made. The childminder very effectively supports children in their play. Younger children are sat in front of her as she encourages them to pass the ball to each other. They are praised for their accuracy and good catching skills. Once younger children start to feel more confident they anticipate the ball coming their way, waving their arms in the air and giggling. Children develop their creative skills as they participate in making, for example, leaves to be stuck onto their spring tree display. They count how many leaves they have coloured in and are then encouraged to 'reach up high' to stick them on the bare branches. They are enthusiastically praised by the childminder building their confidence and self esteem.

Children's emotional development is extremely well promoted as they develop secure and trusting relationships with the childminder and each other. The childminder has cared for many of the children since they were young babies and treats them very much as part of her family. Younger children demonstrate their trust in the relationship as they fiddle with the childminder's hair when they start to feel tired. Children are able to have input into the activities provided especially those planned for the school holidays when they, for example, enjoy travelling to a nearby town on the train or going out to a restaurant for lunch. The childminder acts as a very positive role model, praising children's good behaviour and helping them make the right choices. The childminder uses house rules to help children learn the boundaries and other strategies to maintain their interest. For example, to stop children from becoming bored with activities such as shopping, they are given their own shopping list encouraging them to look for the required items whilst helping the childminder at the same time. They also like to play a game whilst getting ready for school in the mornings giving the childminder time to get the younger children settled into their pushchair. They choose which sort of line they would like to make, for example, in order of height, names or an American wave. The childminder is then asked to check that they have completed it correctly before they quickly fit in a game of eye spy which is also a favourite.

Children's health and hygiene is actively promoted as the childminder takes very effective steps to minimise the spread of infection and develop children's understanding of healthy living. For example, they discuss different types of foods as they cut out pictures of fruit and vegetables to make their own place mats. They also discuss the not so healthy items and why these must be limited in their diet. They are learning where food comes from as they grow a large variety of vegetables in the childminder's garden. In fact they enjoy this so much that the childminder is converting a larger area of her garden so that they can have their very own vegetable patch. Children are also involved in deciding which meals to have for tea. They take it in turn to choose, with pudding often being the childminder's home-made chocolate cake. They are also learning about their own safety and that of others. During a practice of the emergency fire drill the childminder makes the children leave the house without their shoes to demonstrate how quickly they must act if there is a real emergency. They also discuss road safety and know not to walk too far ahead of the childminder. They demonstrate their sense of security with the childminder as they often refuse to go home and are excited about coming in the mornings.

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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