

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	510132
Inspection date	17/08/2009
Inspector	Kathleen Snowdon
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

Registered in 2000, the childminder lives with her husband and 11 year old daughter in Cramlington, Northumberland. Her home is close to all facilities, including local schools and nurseries. All rooms, except for one, on the ground floor are used for childminding and outdoor play takes place in the fully enclosed back garden. The childminder has a pet tortoise.

The childminder is on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. She is registered to care for a maximum of four children at any one time. Currently, there are five children in the early years age group on roll; older children attend also. The childminder takes and collects children from local schools and nurseries.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. The childminder's strong awareness of children's individual needs and abilities enables her to effectively promote their welfare. This inclusive context allows children to make good progress in their learning and development, although assessment needs improvement. Effective partnership working, including the partnership with parents, contributes to the way the childminder evaluates and assesses her practice. Consequently, the scope for continuing improvement is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- record fire drills
- evaluate observations to assess children's progress and to plan activities that will help them reach the next step in their development.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Although there are no records of fire drills, documentation is otherwise well organised, readily available and stored securely to protect confidentiality. Information is amended as soon as changes occur to keep it up to date and accurate and all essential records are in place. The registration certificate is prominently displayed to allow scrutiny as is a poster that explains how parents and other people can contact Ofsted.

Partnership with parents is good. Contracts are used at the beginning of the childminding arrangement to set out clearly the expectations of both parties. Thereafter, daily discussions and daily diaries keep parents and the childminder fully informed of the children's recent experiences. Parents have very positive views of the childminder. They say that she is 'friendly and approachable', describe

her as 'the best in the world' and particularly value 'the warm and caring environment' she provides.

Partnerships with other agencies are also good. The childminder confers with teaching staff from local schools and nurseries, enabling her to complement the care and education the children receive there. In addition, she liaises with health professionals to secure the training and specialist knowledge she needs to meet children's specific physical needs. This collaboration also contributes to the effective way in which the childminder assesses her practice. Recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed and recent training includes first aid and safeguarding.

Good priority is attached to safeguarding. The childminder's knowledge of child protection issues is sound and she is confident about how to pass on concerns. Practical measures keep the children safe from day to day. For example, the childminder initiates worthwhile conversations with the children to raise their awareness of potential dangers, such as 'stranger danger' and road safety. Additionally, thorough risk assessments are carried out to prevent accidents indoors and out.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals because of the very good support they receive from the childminder. She knows them well and plans activities that are based on their personal abilities, starting points and interests. However, although she makes observations of the children, the childminder does not evaluate these to assess how children are progressing or to plan the next steps in their development.

Nevertheless, the children take part in a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities that cover all areas of learning and offer them ample scope in which to have fun and enjoy themselves. For example, the children use large boxes to represent cars or science fiction characters. This encourages them to pretend and imagine and helps them to make good use of ordinary household objects. As well as this, they sing, role play, put on 'shows', make models and paint, all of which allow the children to express their creativity.

There are very good opportunities for children to increase their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are intrigued by natural things. They enjoy feeding the childminder's tortoise, for instance, and like to study cobwebs, especially when they are coated in dew. These experiences prompt them to ask questions about, and develop an interest in, nature. The children plant sunflowers, which lets them study growth and they learn about the effects of the sea when they collect pebbles and shells during walks on the beach.

The children really enjoy outdoor activities. They love playing in a nearby field, for example, where they run around freely under the supervision of the childminder. This allows the children to take a degree of risk and encourages them to be active. Indoors, the children eat nutritious and appetising meals and snacks, which help

them form healthy tastes and preferences. Consistent routines, like frequent hand washing, teach the children the importance of personal hygiene, while the sensible sick children policy contains the spread of illnesses.

Relationships between the childminder and the children are very good, so the children are happy and secure. Consistent and sensitive guidance enables them to behave well and helps them to understand right from wrong. They celebrate world festivals and handle a wide range of good quality and easily accessible toys and resources, many of which show positive images of culture, disability, gender and ethnicity. These factors teach children to respect and value different people and different ways of life.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	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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