

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	09/03/2011
Inspector	Dianne Andrews
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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the childminding

The childminder was registered in 1999. She lives with her husband and two children, aged nine and 13 years, in a residential area of Chelmsford, Essex. The whole of the childminder's home is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for six children at any one time and has five children currently on roll. She offers places for children on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. She walks or drives to the local pre-school and school to take and collect children. She attends a parent and toddler group with children and also takes them to local recreational facilities. She can support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also children who speak English as an additional language. The family has two cats.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children have access to stimulating and interesting learning opportunities. They are recognised as unique individuals and supported in their development in a way which is appropriate to each child. Systems are being reviewed and adapted to support the education programme as children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Arrangements to promote children's welfare are implemented effectively in a caring, homely and secure environment. Positive links with parents, based on effective information sharing, help to involve them in the children's care and education. The childminder is using good systems to evaluate her practice. She is committed to the continuous provision of a childminding service that is sensitive and responsive to the future needs of the children she cares for.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the risk assessment to ensure that it covers anything with which a child may come into contact, such as the activities they take part in, to ensure children's safety and well-being
- develop the use of observations and assessments, identifying learning priorities and planning relevant learning experiences for each child.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder effectively manages procedures to safeguard children. Her role in protecting children from harm is fully understood and based on the Local Safeguarding Children Board's guidelines. She ensures parents and carers are also well-informed through the written child protection policy, which is shared with them. Suitability checks had been completed on household members to provide reassurance to parents that they are suitable to have contact with children. There are good procedures in place so that appropriate action is taken in the event of accidents and both the childminder and her assistant hold a relevant first aid qualification. The childminder is vigilant about children's safety and ensures that effective actions are taken to manage and eliminate risks; however, written risk assessments do not show how children use larger equipment, such as the trampoline, safely.

The childminder's assistant is instrumental in the maintenance of many well-organised systems, which effectively support children's care and well-being. Methods for gathering information are well considered and adapted to suit the ages of children attending. For instance, the templates for daily diaries are pertinent to each age group and these are used effectively to share information with parents. Documentation to further support children's well-being are in place. Consent forms are completed to confirm parents' agreement to emergency medical care or advice and outings, and daily registers of children's and visitor's arrival and departure times are accurately maintained.

Parents know about the progress their children are making through regular discussion and periodic access to their children's developmental profiles. The profiles include photographs and anecdotes and document their achievements. The childminder is developing her systems to show how she is using observations and assessments to plan for the next steps in children's development across all areas of learning.

Policies and procedures are comprehensive and ensure that parent's understand how the setting operates, encouraging secure working relationships. Parents' views are gathered to enable the childminder to develop her practice. The glowing comments made by the parents show their complete satisfaction with the service; 'my childminder has played a big part in my child's development;' 'my children have built a fantastic relationship with the childminder and her husband;' 'we can rest assured that our child is given the same type of care he would receive at home.' Many parents state that their children do not want to leave the provision at the end of their session, demonstrating that their children are happy and enjoy their time there. The childminder recognises the benefits of partnership working with other providers to promote consistency in children's learning.

A good understanding of issues relating to diversity and equality of opportunity is demonstrated. The childminder uses her knowledge to ensure that her childminding service is inclusive to all children and their families. She provides good support for children with English as an additional language; parents comment

that the childminder proactively introduces aspects of their culture and language to enhance their children's development.

Vibrant posters and wall displays, along with the effective organisation of toys to suit the children attending, make the spacious surroundings stimulating, welcoming and child-friendly. Children's experiences in the home are enhanced through outings and attendance at community groups and local amenities.

The childminder has a realistic view of her practice. She is keen to develop her knowledge base further through discussions with other local professionals, the reading of periodic childcare publications and the attendance of training. She uses self-assessment and external evaluation systems to plan for future improvements.

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

The childminder is experienced and demonstrates her good understanding about how children learn. She uses spontaneous opportunities to challenge their thinking, for instance, by encouraging them to solve problems; putting a jigsaw piece in the wrong place or by purposefully missing a 'match' in a game of pairs. Systems to support the delivery of the educational programme are being developed and adapted.

Children form secure attachments with the childminder and her assistant, which promotes their self-esteem and emotional development well. They are happy and settled and they thrive because of the care and attention they receive, happily approaching their carers for reassurance or when they want their help. The childminder is familiar with children's likes and dislikes and ensures their favourite activities are available. She supports language development well as she models words, which the young children copy. Children access books and look at the pictures, pointing to words, showing an interest in the story and developing an understanding that print carries meaning.

Children adopt healthy lifestyles, practise appropriate personal care routines, enjoy nutritious snacks and access drinks whenever they are thirsty. They take part in a wide variety of play experiences and activities, in both the indoor and outdoor environments and within the community, and these support their learning and development well. They make good use of the outdoor environment whenever possible for active games or planned activities, such as, discovering the changes in nature through the seasons and developing knowledge about the world around them. They explore local parkland, searching for 'animal houses', finding evidence in mole holes, birds nests and the pond. Planned activities are developed around the theme and offer children opportunities to make connections in their learning. They take part in creative and hands-on activities, such as, weaving twigs they have collected to make nests and decorating dragonfly templates using a variety of tools and attractive materials.

Through quirky and well-researched activities, children learn about their own and their peers' cultures. They dress in their pyjamas for National Sleepy Head Day,

which is celebrated in Finland, and create special day cards for Mother's and Father's Days, which fall on different days in the different countries. Children benefit from the introduction of simple words in other European languages and are encouraged to respect and value one another. As a result, they feel included and safe.

Children behave well and respond to the house rules and the childminder's expectations, for instance, not climbing on the furniture. As children access the wide range of resources, they are reminded how to use them safely. They develop an understanding of dangers and how to keep themselves safe, and visit the police museum and the fire station, where safety messages are reiterated.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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	2
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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