

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY240223
Inspection date	12/08/2009
Inspector	Sonjia Nicholson
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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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

The childminder was registered in 2002. She lives with her partner in a house in Amersham, Buckinghamshire close to a number of amenities including shops, the library, parks, schools and pre-schools. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. Children sleep in travel cots set up in several of the first floor bedrooms. The family has a cat. The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She may care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, three of whom may be in the early years age group. However, an exemption currently applies which allows her to care for four children in the early years age group. The childminder is registered to care for up to two children overnight. There are currently 18 children on roll, six of whom are within the early years age range. The childminder supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. She has a Certificate in Childminding Practice (CCP) qualification and is a member of the National Childminding Association. The childminder is also a member of an approved childminding network, although no children in receipt of funding for nursery education currently attend.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the provision is outstanding. Children feel relaxed and happy within this exceptional setting. The childminder recognises that each child is unique and provides opportunities through discussion and planned activities for them to form their own opinions and develop respect and confidence. Children benefit from the fact the childminder has taken considerable steps to improve her practice. She is forward thinking and has clear targets in place for her future development, such as, to complete her Forest School training in order to continue to enhance children's outdoor learning experiences.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure there are clearly defined procedures in place for the emergency evacuation of children staying overnight.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder is extremely well organised in all aspects of her service. She is highly professional and ensures all necessary documentation is maintained, including a range of well-written policies relating to all areas. The childminder has gathered an extensive selection of information from the internet, along with leaflets and reference books to inspire her practice and help keep parents up to

date with current thinking. Her detailed portfolio is shared with parents during pre-visits so they know what to expect from her and she ensures daily verbal contact to share feedback and allay any concerns they may have. She provides a wealth of information for parents on a regular basis so they can be involved in their children's care and education, including monthly menu sheets, activity plans, including specific activities and outings during school holidays, and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) information leaflet "It's Child's Play". Parents hold the childminder in high regard as featured in many written references, cards and questionnaires. They particularly highlight her 'warm and loving approach', 'genuine interest in the children's welfare', 'high safety awareness', 'flexibility' and 'willingness to go over and above the strict call of duty'. As a founder member of the Buckinghamshire National Childminding Association "Children Come First" Network she is accredited to receive nursery education funding for three and four year olds. She attends regular network meetings and appreciates the help and support given by the network coordinator in improving the quality of her service. The childminder is highly motivated and committed to attending a wide range of training courses and workshops to add to her skills and knowledge, most recently, 'Safeguarding', 'Sound Development' and 'Paediatric First Aid', which she successfully implements into her daily practice.

Rigorous ongoing evaluation ensures children receive the highest levels of care, learning and development within the childminder's home. She has thoroughly met the recommendation raised during her last inspection so that the step leading into the craft area is now clearly marked by adhesive hazard warning tape with several warning signs with text and a picture on display to raise both children and adults' awareness of this potential trip hazard. The childminder has many interesting plans for the future, including taking photographs of local shopkeepers to add to the children's inclusion poster and making a variety of laminated cards with numbers on for the children to use indoors and outdoors to support their problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills. The childminder gives safety top priority, both within the home and when children are playing outside or on outings. She has some extremely effective systems in place, such as, taking a book on outings containing relevant information about her weekly schedule, details of the children attending, their photograph, emergency contact numbers and their house number and postcode in case the emergency services need to trace where they live. Children also wear wrist tags with the childminder's contact number on it and she is also considering fluorescent armbands as an extra safety measure. Written risk assessments precisely show where there are possible hazards within the home and garden and the action taken; as a result, children move and play safely. Children learn how to handle everyday objects safely, develop independence and learn skills for the future under the childminder's close supervision. For example, they use knives and a vegetable peeler to help prepare their lunch and even operate the toaster independently. As a precaution, fire safety equipment, such as, a fire blanket and smoke alarms are available and children practise the evacuation drill so they know how to leave the home quickly and safely. The childminder keeps meticulous records of these drills so she can assess how children react and make any improvements if necessary. When asked, the childminder is able to describe how she would evacuate the home if children were staying overnight but these details are not clearly defined. The childminder has a sound knowledge of how to safeguard children from possible abuse or neglect through a recent training

course. She has all the necessary information and documentation to hand in order to record and/or report her concerns appropriately.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children flourish in this highly stimulating environment. All areas used by the children are imaginatively resourced with a range of innovative toys and equipment. Children make great use of recycled materials, such as, large wooden spools which they climb and balance on in the garden and off-cuts of wood which they build with. They use buttons, shells and old compact discs to make wind chimes and mobiles which they hang in the garden. Within the home, the childminder encourages children to recycle waste materials into appropriate containers and think about the impact on the planet. Children benefit from the childminder's extensive understanding of the EYFS framework, which means they take part in an excellent range of well-planned activities that cover all six areas of learning. For example, they enjoy playing with coloured rice made by the childminder. They use a water wheel, plates, plastic utensils and containers to explore its properties as the childminder asks questions to make them think critically, such as, 'what happens if you pick up the rice with that spoon? They experiment by using spoons with and without holes to pick up the rice and take pleasure in feeling the texture of it and listening to the sound it makes when sprinkled onto a tray and shaken about. Due to the childminder's recent Forest School training she has proactively adapted her garden so it is now a haven for wildlife and an exciting place for children to focus their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Children grow potatoes in bins, which they harvest, prepare, cook and eat for their lunch. They learn to identify insects in the 'Bug Hotel' where there are logs, canes and bark for children to investigate using the photographic prompts on display close by. Children search for 'fairies' in the shrubs and hide and make camps in the den to the rear of the garden. Children have ample opportunities to make choices about what they want to do, freely accessing the vast array of toys and resources available or consulting the pictorial inventory to help them decide. The childminder involves children in decision making, for example, following several chaotic mealtimes, they draw up a list of acceptable table manners and receive stickers when they achieve each one. Once complete the children enjoy the treat of eating out at a restaurant to show off their good manners.

Children enjoy nutritious, balanced meals and snacks provided by the childminder. She involves children in devising menus and preparing their own meals, for example, they peel, cut and chop carrots, cucumber, cheese, chicken and other healthy options to fill pitta breads for lunch. Each child has their own beaker of drink so they do not become thirsty as they play. Considerable thought has been given by the childminder to help children learn good hygiene habits. They wash their hands before having lunch using liquid soap to kill germs and use a clean flannel to dry their hands on. Several posters and photographs are on display as a prompt. A large basket is available to collect the used flannels which are laundered each day. Tissues are situated around the home at children's level so they can independently 'catch it, bin it, kill it'. Children develop and practise their physical skills as they play in the garden where they climb up the ladder of the climbing

frame and negotiate the 'monkey bars'. The childminder works alongside other local childminders and those in her network to plan stimulating events, such as, a sports day and 'mini Olympics' where children receive medals for their achievements and participation. This is an opportunity for children to socialise with other adults and children and learn new skills. Children also visit inspiring places due to the childminder's intense research into relevant learning experiences. For example, they go to London on the train and visit the Science Museum where they explore building bridges, dry ice and wind force. The childminder creates a photograph album of these events for children to reflect on throughout the year. Children behave well as the childminder has high expectations and clear boundaries in place, for example, they must be kind and helpful towards one another and adults and complete simple household chores to earn a sticker on the 'teamwork' chart. Children learn about the world around them through an extensive range of resources that promote diversity, especially books, maps and a homemade collage depicting different races, cultures and the jobs that people do. The childminder recognises children as unique individuals. She develops very good relationships with them and allows many opportunities for independence within the home, which boosts their confidence and self-esteem. She further shows how much she values them by praising their efforts and displaying their work and often allows children to take their own photographs of pictures and objects they have made so they can share them with their family at home.

Children develop their language skills as the childminder engages them in conversations throughout the day. She freely comments on what they are doing, asks questions to make them think and introduces new vocabulary, for example, she encourages a child who has drawn a picture of a turtle to create a 'habitat' for it using sand and shells. Children's creative development is strongly encouraged through role play situations, for example, a child pretends to make a potion in a plastic witch's cauldron using leaves, sticks and stones in the garden and then dresses up as a pirate inside. The childminder extends this play by helping to create a treasure chest using an empty box and real coins. Children learn new art and craft techniques during their time with the childminder as she has developed detailed resource folders with ideas. For example, they tie-dye t-shirts and make a 'friendship panel' weaving different coloured and textured ribbons and strips of material onto a frame. The childminder has a particular interest in resources that help children discover, investigate and explore. As a result, she has acquired a fantastic selection of instruments, including a telescope, camera, programmable robot, mini metal detector and a sonic explorer that magnifies sound. Children's achievements are methodically documented through photographs and written observations and added to their 'Learning Journey' along with examples of their artwork and emergent writing. These documents are shared with not only parents but children too; they frequently ask to look at them and take great pride in sharing their accomplishments. The childminder uses her observations to plan children's next steps in learning and has skilfully adapted her planning to create specific individual plans for each child; these show that children are making excellent progress. The childminder has developed strong links with some EYFS providers and is continuously making attempts at building relationships with others so that children receive a coherent learning experience.

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?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
---	-----

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
--	-----