

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	28/09/2009
Inspector	Suzette Butcher
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 2004. She lives with her husband and three children aged one, six and 10 years in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire. Most areas of the property are used for childminding and there is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The family has a dog.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of four children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than two may be in the early years age group. She works with an assistant on a part-time basis. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The childminder currently has nine children on roll, of whom four children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children are taken and collected from local schools and taken to toddler groups and outings in the local area. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and Ellesmere Port Childminder Network. She has a level 3 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in childcare.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children feel safe in the childminder's enabling environment where their welfare needs are fully safeguarded. The childminder has a thorough understanding of each child's routines and their family circumstances, achieving a good balance of consistent care and appropriate challenge. Partnerships with parents are secure, with an evolving involvement in their child's learning journey. The childminder's planning for improvement is effective in keeping her up to date with childcare practice through training, reading, consultation and good organisation.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- build on current good practice by increasing opportunities for parents to become more involved in their child's learning journey.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder is conscientious and very well organised. She ensures that children are vigilantly safeguarded and all their welfare needs are met through her comprehensive pack of policies, strategies and procedures. These are reviewed on a regular basis to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness and ensure that all requirements are fully met. The childminder attends safeguarding training on a regular basis to update her knowledge. She also ensures that her assistant is suitable, appropriately trained in first aid and understands safeguarding

procedures. Extensive, robust risk assessments are recorded and reviewed for outings and the whole childminding environment.

The childminder has successfully addressed both recommendations from the last inspection and she continues to seek ways to improve the overall quality of care and education she provides for children and their families. She achieved an NVQ at level 3 in childcare and education in 2007 and she attends local training courses on a regular basis to increase her knowledge and experience. The childminder is keen to share best practice with other practitioners through local, regional and national networking. She reflects critically on her setting's strengths and weaknesses as she completes a range of relevant self-evaluation processes. This enables her to clearly identify her key priorities for improvement and monitor how effectively they promote positive outcomes for children.

The childminder's home is well maintained, with high standards of hygiene followed in daily routines. The childminder is especially vigilant with the family dog, ensuring all areas are cleaned regularly and robust safety procedures are consistently met. Areas and resources are organised to promote children's independence and encourage active learning, in both the indoor and outdoor environment. The childminder provides an enabling, inclusive environment where children are helped to value different aspects of their own and other people's lives. She attends training to enable her to care for a wider range of children. For example, she completed Makaton sign language training and makes good use of this valuable skill to enhance children's language and communication.

Effective partnerships are established with parents during the flexible settling-in period. Parents comment that they are very happy with the quality of care. They write that they 'love the activities they do together' and notice how well their child is developing. Parents and carers value opportunities to share information about their child's daily activities in regular informal chats and in the very effective communication book. Parents record their comments to ensure good continuity of care is maintained. Systems have been introduced to actively involve parents in their child's learning journey towards the early learning goals. However, the childminder has identified this aspect of information sharing as a key area to improve outcomes for children. The childminder describes how she plans to work in partnership with other practitioners within EYFS when the situation arises in the future.

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

The childminder has a good working knowledge and understanding of the EYFS, which provides a firm foundation for children's learning. She acknowledges that there may always be better ways of doing things and regularly reflects on her practice as she refers to EYFS documentation to consolidate her learning. Starting points for each child are established during early discussions with parents and supported through informal observations. Appropriate next steps in learning for children's individual development are identified. These are clearly linked to the early learning goals and used to inform future planning, in order to provide

appropriate challenges. A summary of children's progress highlights their progress towards the early learning goals. Children's individual learning journeys are recorded in an appropriate range of documents in their profile. A scrapbook full of photographs of children's activities, observations and work examples provides visual records of children's play and learning.

The childminder plans monthly activities that are linked to children's interests or current topics, which include multicultural celebrations. This provides a balance of adult-led and child-initiated opportunities. Planning for young children is based on their individual needs and flexible to offer time to practise and develop skills. A suitable range of resources is organised in accessible low-level units to offer children choices. Further resources are in storage and rotated to provide variety. Individual needs are considered in left-handed resources or large and small tools. Children are encouraged to make their own decisions and initiate their own games. They build train tracks for their favourite engines and share their interest with the childminder as they name objects or find a station. Early communication and language skills are strongly promoted through signs, gestures, visual cues, lively songs and games.

Children relate warmly to the childminder in the familiar environment, where they are reassured with hugs and cuddles to help them to feel secure. The childminder joins other childminders at toddler groups to provide opportunities for young children to socialise, join in with group activities and explore different challenges. They learn to share, take turns, play cooperatively and consider other people's feelings. Regular outdoor adventures ensure that children benefit from energetic play activities, as part of a healthy lifestyle. They learn more about the natural world and their environment as they explore opportunities in the childminder's garden, care for the family pets and visit the local park. Safety issues are highlighted to encourage children to learn how to recognise and respond to risks and dangers. For example, children practise emergency evacuation procedures and learn to cross roads safely.

Good hygiene routines promote a healthy environment and children are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own personal care. For example, young children are gently supported and warmly encouraged when they are learning to use a potty. Young children's personal routines are followed as they sleep safely and comfortably and are frequently monitored. Children are offered a choice of healthy snacks and meals and confidently help themselves to their accessible drink throughout the day. They play games to help them to identify healthy options and help to cultivate fruit and vegetables in the childminder's garden. Children develop very good skills for the future through an exemplary range of interactive, problem solving opportunities provided by the childminder. For example, young children enjoy taking their own photographs, download them onto a larger screen, print them and put them in their scrapbooks. Excellent procedures are in place for transition into school and different settings.

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

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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

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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	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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