

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY268764
Inspection date	13/03/2009
Inspector	Sandra Daniels
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 report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

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

The childminder has been registered since 2003. She lives with her husband and three children aged 15, 12 and seven years. They live in Hertford, a short drive from the town centre and close to local schools and parks. The whole of the first floor of the property is used for childminding and there is also some use of the ground floor areas. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The childminder is registered to care for five children under eight years and is currently caring for six children between one and eight years, five of whom are in the early years age group. The childminder attends toddler groups on a regular basis. She is a member of the National Childminding Association and has achieved accredited childminder status, meaning that children can access funding for early years education. The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. The childminder has an excellent understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and how children learn, consequently, she is able to skilfully and effortlessly extend children's learning. All children, regardless of age or need, are welcomed and their individual needs planned for and met to a very high standard. The childminder is highly effective in providing specific activities that interest and challenge children to extend their learning. The childminder is proactive and very professional, embracing new learning and ideas to improve her service. Self-evaluation systems are highly efficient and enable the childminder to build on her strengths and provide excellent levels of care and education, whilst maintaining continuous improvement in outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continuing to develop opportunities to extend learning in the outdoor environment.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are cared for by a suitable and highly qualified childminder. In addition to the required training, the childminder undertakes several short courses, for example, safeguarding children, behaviour management, healthy eating and consulting with children. She has successfully completed training to Level 4 and is in the final year of the Foundation Degree in Early Years. All policies and procedures are unique to the setting and are shared in detail with parents. They are implemented extremely effectively and this ensures children's welfare is highly

promoted in the provision. Children benefit from the solid partnership with parents as they remain extremely involved in all aspects of their child's welfare and learning. Lots of time is spent talking with parents and carers, both before each child starts attending and ongoing throughout the placement. Parents' views are sought in a variety of ways. They receive daily diary sheets with a section for their comments, and 'parents as partners' sheets, on a monthly basis, ensure that the childminder is up to date with each child's latest interests and home life. More detailed annual questionnaires provide parents with further opportunities to comment and share their ideas and suggestions. The childminder plans to collate this information to feed back to parents in her newsletter. Parents contribute to their child's individual plans for learning and are encouraged to support their development at home. Children clearly benefit as the childminder works closely with other professionals working with the children, including practitioners at the pre-school, to ensure they are working together to promote children's learning and development.

Self-evaluation at all levels reflects rigorous monitoring and searching analysis of what the childminder does well and what could be improved. As a result, actions are well targeted and have a significant impact on bringing about sustained improvement to the early years provision. For example, a room on the ground floor of the premises is being re-designed to afford children free and easy access to the garden. The garden itself is also to be developed further to offer children more outdoor exploratory experiences to enhance their learning. Children are also consulted on many levels, consequently, have a clear voice in the setting. Older children complete simple questionnaires, some with pictorial information, whilst babies and toddlers readily show their approval or disapproval. Changes are made to reflect feedback and the childminder makes ongoing improvements to her practice. This includes offering children more choice of fresh fruits and vegetables at snack times.

Children are exceptionally well safeguarded. They are closely supervised at all times and the childminder demonstrates a high level of commitment to promoting their safety. Effective procedures are in place for identifying any child who may be at risk of harm and liaising with the appropriate agencies. Comprehensive and robust risk assessments work well in practice to identify and eliminate potential risks to children. Accidents and incidents are accurately recorded and this information is shared with parents. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as they walk to school with the childminder. Useful resources are used in imaginative ways to reinforce this, such as puppets and activities researched on the internet.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The childminder uses her excellent knowledge and intuitive understanding of how children learn and develop to help them make very good progress. She keeps well documented and beautifully illustrated records of children's achievements to celebrate their achievements, assess their progress and plan for next learning. These records are clearly and directly linked to the EYFS. She listens to and observes children carefully to identify their particular interests, methods of learning

and strengths and uses these to extend their learning across all areas of learning. For example, when toddlers are interested in looking at pictures of other babies and small children, the childminder extends this by talking to them about feelings; whether the children in the pictures look happy or sad. They make comparisons as they talk about hair colour and facial features. Planning is flexible and gives way to spontaneous events, such as the recent snowfall. Children of all ages enjoyed investigating and exploring in the snow. They were intrigued by the small ice puddles and concentrated on picking off pieces and watching them melt. Children feel very much at home and are confident and articulate. The childminder seizes every opportunity to help children consolidate their learning. She gives lots of praise and encouragement to support toddlers' emergent language skills, telling them how clever they are as they repeat words. She explains how she uses each child's interests in different ways, for example, a young child is clearly interested in learning longer, more complicated words and loves words such as elephant and ladybird. Children are confident to request different activities, for example, washing the play equipment in the garden. They choose toys and resources to support their learning and are enthusiastic about new experiences. The childminder provides a rich programme of visits during school holidays and skilfully manages the differing needs of younger and older children by choosing appropriate venues. Children learn to express themselves through singing, craft and painting activities and learn about their own community and the wider world on regular visits.

The childminder has an excellent knowledge of how to promote children's health and well-being. For example, there is a clear and well-written policy shared with parents to exclude children when they have infectious illnesses. Children are encouraged to develop self-care skills, for example, from a young age they learn when and how to wash their hands. Balanced and nutritious meals and snacks are provided and children are encouraged to make healthy lifestyle choices, including daily opportunities to play outside. The childminder uses her instinctive love and understanding of children and their individual needs to promote the inclusion of each child in her care.

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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.