

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	17/05/2011
Inspector	Hilary Preece
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.

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Description of the childminding

The childminder was registered in 2004. She lives with her husband and two children aged ten and eight years in Bishop's Stortford. The whole of the house is used for childminding purposes and there is an enclosed garden available for outside play. The childminder is able to take and collect children from local schools and pre-schools. She takes children regularly to toddler groups. There is a pet hamster.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range. There are currently three children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder also offers care to children aged over five years. She is registered on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association. She holds a Level 3 Diploma in Home-based Childcare.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Exceptional knowledge of each child's needs and highly effective planning enables all children to make great strides towards the early learning goals. Children's health, safety and well-being are promoted to consistently high standards because procedures are rigorous and effective in protecting children from harm. Exemplary partnership working contributes significantly to ensuring the needs of all children are met. Searching analysis and monitoring of what the setting does has led to continuous improvement in standards and indicates further capacity to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- reviewing the policy on equality of opportunities in line with statutory guidance.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and understood very well. The childminder clearly explains her duties in protecting children to parents initially and knows precisely what procedure to follow in the event of any concerns. She regularly updates her knowledge of current Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and ensures her policy reflects current guidance. Vigilant supervision and effective

risk assessments covering the premises, equipment, activities and outings ensure that children remain safe and secure at all times. Clearly documented arrangements also exist to protect children in emergency situations. Children's health and safety are further promoted by robust procedures for managing accidents, illness and individual health needs.

The childminder provides a very welcoming environment to all families. She very much recognises children as unique individuals and understands and plans around their individual needs and circumstances. She has due regard for supporting children with learning difficulties and disabilities, although, this is not clearly stated in the equality of opportunity policy. She carries out an exceptionally thorough induction process with parents. For this, she uses a comprehensive checklist to ensure that detailed information is gathered about the child and every aspect of the childminder's practice is discussed with parents. This forms the basis of a very solid and professional working partnership. Regular reviews take place with parents to establish if needs have changed and six monthly questionnaires are used to seek their views about the service. Together with daily feedback and written diaries detailing each child's day, these ensure that parents are both extremely well informed and active partners in the setting. Parents also receive a disc containing photographs of their children, illustrating their activities and experiences. Comments from parents show that they hold the childminder in high esteem and very much value the service she provides.

Excellent communication exists between the childminder and other settings children attend. The childminder is proactive in building links in order to support continuity in children's care and learning. For example, by writing to the nursery which is attended by one child for part of the week she has introduced a two-way communication diary. This gives the childminder and the child's nursery key worker clear insight into what the child is enjoying and learning which subsequently helps them both plan relevant experiences for the child.

The childminder has a strong drive and is committed to providing a professional and valued service. She continually strives to improve her own knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and develop better ways of working through self-study, researching the internet and sharing good practice with other childcare professionals. This has led to a very systematic and effective approach to self-evaluation. At the heart of this is her ability to effectively reflect upon and evaluate every aspect of her practice and to make clear and achievable plans for future developments.

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

Children receive first-class support from the childminder to help them fulfil their potential. Her exceptionally well-founded knowledge of each child's stage of development is used to develop individual play plans tailored exactly to each child's needs. Careful attention to planning and a systematic approach to making

observations ensure that children receive a balanced range of experiences that successfully support their excellent progress across all areas of learning and development. As a result, children thrive and thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting. The childminder is also exceptionally skilled at recognising children's particular interests and developing learning opportunities whilst they engage in their preferred play. She introduces sorting and counting as children play with their favourite toy cars and encourages them to experiment with mark making by providing special crayons shaped like vehicles, for example.

The environment is welcoming and highly stimulating. Toys and equipment are age-appropriate and appeal to children's interests and natural curiosity. Children select toys independently from the range set out or choose from a wider range displayed in a photographic catalogue. The childminder also has a well-considered approach to supporting sustainability by obtaining resources and materials from charity shops and scrap stores where possible. The childminder provides a wealth of activities in the garden that encourage children to explore, investigate, develop physical coordination and use their imaginations. They learn to use a range of tools with increasing control, enthusiastically using large paint brushes and water to paint the fences and helping to plant summer bedding plants. They are actively encouraged to care for the environment by helping to sort household waste for recycling. Children are challenged and encouraged to take measured risks when using outdoor apparatus so they do not become fearful, such as, when setting out and using obstacle courses in the garden. Older children learn to consider their own safety as they help conduct simple risk assessments of outdoor venues. This alerts them to the potential dangers, such as, broken glass, animals and strangers.

Children develop an extremely strong sense of security and enjoy warm relationships. They are very settled and their individual needs are met exceptionally well. This is illustrated when the childminder recognises a child is more tired than usual and thus provides an early lunch to allow the child to sleep longer. They are provided with well-balanced, nutritious meals. The childminder adapts meals to suit individual tastes whilst always ensuring they contain all the main food groups required for healthy development and growth. Health and safety awareness is promoted through positive role modelling. Even very young children show excellent awareness of responsibility and independence as they immediately take off their shoes on arrival and attempt to secure the safety straps on the highchair. Children's behaviour is excellent because consistent messages are provided about boundaries and expectations. The childminder ensures these are clear for very young children by carefully using gesture and tone of voice to illustrate a point. Children develop good social skills by regularly attending groups for children where they learn to negotiate and share with others. High self-esteem and confidence are encouraged through the use of 'I Can' charts which show what a child has achieved over the course of time. Activities and discussion to help children recognise and value their own identity and how this may differ from others are sensitively incorporated into everyday situations and play. These take account of children's home language and cultural backgrounds extremely well. Further planned activities and use of resources allow children to explore the wider world and celebrate difference and diversity.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
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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