

Inspection date	29 January 2015
Previous inspection date	21 April 2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Good	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Good	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Good	2
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- The childminder consistently supports children to develop their communication and language skills. For example, she introduces new words to the children, engages them in conversations and provides a commentary throughout their play.
- The childminder has a secure knowledge and understanding of safeguarding procedures. Therefore, children are very safe in her care as she consistently protects their welfare.
- The childminder works collaboratively with professionals from other settings where children attend. She shares information with them about children's learning and next steps, which promotes a good continuity of teaching and care.
- The childminder is very caring and regularly praises children for their accomplishments. As a result, they have high self-esteem and strong attachments with her. This prepares them very well emotionally for the next stage in their learning.
- The childminder has good teaching skills. She differentiates activities well, such as messy play, for the varied ages of children in her care and, as a result, they all make good progress in their learning.
- The childminder has an effective settling-in period in place. She supports children well during this time and has good strategies in place to help them to feel secure. Consequently, children are happy and enjoy their time in her care.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- On occasions, the childminder does not ensure resources are easily accessible for children to make independent choices about their play.
- The childminder has yet to encourage all parents to promote children's learning in the home. For example, by suggesting specific activities that they can do together to maximise children's progress.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- maximise opportunities for children to make independent choices about their play, for example, by creating a photograph book of different toys and resources, in order to enhance their learning and ensure their continued good progress
- enhance partnerships with parents by consistently providing them with activities to do at home to support children to make as much progress as possible in their learning and development.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children taking part in a range of activities and spoke with the childminder and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector saw evidence of suitability of the childminder and those over the age of 16 years living in the household.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, policies and procedures and the childminder's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the childminder.
- The inspector has taken account of the views of parents, as recorded in reference letters provided by the childminder.

Inspector

Katherine Hurst

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

The childminder has strong understanding of how children learn. She promotes learning through play and generally provides a wide range of interesting toys and equipment. However, at times, she does not ensure children are fully aware of the resources that are available to them. For example, drawing implements are kept in the kitchen and children cannot always access them freely. Consequently, they are unable to consistently make independent choices about their learning and play. The childminder identifies next steps in learning based on her observations of children and uses an online system to track their progress. The childminder also uses this system to communicate with parents regarding children's learning and care. She uploads her observations and assessments, which they can access at any time. Therefore, partnerships with parents are generally strong. However, the childminder has yet to encourage all parents to promote their children's learning at home. She does not consistently give them specific suggestions for activities or learning opportunities that they can play together. Therefore, she does not fully maximise children's learning and development. Nevertheless, parents say they are very happy with the 'ongoing care and nurture' the childminder provides their children.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children is good

The childminder is sensitive to important changes in children's lives, for example, the transition from her setting to pre-school. She supports them well by talking positively about the new setting so that they are familiar with it and, as a result, children are adapt to these changes with confidence. The childminder promotes children's good health. She provides nutritious food for meal and snack times, and promotes good hygiene practices. Children play outside and exercise in the fresh air on a daily basis. The childminder supports children to play cooperatively with their peers by encouraging them to share and taking turns using equipment, consequently, children's behaviour is very good.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision is good

The childminder has strong knowledge and understanding of the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She evaluates the quality of her teaching and provision effectively. She identifies areas of her practice she would like to improve and swiftly puts the changes in place. For example, over the past few months, the childminder has been developing her garden by adding a vegetable patch for children to grow their own fruit and vegetables. As a result, she demonstrates her commitment to continuously improve the provision in order to benefit the children in her care. The childminder places an emphasis on attending training courses to update her knowledge and improve the quality of her teaching and care. For example, she has recently attended a workshop on outdoor learning and learnt about mud kitchens. This led to her creating one in her garden, which she regularly develops by adding new resources. As a result, the childminder uses the information that she gains from training to enhance her teaching, which has a positive impact on children's learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY299968
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	856486
Type of provision	Childminder
Registration category	Childminder
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	6
Number of children on roll	3
Name of provider	
Date of previous inspection	21 April 2009
Telephone number	

The childminder was registered in 2005 and lives in St Albans. She operates all year round, from 7.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, except for bank holidays and family holidays. The childminder provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The childminder holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 3.

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