

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY302422
Inspection date	29/06/2009
Inspector	Gillian Charlesworth
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).

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 March 2005 and is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA). She lives with her husband and two children aged six and four years in Garston on the outskirts of Watford, Hertfordshire. The childminder lives close to shops, parks and schools. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding, with access to a bathroom and space for undisturbed sleep on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed paved garden for outside play. The family have a pet cat and a pet 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 range. She is currently minding three children in this age group with varying attendance patterns, one of whom is in full-time education. She also offers care to one child aged over five years to 11 years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The childminder collects children from the local school and has a car to transport children. She has a level three qualification in childcare, learning and development.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. The childminder is experienced and values children as individuals therefore they enjoy their time in the setting, are well supported and are making good progress in their learning and development overall. Partnerships with parents are positive and they mostly have a valuable range of information including policies and procedures that positively support many aspects of children's safety and welfare to enable children's individual needs to be met well. There is a commitment towards continuous improvement and self-evaluation overall.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the risk assessments to cover anything with which the child may come into contact, with particular regard to safety arrangements for the garden climbing frame and slide
- develop further the two-way flow of information with parents and others, with particular regard to clarity of the complaints policy and emergency contingency procedures, and involving parents in children's learning and development records
- develop further the culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to systematically and accurately identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder has implemented a wide range of records, policies and procedures which promotes the safe and efficient management of children overall. There are suitable arrangements in place to safeguard children's welfare. This includes a brief written policy that sets out responsibilities to report concerns and gives parents clear explanations of the commitment to protect children's welfare. Effective fire procedures are in place and the childminder completes a daily risk assessment of defined areas of the setting, identifying action to be taken to minimise additional risks that arise from day-to-day. For example, addressing the harmful effects of the sun's rays and potential dehydration. These additional prompts are effectively acted upon to ensure children's health needs are met by the regular application of sun cream, use of sun hats and regular prompts for drinks. However, risk assessments do not clearly identify significant hazards such as large physical climbing apparatus that is positioned on a concrete surface and adjacent to a brick wall with very little protective safety matting. Although children are made aware of boundaries and are supervised, they are potentially at risk from accidental injury and this is supported by recent accident records.

Parents are highly valued and express many compliments about the setting when feeding back through formal consultation. Parents say that the childminder is approachable, she always listens and acts on their views, and that the children are content and well stimulated. Information sharing promotes good continuity of care and includes daily discussions, notices, access to a portfolio and a parent brochure that includes written policies and procedures. Some information provided such as complaints and contingency childcare arrangements is basic and learning journey records have been implemented but with little involvement of parents and other settings. However, informative and attractive daily diaries incorporate photographs and update parents on children's welfare and general progress in their learning and development.

The childminder has formulated thoughtful self-evaluation procedures incorporating parent's views but not yet rigorously evaluating practice. Aspects of the setting are continually improving overall because the childminder is committed to improving her knowledge and completed a level three professional qualification since the last inspection. She has conscientiously addressed previous recommendations and this has improved the safety of the indoor play areas and arrangements to transport children in vehicles. Plans for further improvement are general so are not fully identifying areas that most need targeting for improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The childminder dedicates her time to the children who have plenty of support and encouragement, are valued and are making good progress in their learning and development. For example, young children are purposefully introduced to visitors, are helped to feel at ease and are reassured by a comforting cuddle. As they show interest in their surroundings and point towards family photographs, the

childminder naturally describes the photographs, thereby encouraging their babble and impulse to communicate.

There is a good balance of planned, purposeful play and exploration, that is child-centred and results in children being active and creative learners. Children enjoy a variety of activities that are planned outdoors in the fresh air, under the shade of an umbrella. They sit comfortably when booster seats are provided on adult sized patio furniture. They enjoy making a mess and exploring different textures in paints, using their senses and learning to handle tools such as sponge sticks or exploring pots of sand at their own pace; beginning to develop control and showing curiosity as they tip sand from the pot over the wet paint. Effective distraction avoids frustrations, and alongside plenty of praise and positive respectful interactions, children behave well and develop the habits and behaviours appropriate to good learners. For example, young children are supervised well and are playfully reminded 'not to eat' the paint as the childminder recognises their strong impulse to put paint sticks into their mouths and helps them to learn how to keep safe. Children respond well to her distraction techniques and enjoy being guided to make marks with the paints. Counting shapes is naturally incorporated into activities thereby helping children to begin to recognise numbers as labels for counting. Activities are exciting and are changed frequently which maintains children's enthusiasm and their motivation to learn, for example, when they are invited to explore and investigate the properties of water and sand. The learning environment is enabling and children move freely between indoors and out. They are empowered to choose resources such as books and puzzles indoors because they are stored at low level and have pictorial labels for easy identification. Consequently, children choose story books they enjoy and sit together turning the pages competently at their own pace and learning to handle books well. As they look at illustrations and communicate their responses by kissing images of familiar pets in the book, the childminder interprets this and narrates their thoughts, extending their learning by helping children look for different pets, engaging them well.

Children's health and well-being is effectively promoted. Children freely access drinks throughout the session and have regular reminders so are never thirsty. They know the routine well and sit on a blanket in the garden in readiness for their healthy snacks. They tuck into a mixed bowl of blueberries and grapes and begin to sort and match, putting the blueberries to one side after they have tasted them, thus expressing preferences which are recognised and acknowledged by the childminder. Hygiene is good and includes use of damp paper towels before snacks for younger children and use of colour coded individual towels after hand-washing to prevent the spread of germs. Nappy changing procedures are robust and at a relaxed pace, with time for conversation and giggles. Children settle quickly to sleep with comforters and use buggies because they feel more secure than in travel cots. Children enjoy developing physical skills and squeal excitedly as they throw balls out of the ball-pond and attempt to bang balls together to coordinate movements. They are carefully monitored when awkwardly climbing in-and-out of wheeled garden toys and are growing in ability and confidence as the childminder positions them safely.

Observation records are in the early stages of development and comprise of

learning journeys for each child. These are assessed to monitor overall progress towards the early learning goals through bespoke development charts. This ensures that children achieve well overall in relation to their starting points and capabilities and identifies the next steps of their learning journey that leads to informed but flexible planning. Activities are thoughtfully provided for older children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, sometimes linking to aspects of their full-time education.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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
--	-----