

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY304079
Inspection date	15/06/2009
Inspector	Susan Tuffnell
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 2005. She lives with her husband and three children aged ten, seven and seven months in a residential area of St. Albans, Hertfordshire. The ground floor of the childminder's home is used for childminding and two bedrooms on the first floor of the premises are used for minded children to rest. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The premises are accessible by a low step at the front entrance.

The childminder provides care every weekday during term time and some school holidays. She is registered on the Early Years Register and compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. She is registered to care for two children on the Early Years Register and currently two children attend. The childminder currently provides care for one child on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register (CCR) and there is one child attending on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register (VCR). All the children share the same facilities.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and works in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals. The childminder holds the CACHE Level 3 NVQ in Children's Care, Learning and Development.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is outstanding. The childminder offers a very safe, secure and welcoming environment that supports children effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The close partnership with parents contributes significantly to ensuring that the individual needs of all the children are met. Children are highly valued at the setting because the childminder has an excellent understanding of diversity and equal opportunities. She uses her extensive knowledge to ensure that planning includes activities and equipment that promote positive awareness of the wider world. The childminder evaluates her practice effectively and priorities for improvement in her self-evaluation show that she continuously strives to provide the very best care and education for the 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:

- extending activities and resources to give children hands-on experience of the natural world through investigation of living things, such as creatures, plants and objects in their natural environment.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder's clear procedures for monitoring and evaluating her practice show that she is aware of all areas for improvement. Regular questionnaires are used to gain information from parents. The childminder's positive attitude to this feedback ensures that she is pro-active in implementing changes where needed. Information collected from observations are used to evaluate the impact of the educational programme on each individual child. Her exceptional work in forging excellent partnerships with parents and schools also ensures that children's care is consistent and they are able to make very good progress. Parents greatly appreciate the close links encouraged by the childminder and feel they are kept well informed of their children's progress. The childminder's excellent safeguarding policies include comprehensive risk assessments to ensure that children are protected at all times.

The childminder has an outstanding attitude to her own training and development which has led to a rich and varied educational experience for the children. For example, she has completed training in celebrating diversity and cultures, making her setting more inclusive, the six areas of learning and development, observations, assessment and planning and enabling environments. The childminder uses her knowledge and experience well to ensure that all aspects of the provision are managed effectively. Outstanding policies, procedures and records are in place to support the safe and efficient management of the setting and ensure that the needs of all the children are met. Excellent planning ensures that each child receives an enjoyable and challenging experience across all the areas of learning and is securely linked to the early learning goals. Planning is evaluated to ascertain the impact on individual children's learning and the success of activities and children's progress is carefully monitored. Their identified learning needs are carried forward and implemented into future planning to give a very clear picture of progress.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning and development and are offered an extensive range of imaginative opportunities and activities. The highly individual and flexible approach to planning ensures that children's uniqueness is valued because activity planning is based on their individual interest and current development needs. The childminder has a very secure knowledge of child development and offers the children excellent support and encouragement which enables them to be fully involved and active in their learning. Excellent baseline assessments securely identify children's starting points and are transferred into children's individual planning and used to target future observations. The childminder has an excellent understanding of the learning process which is clearly reflected with detailed observations and assessments.

Children participate in activities that are stimulating and challenging and include lots of exciting resources to investigate. Planning is detailed and covers the six areas of learning well. However, there are minimal activities and resources that

give children hands-on experience to explore the natural world through the investigation of living things, such as creatures, plants and objects in their natural environment. Weekly activity plans ensure children experience a mixture of adult-led and child-initiated activities and planning is flexible to allow children to follow their interest and be spontaneous. For example, if the weather is sunny than activities are modified or changed to take advantage of the fine weather and activities are taken outside. Children explore practical life as they help set the table, clear away at meal times and tidy away the resources. Children help with garden maintenance as they tend the plants and dig up the weeds. They have ample opportunities to make marks as they paint, print, draw and chalk using a rich array of materials and techniques. For example, young children make marks in sand and shaving foam. Imaginative craft activities such as painting with sand and spaghetti give children excellent opportunities to explore different mediums. Children's creativity is encouraged as they use tents and tunnels to make camps. Their physical development is challenged and encouraged through regular action songs and dancing. Children jump, climb and balance on the static equipment to practise their physical skills. Children's understanding of taking turns, rules and fair play are encouraged as they discuss and organise their own group and team games. Children are settled and happy. They thrive in an environment where their individual needs are sensitively met. For example, children share a book about a new baby and have opportunities to talk about the expected new addition to the family.

The welcoming and stimulating environment and the abundance of quality resources promotes children's progression towards the early learning goals. Excellent examples of children's early writing and creative work are displayed in their individual scrapbooks and on the walls. Extensive photographic evidence in the children's learning journeys show children participating in an imaginative and exciting range of activities and using an abundance of resources. Children have wonderful opportunities to find out about the local environment as they meet friends at the childminding group and playgroup and visit local parks and the library. Children's farms, zoos, museums, wildlife parks and other places of interest extend children's understanding of the wider world. Children's own culture and the culture and customs of others are celebrated with multicultural food, traditional clothes and creative activities. Children benefit from inspirational resources to raise their awareness in a multicultural world. For example, festival boxes contain activities, dressing-up clothes and books for each culture.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure environment because the childminder has an excellent knowledge of this area. She has completed a thorough risk assessment which covers all areas of the home, garden and outings. Young children are beginning to understand about taking care of themselves and others as they practise regular fire drills and help tidy the play area. The childminder has a clear understanding of issues relating to safeguarding children and has ensured that she has relevant information and contact details. She has recently completed training in this area to further enhance her knowledge and understanding.

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?	2
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

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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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