

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY309382
Inspection date	18/02/2009
Inspector	Gail Groves
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 was registered in 2005. She works with a group of other childminder's and assistants at her parents-in-law's house and they are all registered childminders. The house is situated in a small village near Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire. The whole of the house is used for childminding and there is a downstairs bathroom. Access to the premises is via a steep flight of steps and there is an enclosed garden as well as a field for outside play. An additional smaller house is also situated on the same land and is used on an occasional basis for physical play if the weather is unsuitable or for a quiet area for story time. It is not used on a regular basis and is not used for any other purposes. Also living at the property are two dogs, one budgie, fish, two African snails, some ducks and chickens.

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. When working with other childminders or assistants she may care for a maximum number of 16 children. There are currently 28 children in the early years age group on roll. She also offers care to children 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 currently supports a number of children with children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The childminder has overall responsibility for the management of the group's childminding practice.

The childminder is a member of the National Childminding association.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is satisfactory. The childminder and her co-workers provide a happy, welcoming environment, in which children's welfare is successfully promoted and children make sound progress towards the early learning goals given their individual starting points. Parents and carers are suitably involved in supporting their children's care and developmental needs, but links with local schools and nurseries are not yet sufficiently developed to fully ensure the continuity of care and learning for children who attend more than one setting. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are appropriately supported and suitable involvement is sought from other professionals. Most of the required documentation is in place and policies and procedures are generally effective. The childminder and her co-childminders have an accurate understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and are beginning to take effective steps to improve their practice.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop links with the other settings that children attend in order to ensure that their needs are met and that there is continuity in their learning
- increase the knowledge and understanding of the educational programmes of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- develop children's assessments to clearly identify learning priorities/next steps and link these to the systems used for planning activities.

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- obtain prior written permission for each and every medicine from parents before any medication is given (Promoting good health: also applies to both parts of the Childcare Register) 04/03/2009
- keep a record of the risk assessment clearly stating when it was carried out, by whom, date of review and any action taken following a review or incident; this also applies to risk assessments for outings. (Documentation) 04/03/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare, care and safety are promoted effectively. The childminder acts as a manager to her fellow childminders and has ensured that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place to protect children's safety and well-being. The setting is organised to provide a safe, stimulating and attractive environment which meets the needs of all children. Resources are made readily and safely accessible to all children in order to encourage their independence and self-esteem. For example, three rooms are used to provide distinct areas for different kinds of play so that when required, older children can enjoy activities without being disturbed by younger ones and babies can have a designated area for their use which allows them to be included as part of the group, but protects them from being hurt by older more boisterous children. The childminder takes responsibility to ensure that the documentation required for the safe and efficient management of the setting is in place. However, the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements to have written risk assessments and to obtain written parental permission to administer prescribed medication are not met.

The childminder and her co-workers form a close-knit and hard working team. They discuss the children's reactions to activities and share any information they have about the children with each other throughout the day, this allows the childminder to respond consistently and appropriately to children's changing individual needs. The childminder strives for improvement to her practice and to the care that she and her co-workers provide. For example, she uses an annual appraisal system to help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the team and has just started working towards achieving a Foundation Degree with the Open University. Her evaluation of the strengths and areas for improvement of the childminding provision has recently led her to make improvements to children's

safety by having an intercom installed at the front door in order to monitor access.

The childminder works with parents and carers to meet children's individual needs and their wishes and views are respected and valued at all times. Appropriate information is sought from them about children's routines, health and dietary needs before they begin to attend. Daily discussions with either the childminder or her co-workers keep them suitably informed about what their children have been doing. When required, the childminder takes on the particular responsibility for liaising with them about sensitive issues such as seeking additional professional help to meet any particular needs that have been identified by herself or the team. However, her liaison with schools and nurseries that some of the children also attend is limited and means that children's progression and continuity of learning and care is not being fully supported.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The childminder promotes children's welfare, learning and development appropriately. Sound hygiene procedures ensure that children's good health and well-being is suitably promoted and that all necessary steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection. One of her co-childminders takes responsibility for preparing the children's meals and the whole team work together to ensure that meal times run smoothly and efficiently and that babies and young children are supported to feed themselves when required. Children enjoy a variety of healthy meals containing fresh vegetables and eat these with gusto. They develop an understanding about appropriate hygiene procedures because they are encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating and learn to keep themselves safe through discussions and practical experiences within their everyday routines. For example, the childminder tells a child that she must sit properly on her chair at lunch time in case she falls. Safety is prioritised and all the childminders work together to ensure that procedures such as regularly checking on sleeping children and daily checks to the premises are consistently carried out and recorded. Children's welfare and well-being are appropriately supported because the childminder understands the signs and symptoms of abuse and knows the procedure to follow should either she or her co-workers have any concerns.

Children enjoy a variety of interesting play experiences which help them to make suitable progress towards the early learning goals. The childminder has recently begun to develop systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and progress in each area of learning. This is beginning to enable her to monitor the activities that she and her co-childminders provide for children and support them in all areas of learning. However, because her knowledge and understanding of the educational programmes of the Early Years Foundation Stage is currently limited, her observations do not clearly identify the next steps in children's learning. She is therefore unable to use these observations to effectively influence the planning of activities to fully meet children's individual learning needs.

Children develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem because they are able to independently access a range of suitable resources, they are encouraged to make choices and take decisions throughout their daily routines and enjoy a

suitable balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. They form affectionate relationships with the childminder and each other because they know and understand the routines of the setting they behave well. They are encouraged to share, take turns and to play together so that they can develop social skills and the childminder interacts with them at all times to develop their language and communication skills. The childminder supports children's learning well and her questions challenge children to think and to find out more, by encouraging them to speculate and test ideas through trial and error. For example, she asks a child if he thinks that he has put too much tissue paper on his collage and suggests that he tips it upside down to see what happens. Children have regular opportunities to develop physical skills and coordination by using tools such as glue spreaders and by playing with balls or moving to music inside. Outside they play on climbing frames to develop large motor skills and sometimes go for walks to the woods to look at the trees and learn about the world around them as they make bark rubbings.

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?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
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?	3
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?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

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

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:

Not Met (with actions)

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Records to be kept) 04/03/2009
- complete an appropriate first aid qualification. (Welfare of the children being cared for: also applies to the voluntary part of the Childcare Register) 30/04/2009

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Records to be kept) 04/03/2009
- take action as specified in the compulsory part of the Childcare Register section of the report. (Welfare of the children being cared for) 30/04/2009

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.