

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY318791
Inspection date	14/12/2011
Inspector	Lindsay Hare
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 registered in 2005. She lives with her husband and two children aged 15 and 16 years old in St Albans. The whole of the ground floor is used for childminding and one bedroom and bathroom upstairs. There is a secure area for outside play. The family has two rabbits. The childminder provides care before and after school, all year round.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years, of whom three may be in the early years age range. She currently cares for 11 children on a part-time basis, two of whom are in the early years age group. The childminder is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The setting is highly effective. It provides an extremely safe and welcoming environment for children, ensuring they are all included and supported. The written policies and procedures are detailed and implemented well. Excellent partnerships between providers, parents and other agencies ensure individual children's needs are met and their protection assured. Children make excellent progress in all aspects of their learning and development. Monitoring and evaluation are robust with both parents and children being meaningfully involved in the process. As a result, actions taken by the setting are well targeted and have had an extremely good impact in bringing about sustained improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- reflecting and further evaluate the practice, in order to sustain continuous improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare, care and safety are promoted extremely well. The childminder has an excellent awareness of safeguarding issues and fully understands the procedure to follow, if she has a safeguarding concern. She has attended safeguarding training and all adults in the household have been vetted. Comprehensive risk assessments are carried out, with high regard given for every eventuality, as well as daily safety checks to ensure all hazards are minimised. Detailed policies and procedures are implemented consistently and records are kept of the children's daily care. The safe environment and age-appropriate

equipment and resources are conducive to learning and children clearly benefit as a result. The childminder gives very high priority to ensuring resources and the environment are fully sustainable. For example, children grow their own vegetables, use local produce and care for the pet rabbits.

The childminder has extremely open and positive partnerships with parents. She seeks their feedback on key matters affecting the childminding practice through highly inclusive procedures, including self-evaluation and regular questionnaires. Parents are well informed about all aspects of their children's achievement, well-being and development through discussion and daily diaries, which they contribute to. The learning journals are shared with parents regularly and there are extremely effective procedures in place for children when they initially start with the childminder and when there is a transition. Systems are in place to share information with other provisions and permission is sought from parents. She has actively been involved in working with the local children's centre, acting in an advisory role and as a representative for childminders.

The childminder effectively and actively promotes equality and diversity and tackles unfair discrimination. Excellent partnership working takes place to ensure every child receives high levels of support from an early age. The settling-in process is extremely thorough and enables the childminder to begin caring for the child with an excellent knowledge of their backgrounds and needs as she visits their home and gathers detailed information from parents. Parents are also involved in completing an evaluation of how their child has settled in. She regularly updates her skills and knowledge on a regular basis, effectively helping children to learn and understand the society in which they live. Well-established links and communication takes place between the childminder and partners, supporting individual children to ensure information is regularly shared and used to promote children's well-being.

Extensive self-evaluation and reflective practice enables the childminder to devise well-targeted plans and actions to improve the overall practice and outcomes for children. She has identified areas for improvement in the future. For example, if she were to care for a family with English as an additional language and how she would simplify or translate the setting's policies.

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

A highly stimulating and welcoming environment fully reflects the children's backgrounds and interests. The childminder knows the children extremely well because of the thorough settling-in process, which includes visiting the child's home and the excellent daily communication with parents. High quality planning and organisation ensure that every child is suitably challenged by the learning experiences provided. Also careful consideration is given to ensuring that individual children's next steps are identified and planned for, as well as completing an overview to determine any gaps in each child's learning. Children behave extremely well and are well motivated to learn through play.

All children show an extremely strong sense of security and belonging. They are confident, settle well and develop excellent relationships with both the childminder and her family. All children are valued and engage in a wide range of activities and experiences, which help them to value diversity. For example, celebrating with one child who observed different customs at Easter. They celebrate multicultural festivals, building on what the children have been learning in school. They have an excellent range of resources, such as, small figures, dressing-up clothes, dual language books and a Braille alphabet. Children create using different mediums, for example, setting beads into clay and folding paper to make diamond shape presents to stick on their Christmas tree. Children persevere with attempting to fasten the buckle on their shoe before asking for help. The childminder builds on this by providing alternative types of fasteners for them to try.

Children play a full and active role in their own learning, showing curiosity and the desire to explore their surroundings. For example, they use magnifying glasses to investigate and sort natural materials. They take an interest in the world around them as they watch for birds, attempt to grow wheat from bird seed and plant conkers to see if they will grow. Children look at the thermometer, weather vane and rain gauge in the garden, as they learn about the weather. They enjoy planting and watering carrots and beans and stand on the tree platform to pick apples in the garden, checking them before putting them in the basket. Children become aware of number as it is used in everyday routines, such as number rhymes and playing hopscotch. The childminder makes numbers from play dough to encourage their recognition. Children problem solve, as they discover that the blocks need to be in a vertical position for them to stack on top of each other. Young children's vocabulary is noted and used as a basis for the childminder to extend on. The childminder commented on one child who is very interested in letters and text, explaining to her what the words said on her fire fighter costume. Young children are introduced to early phonic sounds as they play with the phonic bus, read phonic books and talk about the rhyming words. For example, the childminder encouraged one child to guess which costume was in the bag by saying it begins with a 'p' sound.

Children show an excellent awareness about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, as they use locally grown produce and discuss their favourite fruit and vegetables displayed on the poster. They walk to and from school and play hide and seek in the park, comparing the sizes of trees and looking at the texture of bark. The children are given opportunities to blow bubbles and practise huffing and puffing in the story of the three little pigs, as the childminder observed they had difficulty blowing dandelion clocks. Children engage in lots of imaginative play as they care for the 'baby' and play with the small world figures in the playground. Children are keen to retell familiar stories and one child was observed making herself comfortable with a blanket and 'reading' a story to the toy cat.

Children play a dynamic role in their learning and wherever possible, are keen to share ideas and respond to challenges with great enthusiasm. They are confident in expressing their feelings and communicating their thoughts and often look at books that focus on caring. They display an excellent awareness of safety issues and recognise and understand how to keep themselves safe through discussion

and access to books about safety around the home and out and about. Children wear high visibility jackets and wrist bands on outings and follow a checklist of what they need before going out. Regular fire drills are undertaken and the young children are familiarised with this initially, as the childminder reads them stories about a favourite fireman. Good personal hygiene is encouraged and children have individual hand towels to dry their hands.

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	1
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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