

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY333041
Inspection date	23/11/2010
Inspector	Susan Marriott
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 was registered in 2006 and holds a relevant childcare qualification. She lives with her husband and two children aged 13 and 10 years in a house in the village of Clifton, near Shefford, in Bedfordshire. The childminder uses the ground floor of the property for childminding activities and toilet facilities are also available on the ground floor. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding three children in the early years age group. The family has a pet dog, some fish and a hamster.

This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed into this trusted family environment where the childminder promotes most aspects of children's care and education in a suitably inclusive manner. Each child is valued as a unique individual and children make good progress in their learning and development. Informal observation and assessment systems are in place but these are not yet sufficiently linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage. The childminder builds very strong relationships with parents to underpin children's welfare. She has not yet begun to use self-evaluation as a process for identifying strengths and weaknesses in her provision to support continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- link planning, assessment and learning priorities to secure children's good progress towards the early learning goals, for example, through the use of the criteria in the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- develop a culture of reflective practice and self-evaluation to identify strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children experience a good quality of care and education in this childminding setting. The childminder has worked hard to develop clearly written policies and procedures and all required written records, to underpin the safe and effective

management of the service. Children's welfare is promoted well because the childminder has a good understanding of her responsibilities relating to safeguarding children. This is supported by training and a practical written procedure which enables her to identify any child at risk of harm and take appropriate action. All household members are appropriately checked and deemed suitable to be in contact with children. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place and effective action is taken to manage or eliminate risks for children. Measures in place include a dangerous activity policy which details how children are encouraged to take reasonable risks.

Children make good progress in their learning and achieve well because the childminder makes good use of resources. Her home is welcoming and resources are well organised and accessible, enabling children to make independent choices about their play. The childminder supplements play with planned activities and visits outside the home. The childminder's good understanding of anti-discrimination means that she provides a service which is inclusive for all children and their families. She ensures that she understands and responds to each child's individual needs, background, cultures and beliefs. She uses this knowledge when she encourages children to recognise differences, offering them information about other ways of life and encouraging them to respect diversity.

The informal procedures for monitoring children's progress ensure that their individual development is suitably promoted. The childminder has good partnerships with parents and carers. The childminder acknowledges that in most cases, children are not able to express an opinion when their parents or carers choose a childminder. Therefore, she has prepared a lovely welcome book which gives a rounded picture of who she is, how she operates, shows the activities she does and the facilities she has on offer. Written testimonials suggest that the childminder is a 'lovely, kindly lady' who has 'a sense of humour' and is 'far too modest in her own capabilities'. The childminder keeps parents well informed of their children's progress through regular discussions and parents report that their children are very happy here. Letters of reference confirm that the childminder 'inspires trust and faith' and that 'the family environment is a safe and trusted one'.

The childminder is aware of the requirement to develop partnership working with other agencies but this is not relevant to the children currently being minded. The childminder uses her life experience to ensure that children who have additional development needs are identified and are offered appropriate activities and learning opportunities. She demonstrates enthusiasm for her work and is sufficiently motivated to continue to make changes that improve the outcomes for children, despite her difficulties with paperwork. The childminder has not yet begun to complete a system of self-evaluation to monitor her practice, to identify any areas for improvement and sustain continuous improvement.

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

The childminder is an experienced mother and has a good knowledge of child development which she has extended through gaining a childcare qualification. She capably draws the learning from child-led interests and play, sustaining competent levels of interaction with the children which develops positive attitudes to learning.

The weekly routine is flexible according to the needs of the children. Mornings tend to be more organised and planned and afternoons are more relaxed and less structured. She offers a continuous commentary on the daily routine, including teaching about colours, numbers and shapes. During a cooking activity, children help to weigh out the sugar and butter and count the eggs as they go into the mixture. Children comment that the eggs look like two eyes in the bowl and giggle and laugh with their childminder. Children are fully involved in the activity, mixing the ingredients with the electric whisk, under careful supervision. Photographs show the wide range of art and craft activities on offer, children having fun building a snowman and trips to Standalone Farm and various playgrounds.

Children have plentiful opportunities to develop their physical skills because the weekly routine includes daily opportunities to play in the garden. The childminder walks her dog every day and this ensures that children get outside in the fresh air and have daily exercise to develop their general fitness. Children enjoy an extended range of play activities and develop their social skills with other children as they visit appropriate toddler groups and soft play centres with their childminder. The childminder informally observes the children whilst playing and shares her assessment of their learning with parents and carers. She is competent in identifying the next steps in children's learning. However, she does not yet link her observations to the Early Years Foundation Stage criteria and use this to secure children's progress.

Children are becoming aware of healthy lifestyles and the relevance of hygiene practices. Ongoing discussions mean that young children understand the importance of daily practices such as washing their hands before snacks and meals. Suitable documentation is maintained relating to accidents, medication and incidents and clear procedures are in place, protecting the children's health and well-being. The childminder is very skilled in getting the children to help to tidy away some of the toys before being allowed to play with the special dolls house. She supplies a meaningful explanation about too many toys being a tripping danger and points out that the toys might be damaged if stood upon, effectively promoting children's awareness of keeping themselves safe and respect for their environment and belongings. Children's behaviour is managed very well and effective strategies ensure their social, physical and economic well-being are met.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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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