

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	15/03/2010
Inspector	Margaret Patricia Mellor
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. She lives in St Helens with her husband and three children, of whom one is aged seven years, one is aged 13 years, and one is a young adult. Children use the whole of the ground floor of the childminder's home for their care and play experiences. There is a secure, fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The family has a cat and a dog.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children under eight years, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding four children in this age group. She is also registered to provide care for children aged over five years. The childminder is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The childminder walks or uses her car to take the children to places of interest, and regularly attends the local toddler group. She receives support from the local authority. She is a member of the National Childminding Association and Local Childminding Network.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and homely environment, where they are very happy and content. They greatly benefit from a childminder who understands their individual needs and plans enjoyable and challenging activities for them. Very good attention is given to promoting children's welfare, and keeping them safe and secure at all times. Children enjoy learning about the world around them, and are making good progress in their learning and achievement. Partnerships with parents are good and positively contribute to creating an inclusive atmosphere that welcomes children's individuality. The childminder has successfully met recommendations raised at the last visit, and is using self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for future development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop self-evaluation to include the views and thoughts of parents
- develop further methods to involve parents in practical ways to support their child's learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The provision is managed well, and the childminder has a strong understanding of her responsibilities in the area of child protection. Risk assessments are sufficiently robust and regularly reviewed. Careful thought to organisation of the environment ensures that the childminder can see the children in the playroom while preparing their lunch, which helps keep them safe from harm. Good hygiene practices, including effective procedures for looking after the family pets, help to minimise the risk of cross infection. Meals and snacks are well balanced and nutritious, and daily routines and excellent activities nurtures children's awareness of a healthy lifestyle. Well-written policies are shared with parents, and all the regulatory, daily documentation is well maintained. This further contributes to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

High regard is given to ensuring an inclusive provision that values each child's unique qualities. Settling-in sessions and observations help the childminder to provide an environment consistent with home, which ensures that children's individual care needs are respected, and they make good progress in their learning in relation to their starting points. Ongoing sharing of information is good, and parents themselves say that they are very happy with the quality of provision offered and are particularly pleased with their child's growing confidence and language development. Links forged with the local nursery school are complementing children's learning between provisions, but practical ways of involving parents in their child's learning have not yet been developed. Good consideration is given to the limitations of the planet's environment; for instance toys are sustainable, and the childminder makes good use of recyclable resources in art activities.

Good organisation of the toys enables children to choose for themselves, and initiate their own play and learning in the homely environment. The childminder is highly motivated and very keen to promote better outcomes for children. For example, since the last inspection she has greatly improved children's awareness of diversity by providing a suitable range of multi-cultural toys, and attended training events to develop her knowledge of how children learn through play. As a result a key area for future development includes improving gardening activities after attending a 'Tots Plots ' course. She is using the Ofsted self-evaluation form to drive continuous quality improvement forward, and recognises that she is not yet including parents views or thoughts.

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

Children are very settled and content in the childminder's home, and become active learners eagerly engaging in their play in the warm and very well-maintained environment. They show plenty of curiosity when exploring different textures and experimenting with magnets, and begin to make connections as they turn knobs to operate toys. Child-sized furniture enables them to sit in comfort

with their friends, and the proud display of pictures children have created boosts self-esteem and nurtures their sense of belonging. Children enjoy warm relationships with the childminder; for instance, babies relish her sensitive interactions as they play with the toys, and kind words of praise help children feel good about themselves, which is reflected in their happiness.

Good emphasis is given to ensuring that each child's unique qualities are valued; for example, twins regularly attend the local twin and triplets group. Children also develop respect for people in the wider community as they play with dolls reflecting different nationalities, and the childminder teaches them simple sign language, such as 'hello'. Children show concern for others as they happily push babies in their prams, and joining in charitable events, such as 'Barnados Big Toddler,' helps them to learn to care for others. In the garden, children enjoy opportunities for exploration and discovery. They learn about growth through the flowers they plant, experiment with quantities and measure in sand-play, and especially relish hunting for snails. Children become aware of their local area, and making tiger masks after a visit to the safari park is enjoyed by all.

Well-planned activities and good adult support mean that children have plenty of fun and thoroughly enjoy their play while making good progress in their learning and achievement. During play, children confidently count to five, and develop the concept of opposites, such as right and left, as they learn to put their shoes on, which complements what they are taught in nursery school. Early literacy skills are supported well by the childminder; for instance, babies respond with gurgles to voice intonations, and good questioning motivates children's conversation. The childminder is successfully linking observation to the six areas of learning to identify and plan for each child's next steps in learning, and every child has a development file. A displayed alphabet frieze, mark-making activities, and number rhymes, also enhance children's skills for their future.

Children freely move with confidence around the childminder's home because all the necessary safety equipment is in place to minimise hazards. Learning to keep themselves safe is encouraged; for example, practising fire drills. Children gain very good levels of independence for their age and stage of development. They help themselves to drinks when thirsty, spread crackers with cheese and take great pleasure in personal hygiene when washing their hands. Children engage in role-play as dentists, which affords them fantastic opportunities to extend what they learn at a dental hygiene activity they attend, and helps them make sense of the world. As a result children confidently tell adults about visits to the dentist and how brushing their teeth keeps teeth and gums healthy. Fresh air and physical activities everyday promote children's growth and stamina, and healthy food choices at snack time further enrich their awareness of a healthy lifestyle.

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	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
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	1
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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