

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	17/03/2011
Inspector	Lynn A Hartigan
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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the childminding

The childminder was registered in 2007 and lives with her husband and three children. There are twin boys and a daughter. The childminder lives in Shrub End in Colchester, Essex. The whole of the premises is used for childminding. There is an enclosed garden for outdoor play. The family have a cat as a pet.

A maximum of five children under eight years may attend at any one time, three of whom may be in the early years age range. The childminder is currently caring for four children, on both a full and part-time basis.

Care is also offered to children aged over five years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's well-being is met to a good standard and they are progressing well through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children receive good care, they are settled, happy and secure within their environment. Children enjoy fun activities and outings within an inclusive and safe environment. Some good opportunities are in place to communicate with parents and the childminder is developing effective partnerships with other settings children attend. A systematic way of recording observations is in place and parents' comments are welcomed, however effective systems for parents to contribute to their children's learning are limited. The childminder demonstrates an understanding of the importance of self-evaluation to ensure a good standard of care is offered at all times and an effective process for self-evaluation continues to develop.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure self-evaluation clearly identifies specific areas for future improvements in practice, and the impact on outcomes for children
- develop partnership working to provide further opportunities for parents to share in their children's learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is effectively cared for as the childminder understands her responsibility to protect children. Attendance at training courses, such as,

'Safeguarding Children' ensures she is up to date with current practices and has a good understanding of child protection issues. The childminder ensures members of the household who require suitability checks have completed these.

The childminder provides a very welcoming, homely and safe environment for children. This is successfully achieved as the childminder ensures the home is safe on a daily basis. Risk assessments are completed and toys and resources are checked before the arrival of children. The childminder is aware of potential hazards when outdoors and on organised outings and is vigilant to ensure the children's safety.

The provision of some very good quality toys and resources are available for the children. They receive very good attention from the childminder as she is realistic in how many children are cared for at any one time. Good informative policies underpin the childminder's practices and these are offered to the parents when minding commences.

The childminder is effective in developing and supporting the children's learning and welfare. A range of activities and play opportunities are readily available within the lounge and conservatory where children play. A wide selection of appealing resources are organised and stored at children's level to ensure children can self-select and initiate their own play and learning.

The childminder understands the importance of sharing information with other settings minded children attend, to ensure continuity of care. Good links have been made at the local primary school. For example, the childminder attends the monthly coffee morning with the children as this enables them to meet others who will attend the school and become familiar with the school environment. They are invited to attend special assemblies and as a result transition into school is a positive experience.

The childminder's dedication and commitment to the children ensures they are happy and play in a fun and safe place. The childminder is able to demonstrate how she plans to improve the service she provides and has made good attempts at self-evaluation. The childminder values and encourages parents' contributions, however, the self-evaluation process does not highlight the childminders strengths and areas for improvement, or the impact on children.

The childminder values each child for their individuality and opportunities for children to learn about diversity are provided through the activities offered. For example, some positive images of diversity within books and equipment are readily available to the children to help them embrace difference and discuss similarities. The childminder acknowledges many traditional days and cultural festivals within the planning. Therefore children are able to learn and are beginning to understand about the wider world.

The childminder has effective systems for communication with parents. For example, they are warmly welcomed into the home and encouraged to settle their child. They are able to discuss their children on a daily basis. Photographs are provided for parents in albums and provide good evidence of what the children

have been doing and a treasured keepsake. The childminder encourages parents to review and contribute to their children's learning journey documents. However, parents are not necessarily involved in the initial assessment of their children and effective systems are not yet established to encourage parents to share their children's achievements at home.

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

The childminder is an experienced practitioner and has a very good understanding of child development and how children learn. The childminder also has a good knowledge of the welfare requirements within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are able to initiate their own play, supported well by the childminder. For example, children have great fun playing with the wooden kitchen set. They spend time preparing meals and discussing healthy foods and interact well with each other and the childminder. They wash and iron clothes, reminding themselves that the iron is hot. The childminder is skilful in the questions she asks the children and challenges their thinking. For example, the childminder asks why the children are washing their hands in the play sink. Even very young children respond by discussing the need to wash 'germs away' before making dinner.

Children play in a bright and welcoming environment. Toys are organised and easily accessible, enabling the children to self-select and support their development in all six areas of learning. Children enjoy mark making and even very young children are offered some good opportunities. For example, they show sustained levels of interest using pencils and crayons as they draw pictures to take home. The childminder offers lots of praise for their efforts. Children enjoy using play dough to express their creativity. They make insects and bugs and are proud of their finished models. Very young children are caring towards one another and when they play with the dolls. For example, they tuck them up to ensure they are warm in the buggies and speak to them in soft kind voices.

The childminder is very intuitive of the children she cares for. Good communication systems are in place with the families to ensure she is familiar with their routines, unique needs and family backgrounds. As a result, children settle well and happily leave their parents. Visitors are introduced to the children and they are comfortable and secure within their environment happily engaging visitors in their play.

The childminder has developed a very thorough and effective system to record the children's development and encourages parental involvement. Learning Journeys are made readily available to parents and the children's next steps in learning are identified to ensure children are sufficiently challenged. However opportunities and effective systems to ensure parents are involved in the children's initial assessment and ongoing achievements are more limited.

Good opportunities are provided to support children's physical development and how they learn how to stay healthy. They receive fresh air and exercise daily as they walk to school and pre-school. They regularly visit the local woodland area

where they have fun collecting natural materials such as leaves, feathers and stones. They are able to develop their balancing and climbing skills when they use the equipment in the local park. Children are learning how to stay safe as the childminder discusses road safety with them. They are also aware of how to stay safe in the event of a fire as they regularly practise fire drills and evacuation procedures.

Through familiar daily routines children are beginning to understand the importance of being healthy. Young children excitedly wash their hands in preparation for snacks; they are very familiar with the routine and understand completely why it is important. They use tissues for their noses and dispose of these appropriately. The childminder's good nappy changing procedure helps protect children from cross-infection. Children enjoy nutritious and healthy snacks as these are provided by the childminder, such as, toast, bananas and raisins. Children can also access drinks throughout the day.

The childminder promotes the children's understanding of diversity through some play opportunities and some resources that are provided for them. Children have clearly formed good relationships with the childminder and their peers and have great fun. They are excited to see each other and play well together. It is evident that children feel safe and are comfortable in the childminder's care.

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

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	3

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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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