

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY355684
Inspection date	16/02/2011
Inspector	Lynne Talbot
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 June 2007. She lives with her husband and two children aged five and 10 years in Stevenage, Hertfordshire. The whole of the ground floor of the home is used for childminding. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play.

The childminder is able to provide care on each weekday during term-time and school holidays. She is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of five children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age range. There are currently three children attending part-time, all whom are within the early years age range.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's individuality is recognised by the childminder, who has a very good understanding of their needs and interests. She creates an effective working relationship with parents and is beginning to develop methods to work in partnership with other settings when children attend. These steps ensure that children's needs are met and that activities offered support good progress overall in their learning. The childminder takes steps to promote children's health and welfare through established daily routines, minimising most risks and a good safeguarding awareness. The childminder has a positive and proactive attitude towards continued development but this is yet to be fully developed to enable reflection on the overall care and continued outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that there is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities delivered through indoor and outdoor play; this refers specifically to ensuring that information is obtained to enable children's starting points to be fully understood and using the observations and ongoing parental input to track progression, identifying how the next steps fully feed into the planning
- gain further understanding of reflective practice in order to confidently identify aspects of the childminding service that are done well, and those aspects that might be improved, so as to continue to promote good outcomes for children
- review the record of risk assessments to include assessments of risks for outings and trips, with particular reference to recording the nature of the outing and associated risks.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is well promoted because the childminder has a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She has a firm understanding of her roles and responsibilities relating to safeguarding, implementing clear procedures which fully protect children. The childminder ensures that all persons required undertake the appropriate checks to safeguard children. Risk assessments for the home are undertaken daily and monthly with extensive policies to support all welfare issues. Records of risk assessment are maintained for all outings undertaken. However, the detail contained within those records does not fully reflect the nature of the individual outing or risks associated with it. Children explore with close supervision and take part in daily safety awareness routines. They learn about road safety, safety in the home and take part in regular fire evacuation drills to broaden their personal safety awareness. Methods include visiting the road crossing patrol area and following this with creative works and stories discussing road safety. Procedures for illness and medical assistance are well planned with back-up support organised to ensure children's safety.

The childminder offers an inclusive service to children in her care and ensures that she works with parents to understand each child as an individual. She is aware of each child's learning style and uses this when organising their day thereby ensuring that every child achieves. Examples of this are seen in the activities provided, the choices offered and the understanding of how children of different ages develop with appropriate levels of support provided. Daily diary books support the care, offering a medium for welfare and care issues to be shared. Children explore the local community and the wider society in which they live. Cultural celebrations, such as Chinese New Year, are explored. Children identify what year they were born and the associated animal and then complete creative activities which they later display. Music and foods are used to explore different cultures. The relationship with parents is good and is enhanced by the diary and verbal exchanges each day, as well as the questionnaires which are used periodically. Noticeboards are used to display relevant information for parents alongside the informative portfolio of information. Parents comment that the childminder is 'never-endingly cheerful and flexible'. The childminder has a positive attitude towards working with other settings that provide care for children in the early years stage. She is considering methods that will forge links with early play settings to develop partnerships to ensure consistency in the approach towards learning for children.

The childminder shows an awareness of development and seeks informal feedback from parents to ensure that her care is having a positive impact on outcomes for children. She has completed the required training and holds a level 3 diploma in home-based childcare. She demonstrates a clear commitment to continuous development. However, while self-evaluation processes have been initiated, they are not yet sufficiently in-depth to form the basis of internal review to focus on the strengths or areas for development. Children achieve and make good progress in their learning overall because resources are offered to them which provide variety

and stimulation. Local community resources provide an extended range of opportunity.

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

Children are very content and enjoy their time spent with the childminder. They make good progress overall because the childminder follows children's interests and supports their needs well. She observes children as they play, sharing this with parents in daily journals and meeting with them regularly. Planned activities are varied and interesting. However, whilst observation and assessment are clear the planned learning does not build from a starting point into which parents have had input. Progression is not tracked and this means that potential learning opportunities may fail to be maximised to progress children towards the early learning goals. Children are actively involved in their learning. They play confidently, seeking and choosing from accessible materials. For example, children enjoy music, singing spontaneously and with confidence. The childminder is skilled at offering toys to extend learning and provides musical instruments to enable children to continue making music. Young children show that they care for others, offering instruments to babies to explore before asking 'can I have a turn?' and sharing with each other. Babies explore things that shake and rattle, they show extending concentration skills as they push and pull objects and toys that make a sound. Young children play independently and are creative. They initiate role play and show very good imagination as they direct the childminder. For example, they tell the childminder that there is a fire, direct her to climb into her engine, use the hosepipe and put out the fire. The childminder uses this spontaneous play to extend children's awareness of personal safety as they discuss people who help and dialling 999 to get help. Children show a sense of humour when they develop play with socks as glove puppets, making their puppets speak to others.

Children enjoy books and stories, choosing and sharing them with the childminder. They follow basic text and show good recall as they anticipate what is next in the book, turning the pages together to find familiar illustrations. Children know that text and illustration make up the story and they use this to 'read' the story to others. For instance, they predict that people in the book are going to the supermarket to buy foods and then go home to play. Children use stories to explore social behaviours, for example by reading a book about manners. Children discuss issues such as giving up a seat on the bus to an older person, apologising for bumping into someone, and being polite at the table and in a restaurant. Young children say 'please' and 'thank you' without being prompted, showing a very developed sense of social awareness. The daily routines and the support provided by the childminder all encourage children's self-esteem and sense of achievement. Mark making is explored with children naming the colours of crayons they are using and identifying shapes, such as stars, without help. Children count freely and accurately up to five and explore numbers. They experiment with shape and size when they balance the flat-ended crayons and line them up on end. The childminder uses this interest to extend the play, offering dominoes to line up and knock down from end to end. Children delight in this new activity and explore their physical skills and turn taking as they develop the game.

Children have ample opportunities to participate at social groups in the local community. They visit social and activity groups which foster their links with others, supporting social development. Children enjoy outdoor play in the well-equipped garden where they climb, run and use a good selection of physical equipment. They take part in planting and observe the growth of sunflowers and cress. A free digging area in the garden provides scope for exploration where children search for insects and worms exploring the natural environment. The childminder helps children to recognise the importance of caring for the environment. They sort items to take to the school for recycling and keep others for use in modelling activities. This helps children to appreciate the world in which they live and play their part in sustainability. Hygiene routines are robust and help children to understand personal hygiene and its link to their well-being. They have a good attitude towards personal care, asking for tissues when needed, washing and drying their hands with help and using anti-bacteria gels. Children are clearly helped to develop the habits and attitudes that will help them to develop skills for the future and to make very good progress overall in their development.

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	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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
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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