

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	03/04/2012
Inspector	Karen Molloy
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 2007. She lives with her partner and four children aged 15, 12, three years and eight-month-old baby in London Colney, near St Albans, Hertfordshire. The whole of the house is registered although the ground floor is used for childminding purposes and there is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. Children do not generally access upstairs as there is a downstairs cloakroom. The family has a hamster, kept upstairs.

The childminder is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of four children at any one time, of these no more than one may be in the early years age range. She is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The childminder is currently caring for three children in the early years age group, on a part time basis. 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.

The childminder provides a warm and welcoming home environment for all children, where they feel safe and secure. The childminder has established good working relationships with parents, verbally sharing her policies with them and she works closely with them to ensure children's individual needs are recognised and met. Children make good progress in their learning and development and this is well supported by the wide range of activities and resources available to them. The childminder is beginning to evaluate her practice and is committed to improving her provision for children and families.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- maintain the two-way flow of information with parents and between providers.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded and well protected in the setting because the childminder is clear of her role and responsibilities. She supervises them well and has recently completed an appropriate first aid course to support children's general well-being. All household members are appropriately vetted. The childminder makes effective use of up-to-date risk assessments to support her in ensuring the areas used by the children are safe. Appropriate safety precautions are in place for example, the front door is always locked and stairgates are in place. This means that children move safely and freely around the childminder's home.

The childminder has a good knowledge of how children develop and she uses this well to support children in their learning. The environment is well organised and accessible to the children. For example, there is a wide selection of resources, stored at low-level and easily accessible, which encourages children to make independent choices. This means they are able to thrive and make good progress in their development. Child-sized furniture enables children to play safely and comfortably. Posters of the alphabet, phonics, map of the world, numbers and colours supports children's learning. The childminder is dedicated to her role and really enjoys caring for children. She is aware of her strengths and some of the areas for development, such as documentation. She looks for ways to improve her provision for the children, such as developing the outdoor area. She has addressed a previous recommendation, and as a result, children have access to a range of resources that extends and develops their understanding of the wider world. The childminder is beginning to evaluate her practice and asks parents for their feedback on the service she provides.

The childminder forms close working relationships with parents and carers. She obtains useful information about each child through an 'All about me' booklet, to ensure parents' wishes and children's individual needs are effectively met. Time is taken to settle new children and parents are encouraged to ask questions. A parent's file, including policies is shared with them. While all parents are informed about what the childminder would do in the event of a child being lost or uncollected child and her equal opportunities policy, they do not routinely receive a copy of her policies. Ongoing communication is good, through photographs, texts and daily conversations. A daily diary is maintained detailing the children's day and individual progress records are shared with parents to keep them up to date. Parents' feedback is positive and they comment on; the good selection of toys, a happy and caring environment and an enthusiastic childminder. The childminder has links with the local school and attends many of the sports days and assemblies that children are involved in; this contributes well to supporting children's welfare and learning.

The childminder offers an inclusive service and readily adapts activities to ensure that all children can access them. Props and visual aids are used to support children's learning and attention given to children's age and stage of development. This means that the individual needs of all children are met and all children are included fully in the life of the setting.

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

Children are happy and settled in the childminder's home. They enjoy one-to-one time with her and also play together cooperatively, with their social skills developing well. They are well supported by the childminder, who is on hand to guide them when necessary. She has developed close relationships with the children and their interaction is very positive. She listens effectively to them, asks them challenging questions and in turn they respond and approach her with confidence and enthusiasm. Children are making good progress towards the early

learning goals and the childminder has established learning journals for each child, where she gathers observations, linked to the six areas of learning, examples of work and photographs, and uses these to plan ahead for children's individual needs. The childminder completes a basic weekly activity plan and is led by the children's interests, so they can be spontaneous and flexible in their activities and routine.

Children participate in a good range of activities and experiences. Trips to fire station open days, the toy library and toddler groups develop their understanding of the wider community as well as their social skills. Children really enjoy constructing and take delight in making towers, repeating back to the childminder 'blue tower!' Children's creative development is promoted well. They enjoy drawing, painting and making Easter bonnets, as well as baking and making pancakes. Children develop a knowledge and understanding of the world, they learn about different countries and cultures, looking at the map and where they are from. They use books to check the flag of each country and make their own flag. Children's communication, language and literacy skills are promoted as they enjoy books, use story bags, read poems and use puppets as props, whilst singing songs and reading stories.

Children's good health is promoted well. Menus are shared with parents and children enjoy a range of healthy snacks and meals. Specific dietary needs are recorded and adhered to and the childminder is sensitive to any cultural requirements. Posters illustrate the 'five a day' food requirements and support children's understanding of healthy eating. Good hygiene practices are in place, for example, each child has their own designated colour, which is linked to their towel, cup and bowl. Therefore, this encourages good hygiene and children can identify their own belongings. Children's general well-being is fostered as they spend a good deal of time outdoors, benefiting from regular fresh air and exercise. They use the garden, go for walks, visit the park and nearby farm, using the indoor and outdoor play areas, thereby developing their physical skills too. Children feel safe and secure. They develop an awareness of their own safety. They discuss 'stranger danger' road safety and learn the meaning of the traffic light colours. Children practise fire drills and take it in turns to be the chief fire guard and carry out a safety check with the childminder, wearing a fluorescent jacket and taking the role very seriously. They are familiar with sensible rules, such as not running indoors, which all contributes to their safety.

Children behave well because the childminder gives lots of one to one attention and children are busy and engaged. They are familiar with the sensible rules, such as be kind to each other and these are displayed to remind them. They discuss any difficulties and children are encouraged to talk about their feelings and recognise those of others. Time is taken to relax and wind down if there are any challenging situations. Distraction is an effective strategy and children are encouraged to apologise to each other, with stickers used to reward positive behaviour. Children receive lots of praise which encourages their good behaviour and promotes their self-esteem.

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	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	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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