

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	21/03/2012
Inspector	Susan Ennis
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 husband in London Colney, Hertfordshire, close to shops, parks, schools and public transport links. The whole of the childminder's house, apart from the main bedroom is used for childminding and there is access to a fully enclosed garden for outside play. Children also have access to further play space in a large cabin situated in the garden. The family has no pets.

The childminder provides care on each weekday during term-time and school holidays. She is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of three children in the early year's age range. When working with an assistant this number may increase to six. The childminder is currently minding eight children in this age group who attend on a part-time basis. She also offers care to children aged over five years and this provision is registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Children on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register share the same facilities as those on the Early Years Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The childminder offers a secure and welcoming environment in which safeguarding procedures are in place to protect children's safety. Overall, documentation is well maintained and underpins the childminder's practice. Her flexible planning and excellent range of resources ensures that the children's interests are followed and that they enjoy their time with her. The childminder builds trusting relationships with parents promoting a continuity of care for all concerned. Through reflecting on her practice, the childminder has a picture of her areas for improvement. She demonstrates a high commitment to her childminding and is enthusiastic about making and sustaining improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- analyse further your use of observations and assessments to demonstrate how children's next steps of progress are achieved
- update the record of risk assessment to include an assessment for each individual outing and trip.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Effective safeguarding policies and procedures ensure that children are well protected. The childminder has a detailed knowledge of child protection, having attended additional training to update her knowledge, and has the required contact numbers in place for dealing with concerns should they arise. She ensures that anyone coming into contact with the children is suitable to do so and has arranged emergency cover should she ever not be able to care for the children herself. The childminder conducts detailed risk assessments and regular safety checks of her home and garden to ensure that they are safe for the children to use. However, the risk assessments for outings are not always included in the written records and as a result do not formally identify the associated risks for all outings or allow them to be shared and regularly reviewed. The childminder is very mindful of children's safety whilst out and about. For example, they all wear high visibility jackets so that they can easily be seen. They also wear wrist bands containing the childminder's contact details in case they ever become separated from her.

The childminder demonstrates a genuine enjoyment for her work and is committed to improving the outcomes for the children. She attends training to update her childcare knowledge and regularly reads childcare publications to ensure that her practice is current and correct. The childminder consistently evaluates her daily practice and is pro-active in making changes where she feels they are required. She reacts positively to the inspection process and plans to use the self-evaluation form as an ongoing tool to highlight her strengths and areas for improvement. Parents share their thoughts through use of verbal interaction, text messages and written references. They demonstrate their satisfaction through comments such as 'The childminder strives to improve and has endless energy of which she puts 100% into her childminding.'

The superb range of resources available to the children is actively used and the inclusive, child-friendly environment is extremely conducive to children's learning. Children are able to self select which toys they want to play with from the low-level storage boxes in place. They also make excellent use of the log cabin which is designed to cover all areas of learning. The children particularly enjoy relaxing on the child-size settee and arm chairs to listen to a story. The childminder has a positive understanding of anti-discriminatory practice, enabling her to provide a service which is inclusive for all children and families. She works closely with parents to ensure that she understands each child's background, needs and beliefs. A trusting partnership with parents and carers ensures that all relevant information is shared and a consistent approach given. Detailed documentation ensures that parents are fully informed about the childminder's policies and procedures. Daily interaction, use of a daily diary and the regular sharing of the children's learning journals ensures that parents are fully informed about their children's day. The childminder works effectively with other settings attended by the children. She shares relevant information and makes sure that she is aware of the themes being covered so that she can use these as a focus for conversation with the children.

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

Children are consistently offered a wide range of opportunities that support them in making good progress across the areas of learning and development. Good quality information is initially gained from parents at the start of the placement. This tells the childminder about, for example, the children's home lives, likes, dislikes and their stage of development. This information is then used to feed into children's initial assessments. The childminder knows the children very well. Each child has a learning journal in which the childminder makes effective use of observations, photographs and assessments to enable her to build on what the children know and to plan their next steps. However, it is currently difficult to see how children's next steps are incorporated into planning or achieved. As a result of this children's development is not optimally promoted.

The childminder uses her experience to plan activities that progress children's learning and stimulate their ideas. They experiment with play dough making fruits that they describe as 'grapes and strawberries' and figures such as gingerbread men. When they make masks from the dough they are reminded not to put it on their faces due to their runny noses and the potential spread of infection. Children demonstrate their growing use of mathematical language as they compare the water left in their drinks bottles stating that 'mine has less' and 'theirs has more.' They develop their language as they describe the corn flour gloop as 'sticky' and 'cold' and enjoy sharing a book with the childminder. They are thrilled when they use their construction skills to build a tower which reaches their forehead and is 'as big as me.' Children's emotional development is sensitively promoted as they develop secure and trusting relationships with the childminder and their friends. The childminder acts as a positive role model and assists the children in learning the consequences of their actions. Children are sensitively taught to understand about the society in which they live. For example, celebrations of festivals are built into the planning and resources such as dolls and play figures improve children's knowledge of the wider world.

Children's health is extremely actively promoted as the childminder takes robust steps to minimise the spread of infection. Children develop an enthusiastic attitude to healthy living. They know to wash their own hands after using the toilet, 'washing the germs down the sink' and are sensitively reminded by pictures displayed in the bathroom. They are learning about where different foods come from as they participate in the planting and nurturing of fruit in the garden and take part in a range of cooking activities. Visits organised by the childminder enhance all aspects of the children's development. They participate in pony riding, ice skating and especially enjoy their regular visits to the local safari park when the childminder uses a large enough coach for them all to have a window seat. Children are learning about their own safety and that of their friends. They know not to run when inside and look to the childminder for support when they see their friend playing with the safety gate. The childminder also uses imaginary situations including the road mats and cars to enhance children's understanding of road safety and keeping safe when out and about.

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	1
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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