

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	21/06/2011
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 2010. She lives with her husband and three children aged nine months, three and five years in Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire, close to shops, parks, schools and public transport links. The whole of the childminder's house is used for childminding and there is access to a fully enclosed garden for outside play. 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 one child in the early years age range and is currently minding one child in this age group. She also offers care to children aged over five years and this provision is registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. Children on the compulsory and part 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 safe, secure and welcoming environment in which all children thrive and where their development is consistently promoted. Her flexible planning 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 is therefore able to make effective changes to improve the daily care and experiences for the children she looks after. 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:

- improve the use of information gathered about children's learning to enhance their good progress towards the early learning goals
- develop further the use of reflective practise to highlight strengths and areas for improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Effective safeguarding policies and procedures ensure that children are well protected. For example, the childminder has a good 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 with another childminder should she ever not be able to care for the children herself. The childminder uses clear and practical procedures, such as daily safety checks and regular risk assessments, for monitoring the environment. This ensures that children can move around freely and with confidence. She also regularly practises the fire drill with the children, increasing their knowledge of the action to take in an emergency.

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. For example, she would learn some basic words in children's home language to make them feel settled and secure. The childminder effectively helps children learn and understand about the society in which they live and the wider world. For example, she talks to them about naturally occurring events such as the longest day and provides activities in celebration of Easter and Fathers' Day. She extends children's knowledge further by teaching them Slovakian songs and reading stories, for example, about 'Mr Big' encouraging their respect for others.

Children's individual development is purposefully promoted because the childminder has effective procedures in place to support, monitor and evaluate their progress. The wide range of available resources is well used and the inclusive, child-friendly environment is conducive to children's learning. A designated play room and low-level storage enables the children to freely select which toys they want to play with, which they are confident in doing. For example, they independently choose pens and paper which they use to draw a picture of a rainbow with their name written below, developing their mark-making skills as they do so. The childminder also makes use of the local amenities, taking the children to play areas, the library and toddler groups to broaden their experiences and socialising with their peers.

A close and trusting partnership with parents, carers and others involved in the children's lives ensures that all relevant information is shared and a consistent approach given. Organised documentation ensures that parents are fully informed about the childminder's policies and procedures, detailing her working ethos and good practice. Daily interaction, text messages and the sharing of the children's development files all help to keep the parents effectively informed about their children's day and involved in their developmental progress. They also enjoy receiving the 'What I have done' sheet which contains photographs and details of the activities the children have participated in. The childminder works with other settings attended by the children to ensure an effective continuity of care. She makes sure that she is aware of any particular themes being covered at the nursery and compliments the activities back at her house. For example, when children discuss creatures and animals at nursery, the childminder encourages their further interest by providing resources for them to make caterpillar pictures. This then leads onto them looking for caterpillars and bugs in the garden.

The childminder demonstrates a genuine enjoyment for her work and is committed to improving the outcomes for the children. She also wants to increase her own

knowledge and has identified courses that she hopes to attend in the near future. She regularly seeks parents' views about her practice and they demonstrate their satisfaction with her through recorded comments such as 'I have to say I am so glad we found you when looking for a childminder. I feel you go over and beyond what is expected, always thinking of things to make the children's time enjoyable'. Children also feedback their thoughts including 'I would like you to come on holiday and to see you everyday.' The childminder evaluates her daily practice and makes continuous plans for the future, such as introducing a laminated menu planner that the children can use to illustrate what they have had to eat. This can then also be shared with the parents, keeping them well informed. Although the childminder has identified areas for improvement she is less confident in highlighting her strengths, therefore limiting her view of her practise as a whole.

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

The childminder offers a stimulating range of opportunities to support the children to make good progress in the areas of learning and development. Her flexible approach to planning ensures that children's choices, likes and dislikes are taken into account. For example, when children show an interest in playing outside, the childminder suggests a game of hide and seek to encourage their physical and counting skills. The children hide first and then state that it is the childminder's turn to hide. The children count and then squeal with delight as they find who they are looking for. The childminder is knowledgeable about where the children are in their development and uses observations, photographs and the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance to plan their next steps. However, there is currently limited information regarding children's starting points and current systems do not consistently demonstrate how children's next steps of progress are incorporated into planning or where children are in their overall development towards the early learning goals. Therefore children's individual needs are not optimally met.

The childminder uses her skill to plan activities that provide good levels of challenge and are appropriate for children's age and stage of development. For example, they develop their creative, problem solving and language skills as they help the childminder make play dough. The childminder encourages them to look at the recipe with her and to fill the cup with the correct amount of flour and salt. The childminder asks 'Is the cup full yet?' and 'What colour is the flour?' Children are praised for their 'lovely' mixing skills and discuss with the childminder the colour the mixture changes to when the food colouring is poured in. Once cooked they are reminded not to touch the mixture as it is hot. They are encouraged to count to five and then to feel if it is cool enough to use. They develop their creative skills as they make a beach scene using shells and dough fish. The childminder is also good at drawing out children's learning from daily activities. For example, whilst walking to school she asks the children to identify items starting with certain letters of the alphabet and to collect stones that they later play with in the water.

Children's emotional development is well promoted as they develop secure and

trusting relationships with the childminder and their friends. They demonstrate this as they proudly show the childminder their plate of dough food including chips, fish and sausages. The childminder acts as a positive role model and assists the children in learning and making the right decisions. She offers sensitive reminders about, for example, taking their shoes off when inside and washing hands after playing in the garden. Children learn the expectations and boundaries in place and the consequences of their actions. They also very much like having a star placed on their chart for positive behaviour.

Children's health and hygiene is actively promoted as the childminder takes effective steps to minimise the spread of infection and develop children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle. For example, they learn about healthy eating and where food comes from as they grow fruit and vegetables in the garden. They particularly enjoy picking the strawberries from their planting area and watering the items growing in the greenhouse. They are also developing their independence skills as they help cut up the fruit to eat. Children are becoming aware of their own safety as they discuss road awareness when out and about. They are also reminded not to stand on the chairs and to save their running feet for outside.

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

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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