

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 223631
Inspection date 01/04/2009
Inspector Suzette Butcher

Type of setting Childminder

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.

Description of the childminding

The childminder was registered in 1987 and lives with her husband in Ellesmere, Shropshire. She works on the same premises with her husband, who is an assistant, and another registered childminder who she employs. The whole of the ground floor of the house and first floor bathroom are used for minding children. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The setting is open from 08.00 to 18.00, for 49 weeks a year. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than three may be in the early years age group. There are currently 11 children on roll in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The childminder also offers care to children over five years to 16 years. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The provision is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The childminder takes and collects children from local schools and nurseries and attends toddler groups on a regular basis. She has a level 3 diploma in Home-based Childcare and a level 3 award in Playwork for Childcare Workers. She is a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA) and of the Shropshire Community Childminder Network. The provision has achieved both NCMA Children Come First and the local authority Growing Together Quality Assurance Awards.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the provision is outstanding. The childminder's meticulous organisation and holistic approach creates an exceptional rounded, nurturing and enabling environment where children thrive. Extensive assessment procedures record children's progress with a minor omission. The childminder's exemplary commitment towards continual improvement and professional development continues to raise standards and has a very positive impact for children and their families. Children learn to care for and respect each other within the supportive community ethos where inclusive practice is given a very high priority.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- build on good practice by recording starting points as a baseline assessment for individual children.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder is highly committed and aspires to provide the best possible standards of care and education for children. Her personal training programme is exemplary and she is currently following a high quality continuous professional

development programme. This includes the completion of level 4 NVQ as she works towards a degree qualification and Early Years Professional Status. She has recently achieved two quality assurance awards with the local authority and NCMA for the provision and continually reflects critically and methodically on the overall quality of her practice. This supports her rigorous self-evaluation systems that clearly identify and prioritise areas for improvement and outline action plans for the future. The childminder welcomes critical dialogue and feedback from children, parents and colleagues to ensure that everyone's needs are being met within her setting and in the wider community. A very strong community ethos is promoted and parents write that the childminder is 'held in high regard by all members of the local community'. She is an active member of the local children's centre multi-agency steering group and the county's childminding network. The childminder is highly organised and skilfully manages the very effective, professional partnership with her co-childminder and her assistant husband. Their different roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and a timetable for each day is rigorously planned and recorded on a matrix to provide a very secure and supportive system. The central focus on the differing needs of children and their families creates flexibility and adaptability. A strong promotion of inclusion is at the heart of the provision and every family is warmly welcomed with each child valued as uniquely special. The childminder seeks every opportunity to increase her skills to support children with additional needs, such as medical needs or learning difficulties and disabilities. Diversity is actively promoted and children's home languages and cultures are highly valued and reflected in their play and learning. Children's welfare needs are rigorously safeguarded through comprehensive documentation and very effective procedures.

Partnerships with parents and carers are excellent. Parents are actively involved and consulted on a regular basis. They comment that they value that their views are actively sought as the childminder strives 'to improve her provision even further'. They consistently respond very positively in questionnaires and consider that the very high quality of care and education provided exceeds their expectations. Newsletters keep parents informed about future plans and changes. Comprehensive information about children's welfare needs and general progress is shared informally in daily chats and through the child's profile. More formal meetings are arranged to further involve parents in their child's progress within the EYFS and parents provide photographs and information to include in their child's profile. Close links are firmly established with providers in children's other EYFS settings. Effective systems are currently under review to ensure relevant information is shared with parents and each other to promote continuity and progression.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are very happy and relaxed in the homely setting. Excellent settling in procedures are followed as children quickly develop close relationships with the two childminders and form strong friendships with the other children. Starting points are established through discussion and in an 'All about me' form, although details are not recorded as a baseline for assessments. The childminder knows each child extremely well, which helps them to feel confident and settled and

allows them to make extremely good progress towards the early learning goals. The childminder's long term childcare experience and extensive training further enhance her excellent knowledge and understanding of the underlying principles of the EYFS. This creates a very firm foundation for children as they follow their individual learning journey and make the very best of their abilities and talents. A very good mix of planned, structured activities and time for free play, both in and out of the home, provides a balance of adult-led and child-initiated opportunities. Well organised observation and assessment procedures monitor children's progress. Children's key strengths and their next steps in learning that require more support are clearly identified and used effectively to inform future planning. Additional learning and development needs are skilfully identified and provided for in individual programmes. In addition, this information is shared with the children's parents, providing a continual up-to-date overview of their child's stage of development.

The home is very well laid out to allow children to move around freely and have plenty of space to play. Free-flow of activities between indoors and the garden enhance children's well-being and provide challenging and stimulating learning opportunities. Equipment is extensive and stored to enable children to make choices about their own play as they develop active learning. Activities are extended to include a variety of languages and positive images of diversity and different cultures. Many resources support children's understanding of diversity and encourage them to learn to value different aspects of their own and other people's lives. Opportunities to socialise, join in with group activities and explore different challenges are provided through visits to toddler groups and outings to places of interest. Children develop an excellent knowledge and understanding of the world around them as they explore the natural world on outings, grow their own plants or help to care for the wildlife in the garden. Informal learning opportunities are explored through interesting practical experiences, such as visits to building sites and making mud bricks. The childminder talks to the children constantly, providing opportunities for them to engage in conversation, answer questions, extend their vocabulary and share their own thoughts and opinions. The children's enthusiasm, along with the childminder's ability to extend their learning with interesting and exciting activities, allows them to develop habits of independent and inquisitive learners. Children's special events and individual achievements are enthusiastically celebrated and parents describe how the childminder 'surpasses herself with all of the personal touches that go on throughout the year'.

The childminder sets high standards to safeguard children and encourages children to recognise potential risks and hazards as they learn how to keep themselves safe. Children are polite, considerate, well-behaved and acknowledge each other's feelings as they take care of each other. Parents comment that 'children are extremely close' and 'look out for each other' and 'become aware of other's needs and worries'. Whole group activities, such as creating a large painting, encourage children to solve problems and work together to produce the finished result. Children's good health is promoted as stringent procedures are in place to prevent the spread of infection. They are encouraged to develop good hygiene habits and to understand the purpose of routines as part of a healthy lifestyle.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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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

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met