

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	123669
Inspection date	29/01/2010
Inspector	Sarah Johnson

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 1986. She lives with her husband in Bishop's Stortford in Hertfordshire, close to shops, parks, schools and public transport links. The ground floor of the childminder's home is used for childminding and a secure enclosed garden is used for outdoor play activities.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, no more than three of whom may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding one child in this age group who attends on a part-time basis. The childminder also offers care to children aged over five years: this provision is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The childminder takes and collects children from the local school and goes to toddler groups regularly. She holds a relevant early years qualification to Level 3.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

The childminder has sound understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), enabling her to keep children safe and secure. Children enjoy a sound range of play opportunities that are generally planned to enable them to make steady progress in their learning and development. The childminder works closely with parents and carers to ensure that children's individual needs are met, and she demonstrates a generally sound commitment to promoting inclusive practice. The childminder demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for improvement as she has sound awareness of the strengths of the provision and has identified some areas for future improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend the use of observations and assessments to ensure they are matched to the aspects of learning and development in the EYFS and used systematically to identify the next steps in learning for each child
- provide more positive images and resources that challenge children's thinking and help them to embrace differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, special educational needs and disabilities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded effectively from abuse and neglect because the childminder has good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. She has completed appropriate training focusing on safeguarding children and

developed a clear written safeguarding children policy to follow should any concerns arise. All the required checks are completed to ensure the childminder and other adults who have regular contact with the children are suitable to do so. Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where the childminder uses safety gates to limit children access to the stairs, and ensures that children are supervised at all times. In addition, effective risk assessments are carried out in the home to minimise any further risks to the children's safety and these are recorded and reviewed regularly to meet the EYFS requirements. Toys and equipment are maintained to a clean and safe standard, and most of these are set out appropriately to enable children to reach them for themselves and make choices in their play.

Positive relationships are shared with parents and carers, ensuring each child benefits from sound continuity in their care. For example, the childminder prioritises time for daily discussions with parents and passes on her informal observations of children's progress and the skills they are developing. An informative noticeboard provides parents with written information about some of the key procedures that are implemented at the setting, such as the fire evacuation plan and the procedure for dealing with concerns or complaints. The childminder occasionally chats to teachers when collecting older children from the local primary school, standing her in reasonably good stead for forging partnerships with some of the practitioners that may be involved in children's care, learning and development in the future.

The childminder is fairly reflective in her approach and takes time to trial some of the new ideas and guidance that she gathers from training courses and support meetings. For example, she links up with an advisor from the National Childminding Association (NCMA) to review her practice against the requirements of the EYFS, and gathers example written policies to adapt for use in her setting. The childminder has addressed the recommendations from the last inspection to bring about sound improvements to outcomes for children's health and safety. Equality of opportunity is promoted to ensure children are able to participate in all aspects of the provision. Following the completion of a range of relevant training courses the childminder is able to work together with parents to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Children make sound progress in their learning and development as they participate in a range of activities and enjoy using the selection of toys and resources provided by the childminder. They make many of their own choices as they play, demonstrating their independence. Children are confident in expressing their wishes, reassured that the childminder will listen and value what they say and do. For example, the childminder gladly gets involved when children show an interest in sharing a familiar book with her. Through this experience, the childminder asks questions that extend children's thinking around colours and numbers, and she challenges them to articulate new vocabulary such as 'statue' and 'chimney'. The childminder plays imaginatively with the children as they

develop their own role play scenarios such as feeding the doll with a spoon and taking the small digger to the garage. Children have sound opportunities to experience the local community. For example, they regularly visit local shops, the library and a toddler group. This provides children with the opportunity to experience the diverse society in which they live and become aware of people's similarities and differences. However, the use of resources and positive images to support children's thinking around differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, special educational needs and disabilities is much less purposeful. Children show interest in the natural world and living things as they help to fill the bird feeders with seed and get involved in planting sunflowers in the garden. They watch as these grow, comparing their own height with that of the sunflowers and using mathematical language such as 'shorter' and 'taller' to describe their early measurements.

The childminder is continuing to develop the way in which she plans different activities for children and is now beginning to use observations and assessments more readily to monitor children's progress. She provides each child with an individual approach by adapting and extending activities in her daily interactions with them. For example, she extends children's learning as they get involved in baking activities; prompting them to count the number of spoonfuls as they add ingredients to the bowl and showing them how to stir the icing mixture carefully with a wooden spoon. Although the childminder is beginning to consider how to keep written notes of her observations of children's development, she is not yet matching her observations to the aspects of learning and development in the EYFS. Consequently, these are not being used as effectively as they could be to identify the next steps in learning for individual children.

The childminder has a calm and positive approach with the children, ensuring they are relaxed and encouraged to behave well. The daily routine allows time for children to engage in a sound range of activities in the childminder's garden, such as pedalling ride-on toys and climbing on the larger apparatus and slide. Together with outings to the local park, these outdoor experiences ensure that children benefit from being active outside in the fresh air on a regular basis. Children are encouraged to learn about aspects of a healthy diet as the childminder talks to them about the benefits of eating their apple and having a drink at snack time. Good consideration is given to raising children's awareness of safety issues. They are reminded to tidy away resources to avoid the risk of tripping over, and they talk about the traffic and appropriate road safety rules whilst walking in the local area.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
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	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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