

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	204746
Inspection date	24/03/2009
Inspector	Donna Stevens
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 report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

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 1994. She lives with her husband and two adult daughters in a house in Kidderminster. The whole of the property is used for childminding. The home is laid out over five floors and there are steps down to the fully enclosed garden. The childminder is able to take and collect children from local schools and pre-schools. The family have two cats. The childminder works with an assistant and is supported by childcare students from the local college.

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 range, when working alone. When working with an assistant this number increases to eight children under eight years at any one time, of whom no more than six may be in the early years age group. There are currently nine children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The childminder also offers care to children aged over five years to 11 years. This provision is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The childminder supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and there are procedures in place for supporting children with English as an additional language. The childminder is a member of the National Childminding Association and is an active member of the local childminding support network. She is accredited to receive early years funding for two, three and four year olds.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. Children's welfare learning and development are extremely well promoted in the setting as the childminder works closely with parents, carers and staff at other settings to ensure her practice is fully inclusive. Individual needs are identified and children's likes, dislikes and interests are successfully included in the high quality daily activities provided, ensuring they are happy and enjoy their time with the childminder. The childminder has a very positive attitude to continuous improvement and self-evaluation and actively seeks the opinions of both parents and children when identifying areas of her provision where opportunities for the children can be further expanded. This results in a service that is responsive to the needs of the children currently attending.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue with plans to further improve the outdoor area.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The children benefit from the childminder's strong commitment to training and developing her skills which allows her to constantly improve the already high quality care provided. She has recently completed an NVQ 3 in children's care, learning and development and regularly attends short training courses and workshops allowing her to build a wealth of knowledge and expertise. She has welcomed the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and has used its principles to further improve the arrangements for identifying children's individual needs, tracking their development and working closely with parents and other settings to ensure the children receive consistent and sensitive care. The childminder is supported by several family members who work as her assistants and students from the local college. She ensures that she cascades her knowledge and expertise down to them in order to maintain an outstanding level of service.

Partnerships with parents and carers are excellent and highly valued by the childminder. She consults with parents, constantly seeking their opinions when making decisions about changes and improvements and values their input as part of her successful and ongoing evaluation processes. For example, when improvements were made to the garden, parents and children were consulted at every stage. The finished garden now provides a child-friendly outdoor space which can support all areas of learning and further improvements are planned to involve the children in bringing nature back to the newly refurbished area. Following discussions with parents it was decided that information would be shared verbally on a daily basis at both ends of the day. At the end of each half term the childminder sends home a file with copies of children's daily diary sheets, observations and progress records, along with examples of the children's work and photographs of them taking part in activities and enjoying themselves. Parents are also aware that children's records are available at all times and this results in an open, honest and transparent service where parents and the childminder work closely together to cater the children's individual needs.

Children's welfare is extremely well safeguarded as the childminder ensures that her home remains safe, suitable and child friendly. Robust risk assessments are carried out regularly and a daily safety checklist and cleaning programme ensures that children can continue to play safely and stay healthy. The childminder has an excellent understanding of child protection issues and regularly attends training in this area. There is a clear safeguarding policy in line with local guidance that is shared with parents and they are required to sign a declaration confirming that they have read the policy and understand the childminder's obligations to report any concerns, ensuring that children's welfare remains the paramount concern.

The childminder has developed a comprehensive range of policies and procedures which reflect the high quality care and learning environment provided. These are shared with parents so they have a clear understanding of the expectations of themselves, their children and the minder. All required documentation is extremely well organised and maintained to a very high standard.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make extremely good progress towards the early learning goals and in all areas of their development. They are provided with an excellent range of play and activities both in and out of the home. The childminder is skilled at turning every event into a fun, exciting and enjoyable experience for the children where they develop their skills and learn new things at their own pace. At snack time, for example, children develop their social skills as they learn to sit sensibly at the table, demonstrate excellent manners and engage in conversation with their peers and adults present. They will talk about the fruit they are eating, introducing early mathematical concepts of comparison by size and weight and enjoy sandwiches and toast cut into different shapes. Trips to the local school and nursery are taken by a slightly longer but more scenic route allowing children to observe nature and develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them and their language and listening skills are supported as they sing-a-long to music CDs and engage in discussion about what they can see and hear.

Children's play is observed to allow the childminder to identify areas of strength and those who require more support in their learning and development. Her wealth of knowledge with regards to child development allows her to instinctively know when children require more opportunities to develop their skills and when she sees children developing an interest in a particular area of learning she will grasp this and find ways to incorporate further progression in this area into daily routines and purposeful play. For example, when she became aware that children were developing an interest in numbers she provided them with resources that they were able to count, sort and make patterns with. Younger children were included as shape, size and colour were introduced and written numbers are displayed in the kitchen where children eat and enjoy a wealth of creative and messy play. She will also use children's particular interests to enhance their learning and play. For example when a child developed a keen interest in Bob the Builder she supplied character toys and further vehicles allowing the children to extend their imagination and creativity as they engaged in small world and role play. As an extension of this, children were provided with large construction toys including bolts and screws which allow them to explore their problem solving and reasoning skills.

The home is laid out over five floors and the children generally move between three of them. The childminder ensures that children are always well supervised and they benefit from the additional support of students and assistants. They are encouraged from a young age to learn to climb up and down the stairs safely and older children develop their independence as they learn to open and close stairgates always ensuring that younger children are safely away from staircases. This allows children to be independent and considerate. The childminder is skilled at linking children's learning and development to their welfare needs. She recognises that children experiencing change in their personal lives will often wish to revert to familiar play and activities and provides them with time and support to consolidate their learning and rebuild their confidence to enable them to take the next steps in developing their skills.

The childminder is currently working with the parents and children to complete a gold award for healthy living. This involves completing activities with the children that encourage healthy eating and exercise. The programme also covers children's emotional well-being and this has encouraged the childminder to look at some of the more sensitive issues of life and in line with local events within a close knit community has developed a policy for dealing with sensitive issues such as bereavement & loss in an honest and sensitive manner. She is now attending training in personal, social and emotional development as she wants to develop this within her own already excellent practice. She recognises that children's emotional well-being is the key to them being successful in their learning and development and gaining important skills for the future, as they become confident, inquisitive and independent learners.

Children develop an excellent knowledge and understanding of the world around them and a sensitive and respectful attitude to other ways of life and cultures. The childminder leads a local sponsorship programme where children in a Gambian school are sponsored by families in the local community. Through this experience children are able to learn about the differences and similarities between their lives and lives of children living hundreds of miles away. The childminder is open and honest with the children about her experiences in Gambia and encourages them to ask questions and explore their own feelings about difference. In the setting children are encouraged to share, take turns and take into consideration the feelings of the adults caring for them and their peers. The childminder has high expectations of the children and is clear about how she expects them to behave. She is able to manage their behaviour in a calm and positive way, for example, when leaving the house to collect children from nursery the children ran to the front door. The childminder asked them to move away and reminded them that for their own safety she went out to the driveway first. When they did not immediately follow her instructions she waited patiently reinforcing her request in a calm and gentle manner. The children soon responded appropriately and were praised considerably when they did. On leaving the house she continued to explain to the children why they needed to behave well to ensure their own safety. These opportunities allow children to understand right from wrong, develop a sense of responsibility and learn to keep themselves safe.

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

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.