

## Inspection report for early years provision

---

**Unique reference number** EY257109  
**Inspection date** 14/04/2011  
**Inspector** Jan Moutter

**Type of setting** Childminder

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011

## 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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

## **Description of the childminding**

The childminder first registered in 2003. He works in partnership with his wife who is also a registered childminder. The co-childminder's wife and their three children aged eight, 11 and 13 years live at the property. They live in a large six bedroom, three storey detached property in Upper Swainswick on the eastern edge of the city of Bath. Minded children have access to all the rooms in the house as appropriate and an extensive garden.

The childminder specialises in after school care and organising explorer days out in the local countryside where children walk, play and study nature. Both childminders have equal responsibility for the childminding practice.

Registration is for a maximum of six children under eight years, but when working with another childminder and/or an assistant the number is increased to 12 children. There are currently a total of 38 school children on roll for after school care of whom two are in the early years age range. They are members of the National Childminding Association and he has a CACHE level 3 Diploma in Playwork.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy and thrive in a safe and challenging outdoor and woodland learning environment. The dedicated childminder and his co-childminder wife stimulate children's imagination through a lively and creative curriculum that covers generally all the six early learning goals. The childminder and his whole team share a strong commitment to the continuous improvement of the provision and in improved outcomes for children.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- consider developing procedures for observing and assessing children's progress towards the early learning goals in order to more clearly identify achievements and next steps.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children enjoy a innovative safe outdoor environment in which to play. There is a very strong emphasis on child safety supported though comprehensive

assessments of risk that very successfully minimise potential hazards to children and ensure practices are safe. Excellent communication with children helps them to recognise how to keep themselves safe. There is a secure safeguarding procedure and the childminder ensures that his co-childminder and assistants have a clear awareness of their responsibilities in regard to the protection of children. All adults working with children have been suitably vetted. All policies, procedures and documentation are well maintained and strongly support the smooth running of the provision and inclusive practice.

A particular strength of the setting is the exemplary relationship with parents and carers, who are very positive about all aspects of the provision. In particular, they mention that both the childminders have a very nurturing and supportive approach to all children. They also remark on the very good progress children make because the 'Explorer Club', the name for the woodland walk days, provides an extra dimension to children's overall learning. Highly effective partnerships are well established with the local pre-schools and schools. This strongly contributes to the excellent continuity of care and learning for children. Both the Explorer Club and the afterschool provision operate with the same childminders, co-childminder and his assistants and children from the childminder's house and gardens. There is a separate registration of childcare on domestic premises for the older children.

A further strength of the provision is the skilled and committed childminder and his team who work effectively together. The system of self-evaluation and monitoring of the provision is highly effective. Even though the childminder has been running for quite some time a well targeted and comprehensive action plan is clearly achievable and has been implemented. This has led to improvements, since the previous inspection, of the two recommendations given: the children practise regular emergency evacuation drills from the house with the fire blanket now securely sited in the kitchen. Also, all the accident and medication records are now signed and are confidentially maintained along with any behaviour incidents. The documents were readily available for inspection. These improvements have had a very positive effect on the children as they become more vigilant and learn to protect themselves inside. When in the garden and on outings, there are written consent documents from parents and detailed risk assessments, and children are alert to dangers of the road, animals and plants. The childminder briefs all the children each time they are ready to leave the home to go on 'Explore Days', and carries appropriate first aid and detailed information with him. The organisational improvement plan has further led to very good outcomes for children and joint projects with the pre-schools and schools to provide outdoor exploration in the local woodland areas. The childminder is totally committed to ensuring a fully sustainable environment. Very creative use is made of the woodland resources and these are enhanced by a good range of other learning materials. His knowledge and training in Managing Woodland for Wildlife Conservation and Tree Identification has enhanced the provision and this has made a very successful impact on the children's learning through play, especially in nature and the world they share. The childminder and his team ensure that the deployment of adults is highly effective in promoting the best outcomes for children. The setting successfully promotes equality and diversity as levels of engagement with parents are well established and this results in a good knowledge of each child's background and needs. The childminder takes effective steps to close the identified

gaps in some children's achievements.

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

Children strongly benefit from the safe and highly stimulating outdoor woodland learning environment. They make significant progress in their learning and development because they have very good opportunities for self-exploration and play a dynamic role in their own learning. There is a good balance of child-initiated and adult-supported play. For example, children work cooperatively together as they help the childminder to make the top camp a cosy den from natural resources. They find the straight poles for the frame and the ivy and fir for the interwoven areas. They measure and compare length and safely cut lengths of string to bind the frame together. They count the number of sides to the shape, offering suggestions about how it is constructed as they do so. On receipt of a negative comment from a child, the childminder has taken on board what was said and has established different camps each day so that the children who return have a fresh view of the local areas and gain additional skills with their chance to explore and investigate. Children concentrate well and for long periods of time on activities of their own choosing. They quickly become independent and confident. Two children engage their imaginations and they try out their 'swords' and bows and arrows and others decide to collect 'vegetables for a meal'. Some children taste fresh young nettles and wild garlic. Children do not go thirsty as they are encouraged to take a drink at frequent intervals. They learn to use a collection of tools safely, very closely supervised by the childminder to harvest a rich variety of twigs and leaves that they safely cut in the copse on their way to the camps. The children make up scenarios of adventure, tell stories, listen and respond to each other and work confidently and cooperatively together.

Children are very well equipped with the skills they need for future learning. Children develop large muscle skills as they go on lengthy walks up and down hills. They run across fields. Younger children stretch as they climb independently over the wooden stiles. Towards the end of the walk some children begin to tire but are encouraged to continue at their own pace, so that they are pushed or challenged to their limits. They are skillfully encouraged to listen and to respond to nature; the childminder stops regularly to ask them to look at this plant and examine its sharp spiked under leaf, 'like crocodiles' teeth' he suggests, or the song of the Robin, 'He is telling everyone that this is his space', and enthusiastically the children add their own top tips, 'If you spit on the dock leaf and rub it works better'. All comments given by the children are given value, worth and a straightforward answer. Children have excellent opportunities to be active outdoors in the fresh air, both in the garden and on walks through the countryside. They are protected from the elements: in winter they wrap up warm in coats and wellington boots; in summer children play in the shade of the trees. They follow the rules to safely climb trees and one of the adults is always on hand to observe and support. The children take responsibility for finding resources and safely test their own strength and look out for each other, such as when climbing over styles, making sure that their boots do not hit the child behind them. The childminder demonstrates at each obstacle how

to maneuver safely and the children immediately put these skills into practice. They climb, sit, step over, balance and negotiate space because they thoroughly enjoy the physical challenges of exploring the natural environment and do so with all their senses. All children contribute positively and show a strong sense of security and belonging within the setting.

They receive high quality explanations from the childminder of what is acceptable and unacceptable risk, such as being safe around the camp fire or when meeting a stray dog, or farm animals. They show an excellent understanding of what is expected of them and apply the rules about safety consistently for themselves. Children have a clear understanding of the importance of following good hygiene procedures. The childminder ensures there are innovative and practical facilities, such as the running water that children use to wash their hands. Children are fully aware that they should not put their hands in their mouths without washing them first.

The childminder's Explorer Days are rooted on a full understanding of how children learn and progress. Activities are well planned and based upon accurate observations of children, which contribute to an online Blog. However, the procedures for observing and assessing children's individual progress towards the early learning goals in order to more clearly identify achievements and next steps is currently not fully in place. This means that summative assessments in their learning journals have yet to be fully completed to show children's process over a longer period. However, the excellent link with the other childcare professionals ensures that other assessment information is used effectively to identify children's next steps in development.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
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	1
--	---

### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	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](http://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