

Thomson, Irena Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 16 March 2017

Service provided by:
Thomson, Irena

Service provider number:
SP2003900189

Care service number:
CS2003000668

The service

Introduction

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of eight children at any one time under the age of 16 years, of whom no more than six are under the age of 12, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and no more than one is under 12 months.

The childminding service is provided from a detached bungalow in a residential area in the western side of Dundee. Most of the childminding takes place in a large conservatory extension to the rear of the property which has direct access to the garden. The childminder also makes use of the lounge and bedroom areas on the lower floor for quiet activities and for children to sleep in comfort. There is a bathroom on the lower floor.

The childminder's aims state – 'each child is unique and has individual needs and interests and I will ensure that each child is valued and has their individual needs met. By listening to you and your child, I will nurture their emotional, social, physical and creative development in a safe and secure environment.'

At the time of this inspection, there were two pre-school aged minded children present and other children were due to use the service later in the day. Seven children currently attend the service, all on a part-time basis with ages ranging from three-11 years of age.

What we did during our inspection

We issued six questionnaires to parents of children who used the service. The responses within the five returned questionnaires were very positive and demonstrated that these parents were very happy with the quality of care and support being provided for their children. Further feedback and comments from parents are included in the main body of this report.

In this inspection, we gathered evidence from various sources, including the relevant sections of policies, procedures, records and other documents and the following:

- Observation of the childminder and her interactions with the children in her care.
- Observation of the children's experiences and the learning opportunities.
- Viewing of the children's records.
- Viewing photographs of the children at play.
- Health and safety records.
- Medication systems and records.
- Accident and incident records.
- Questionnaires that had been requested, filled in and returned to the Care Inspectorate.
- Examining equipment and the environment.

We spent time talking to the childminder and the children present about the range of activities that took place and how the service was run.

Views of people using the service

Both children present were seen to be very settled, happy and secure. They clearly had formed strong and trusting relationships with the childminder who was highly attentive to their needs and knew them very well.

We observed both children to be happy and active at play, they accessed a wide range of resources and activity during this inspection, that was supporting their learning and development very well. The children received excellent levels of attention, support and encouragement from this skilled and experienced childminder. The children were able to talk about some of their positive play experiences with the inspector.

All five parents who returned Care Inspectorate questionnaires expressed very good levels of satisfaction with the service, and all five parents 'strongly agreed' that they were overall happy with the quality of care being provided.

Self assessment

Due to an administrative error the childminder had not been asked to submit a self-assessment until the day of her inspection. She intended to submit her self-assessment by the end of March 2017.

What the service did well

The childminder had created a relaxed and most welcoming atmosphere where families were valued and respected. The childminder was very experienced and highly skilled at working with children. She had an excellent understanding of children's needs and we observed her engaging naturally with the children in a highly responsive manner that supported their development and emotional well-being. There was an excellent range of good quality resources in this homely and child centred home. The childminder continues to offer excellent standards of care which meets children's needs extremely well.

What the service could do better

The childminder needed to develop the recording and documentation aspects of her service, as identified at previous inspections. She did need to ensure that she updates training in first-aid and ensures that her approach to fire safety complies with current Fire Brigade guidance. Issues requiring further attention have been highlighted as recommendations in reports previous inspection and should now be prioritized for prompt attention.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	3 - Adequate

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

We graded the service as excellent for this statement.

There was a most inviting and welcoming atmosphere in this child centred home. Two pre-school aged children were present at this inspection and were seen to be busy and active at play. Both children were seen to be receiving excellent standards of care and were settled, happy and very much 'at home'. The childminder had clearly established strong and trusting relationships with both children, who were most comfortable in her care. The childminder spoke about all seven children currently using the service with warmth and respect. She clearly knew all children and their families very well and understood their individual needs. The children had open access to much of the ground floor area of this large and very comfortable family home. The childminder moved between rooms and the garden in response to the children's changing interests, ensuring that they were safely supervised without restricting their independence. Children enjoyed a wide range of activity and accessed many resources during this inspection that supported them to use their imaginations and to be creative. The childminder reacted quickly to the children's needs, engaging and extending their play extremely well to support their learning and enjoyment of their activities. She extended children's vocabulary and thinking and used positive and encouraging language that supported children's confidence and self-esteem. The children were clearly really enjoying their diverse play experiences, they played hide and seek, went into the garden, sought new resources in the outside play house, enjoyed music and dancing, dressing up and other imaginative play activities, in which even the family dog was involved. The childminder was highly nurturing, warm and approachable. It was evident that children were used to receiving high levels of attention and naturally included the childminder in their play. She had created a most inviting play environment that supported children to explore and to be curious, their play was not interrupted or curtailed. The childminder described a varied week of planned and free flow activities that provided diverse learning experiences that supported children's learning and development very well.

The childminder described open and positive relationships with parents and this respectful partnership working was confirmed by all parents who returned Care Inspectorate satisfaction questionnaires. The childminder was confident, approachable and demonstrated excellent communication skills. Five parents using the service expressed that they 'strongly agreed' that they were happy with the standard of care that their children were receiving. Their positive comments about the service included;

'My son has been with Irena for four years and he has loved it. I am safe in the knowledge that he is in a caring and nurturing environment. I feel that this service has been the best start to my son's experiences with other children and adults outwith his home'.

'Am extremely happy with the service Irena provides. My daughter loves going and even asks to go on days that she is not supposed to. Fab childminder, our minds are at ease knowing that our child is in such a fantastic environment'.

'Could not be happier!'

'Irena has a good bond with all of the children in her care. My daughter loves Irena and her family and she enjoys spending time there'.

'I have 100% trust in the childminder with my child. He is always happy and excited to go there'.

These positive comments from parents mirrored the inspector's positive observations and views of the service.

The children were regularly out in the fresh air, enjoying some outdoor activities in the local community. The very well maintained rear garden was also used on a daily basis for outdoor play. This regular active play and fresh air was highly conducive to supporting children to lead healthy lifestyles.

The childminder was aware of the importance of promoting healthy eating and provided a range of snacks that offered children choice and variety. Parents currently provided packed lunches for their children. The childminder had a copy of 'Setting the Table', a good practice document to further support her approach to food and meal times.

We found that the outcomes for children attending this service were excellent. Children were happy and thriving in this caring, respectful and stimulating childcare setting.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 6 – excellent

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

We graded the childminder as very good for this theme. The space, facilities and standards of the home were seen to be excellent for minded children, however, two recommendations from previous inspections had still not been addressed and required attention.

We viewed areas of the house used by minded children and found the premises to offer children excellent facilities to be comfortable, safe, rest, play freely and be active. The children played mostly in the large conservatory/playroom that led directly into the large and inviting garden. Children also had access to the dining room, large hall area, kitchen and ground floor bathroom. There was also a most inviting large 'play house' in the garden, where a vast range of additional play resources were stored and there was ample additional play space. We saw that the home was safe, clean and well cared for throughout, it was child centred in its layout and organised around the children's needs.

We saw that there was an excellent range of age appropriate toys and books, which were seen to be safe and well maintained. Resources were attractively displayed and easily accessed by the children, supporting them to be independent and to make choices. The main play area was bright, spacious and most inviting. Areas of the room were organised to offer diverse play experiences and books were readily available to the children. We saw that the children were highly motivated by the resources and activities on offer. They confidently explored their surroundings and led their own play and learning.

The childminder took very good measures to minimise the spread of infection. She had suitable procedures and policies in place to keep children safe and well, including a contact with pets and animals policy that detailed safe contact with the family pet dog. She had attended a range of relevant training during her years of childminding which supported her to maintain a healthy environment for minded children.

It was recommended at the last two inspections that the childminder should update training in first aid and this had not yet been progressed. A further recommendation is made in this report and should now be addressed, to ensure that the childminder has current knowledge of first aid and can keep children safe and well (see recommendation one).

We saw that there were suitable written risk assessments in place for the premises. The childminder told us that she carried out daily visual checks of her premises, ensuring that it was clean and safe for the children before they arrived and at various points in the day. We saw that she also encouraged the children to care for the environment and to respect resources.

The childminder did need to update her smoke detectors in line with latest Fire Brigade guidance as recommended at her last two inspections. This should now be organised promptly to ensure children's safety (see recommendation two).

We reviewed the childminder's records and saw that there had been no significant accidents or incidents since the last inspection of the service. We noted that there were appropriate systems in place for administering medication, although none was currently being given.

We saw that the rear garden was safe, child centred and well-maintained. It offered excellent opportunities for outdoor and energetic play. There was an excellent range of resources that supported children to be active and to develop a range of physical skills. Children were permitted to bring the scooters inside to extend their 'police and baddies' game. This flexibility to use of space and resources was highly conducive to supporting children's play and developing their ideas.

We found that this was a safe, comfortable and highly inviting environment that provided children with excellent opportunities for play.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. The childminder should update training in first aid. This was recommended at the last two inspections and should now be promptly addressed.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:

Standard 2 - A safe environment

Standard 3 - Health and well-being

Standard 14 - Well managed service.

2. The childminder should make herself aware of current Fire Safety guidance for childminders and install appropriate smoke detectors as required. This was recommended at the last two inspections and should now be promptly addressed to ensure children's safety .

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:

Standard 2 - A safe environment

Standard 3 - Health and well-being

Standard 14 - Well managed service.

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of staffing

This quality theme was not assessed.

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

We graded the childminder as adequate overall for this statement. The childminder was providing very high standards of care but was less focused on the recording and documentation aspects of running a childminding service. She did not always address recommendations made by the Care Inspectorate during inspections. These factors have impacted on the grades awarded for this area of her practice, whilst recognising the overall excellent outcomes for children attending this service. Once recommendations made relating to children's safety have been addressed the grade awarded for this theme is likely to improve.

There were individual files for all minded children that held a range of relevant information to plan for the children's care, including; consent forms, registration forms that noted individual care needs, and recently introduced developmental checklists and progress charts that were shared with parents. This improvement to recording now more accurately reflected the excellent awareness the childminder had of individual children and their needs. The childminder took regular photographs to capture significant learning and children's experiences. She was considering how she could make best use of these photographs and felt that the children might enjoy completing scrap books and being involved in sharing and revisiting their childminding experiences. The childminder told us that she regularly sent photographs to parents to let them see the range of experiences that the children had and for them to enjoy these images of happy, active children at play.

The childminder demonstrated that she regularly informally reflected on her service and made changes in response to the families' changing needs. Parents and children were routinely consulted about the service and their viewpoints used to help develop the service. She had established excellent relationships with parents, and provided some examples of effective partnership working to support individual children.

The childminder had attended very little external training in recent years, however, she was an avid reader and keep updated on childcare issues and developments through reading publications and using the internet. The positive impact of this self-directed learning was evident in the childminder's strong practice and extensive knowledge. She should continue to seek relevant training in key areas to ensure that her practice always reflects current guidance and legislation.

Discussion with the childminder evidenced that she had a very good understanding of child protection issues and of her responsibilities for children's welfare and safety. She had an appropriate policy and procedure in place to manage any child protection concerns. She was sensitive and caring and understood the importance of strong emotional well-being and for children to feel safe and secure. She was familiar with the GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) framework and the associated well-being indicators, which were naturally woven into her daily practice .

It was evident from observing the childminder's practice that her child-led approach to children's play and learning sat very comfortably with current best practice guidance.

Parents expressed great confidence and trust in the childminder and felt well-informed and involved in their children's care.

We found the childminder to be experienced, reliable and most nurturing. She had an excellent understanding of children's needs and now needed to develop the documentation and recording aspects of her service. She should also work towards meeting recommendations made by the Care Inspectorate, particularly when they relate to children's health and safety (see recommendation one).

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The childminder should continue to develop the recording, organisational and training aspects of her service, ensuring that key recommendations are met to develop her service and support children's health and safety.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:

Standard 2 - A safe environment

Standard 12 - Confidence in staff

Standard 14 - Well managed service.

Grade: 3 - adequate

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

The childminder should make herself aware of latest Fire Safety guidance for childminders and install appropriate smoke detectors as required. This was recommended at the last inspection and should now be addressed.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:
Standard 3 - Health and well-being
Standard 14 - Well managed service.

This recommendation was made on 10 February 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This important recommendation regarding home safety had still not been addressed and should now be progressed as a priority. A further recommendation is made in this report.

Recommendation 2

The childminder should update training in first aid. This was recommended at the last inspection and should now be addressed.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:
Standard 3 - Health and well-being
Standard 14 - Well managed service.

This recommendation was made on 10 February 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This important recommendation had still not been addressed and should now be actioned as a priority. A further recommendation is made in this report.

Recommendation 3

The childminder should ensure that she submits the required documents and evidence required by the Care Inspectorate, including self-assessments, annual returns and action plans to inform our regulatory duties for the service.

**National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:
Standard 14 – Well managed service.**

This recommendation was made on 10 February 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The childminder had submitted an annual return this year and intended to submit a self-assessment in the coming weeks. This improvement to compliance with the Care Inspectorate should be sustained.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
10 Feb 2016	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	6 - Excellent 5 - Very good Not assessed 3 - Adequate
29 Jan 2014	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate 4 - Good Not assessed
14 Feb 2013	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate 4 - Good Not assessed
20 Mar 2012	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 3 - Adequate Not assessed
13 Feb 2011	Re-grade	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	Not assessed Not assessed 1 - Unsatisfactory Not assessed
26 Nov 2010	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good Not assessed
7 May 2009	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate Not assessed

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