

# Thomson, Irena Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 8 March 2018

**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 house 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 that '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 four pre-school aged minded children present, one of whom was five years old. Other children were due to use the service when they finished school.

### What we did during our inspection

We issued questionnaires to parents of children who used the service. We received two completed questionnaires, in which these parents expressed very good levels of satisfaction with the service. 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 learning and experiences.
- Viewing of the children's records.
- 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.
- Quality Assurance Systems and audits of service user involvement.

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

### Views of people using the service

All minded children present were seen to be very settled and most content in the childminder's care. They had clearly formed very strong relationships with their childminder and confidently told the inspector about the activities they enjoyed and the fun that they had. Children were seen to be very happy, relaxed and really enjoying the diverse play experiences on offer. Both parents who returned Care Inspectorate questionnaires told us that they were very happy with the service. Both parents 'strongly agreed' that they were happy with the quality of care that their child received.

## Self assessment

It appears that we had not asked the childminder for a self-assessment prior to this inspection being carried out. We discussed the childminder's plans for her service and saw that she routinely developed the service in response to the needs of the children and families using her service.

## What the service did well

The childminder was very experienced, confident and skilled at working with children and had established excellent relationships with families using the service. She had a deep understanding of children's needs and was highly responsive and tuned into their needs. She was warm, nurturing and enthusiastic in her care and support of the children. There was an excellent range of good quality resources and a wide range of activities on offer. Outcomes for children were found to be excellent, the childminder continued to offer excellent standards of care in a warm and inclusive atmosphere where children were flourishing.

## 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 should also extend the range of training that she undertakes, including refreshing training in child protection that was last completed in 2007. She does need to ensure that she always works within the conditions of her registration.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

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

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

The childminder had created a most child-centred and inviting environment where children and their families clearly felt welcome and valued. The childminder was extremely responsive to the children's needs and was highly involved in their play and learning. She knew the children in her care extremely well and used her knowledge and observations most effectively to support children's play, learning and wellbeing. The children clearly adored the childminder and they all had established strong and trusting relationships with her and were thriving in her care. After many years childminding, the childminder remains highly motivated and enthusiastic in her role. Our discussions and observations concluded that she had great respect for the families using the service.

The childminder was currently caring for four pre-school aged minded children and five primary school aged children attending before and after school; all children attended on a part-time basis. The childminder was well-organised and very skilled meeting the differing needs of all age groups. For example, ensuring that all children were included in play and that the story she read during the inspection was equally meaningful to the youngest child present.

The children present during the inspection were seen to be very happy, secure and fully engrossed at play. They had a broad range of activities and resources to choose from. They had stories, they sang songs and had excellent conversations and discussions with the childminder that extended their enjoyment and learning from activities. Outcomes for children were seen to be excellent. Children had fun; they were learning, they laughed, were building strong relationships and were all included and valued in this very caring setting.

The childminder was kind and most nurturing in all interactions with the children. It was evident that children were used to receiving positive and individual attention that met their needs very well. We heard the childminder praise and encourage the children and recognise and celebrate their achievements. Children were encouraged to be kind and helpful towards each other and to respect consistent boundaries and the environment. This positive, highly respectful and child-led approach supported the children's development and provided them with excellent opportunities to be independent and responsible.

The spacious and inviting play areas and excellent range of resources available meant that children could develop their own interests, and we saw that play was not interrupted or restricted. There was an excellent range of well-cared for books available and we found that literacy and numeracy were naturally and routinely embedded into play. Children understood that they needed to care for books, they knew that books had authors, they revisited the story with the childminder sharing their understanding and interpretation of the story, and sought clarification through questioning. This stimulating environment had a very positive impact on children's development. The inspector watched them confidently complete some difficult jigsaw puzzles for their age. They were delighted with their achievements, and the praise from the childminder boosted their confidence and self-esteem. We found that the childminder provided a varied and stimulating weekly programme that was meeting children's needs very well. She told the inspector that the after school children were currently very interested in playing Monopoly and that they regularly enjoyed group board games, which encouraged taking turns and working together. It was evident that children were very involved in sharing their ideas for activities and encouraged to be involved in planning.

Parents provided packed lunches for minded children, which were supplemented by snacks provided by the childminder. Children had very good access to active play and fresh air in the weekly programme, which was conducive to children's general good health and wellbeing. The large child-friendly garden was used on a daily basis with further opportunities for active play provided through trips and outings.

The childminder had improved recording of children's needs since her last inspection and now had basic care plans and developmental checklists in place. These could be further developed to better reflect the excellent knowledge that she had about individual children in her care.

The childminder's open approach ensured that parents were offered a range of opportunities to become involved in the service. Feedback from parents through returned Care Inspectorate satisfaction questionnaires confirmed that parents were well-informed and had open and regular discussions with the childminder to inform their child's care. The childminder had previously used satisfaction questionnaires to gather parental views and suggestions for the service, but these had not been carried out for some time. She felt that the open and regular communications with parents were effective in receiving feedback about her service. Two Care Inspectorate satisfaction questionnaires were returned from families using the service. These parents expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the service and both 'strongly agreed' that they were overall happy with the quality of care that their child received.

We took all of the above into account and concluded that the childminder was meeting this theme to an excellent standard. This was a highly nurturing and supportive environment, that was providing children with excellent experiences that were supporting their holistic wellbeing and development.

### Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

### Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 6 – excellent

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

The childminder's home was very well cared for, spacious and inviting. The layout and organisation of the home was well-suited to childminding, with all facilities at ground floor level and allowing children to move independently between different areas of the house. This comfortable and homely environment provided ample space for the children to play, rest and eat in comfort. Children could access the toilet independently and had easy access into the garden through patio doors from the conservatory. The main play area was the comfortable conservatory/playroom where an excellent range of age appropriate resources were available. Children also played in the dining room and large hall area. There was also a most inviting large 'play house' in the garden, where a vast range of additional play resources were stored. This area offered additional play space and was sometimes used for a change of scenery.

We saw that the childminder's home was clean, well-organised and hygienic. It was evident that she had very good standards of cleanliness for her home, and a robust approach to infection control practice to keep children safe and healthy. Through our discussions and observation of practice it was evident that the childminder had a conscientious approach to supporting children's health and safety. She kindly reinforced boundaries and reminded children of behaviours that would keep them and others safe. For example, being careful opening the patio door so that nobody hurt their fingers. These routine conversations with children were helping them to learn about safety and managing risk.

The home was a smoke-free zone. There was one family dog who was seen to be very comfortable around the children. The childminder was clear about appropriate measures to take to protect both the children and the dog.

Children had regular access to the safe, spacious, well-maintained and enclosed rear garden. Opportunities for fresh air and energetic play were further supported by regular walks and outings in the local and wider area.

We reviewed the childminder's records and saw that there had been no significant accidents or incidents since her last inspection. She had recently updated training in first aid as recommended in previous inspections of the service and told the inspector that the update had been helpful. She had appropriate systems in place for recording accidents and for the safe administration of medication. No medication was currently be given to children.

The parents who returned satisfaction questionnaires to the Care Inspectorate expressed very good levels of satisfaction with the premises and resources. The children told the inspector enthusiastically about the wide range of resources they played with and the fun they had. One child asked if they could play 'hide and seek', which indicated that children were confident making suggestions and were not restricted in where they played.

We saw that there were appropriate 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 was able to confirm the imminent date for mains-linked smoke detectors to be fitted, as required for her childminding service and recommended in previous inspections.

We concluded that this was an excellent environment for childminding. The home was safe, comfortable and very child-centred in its organisation. The outcomes for children were seen to be excellent. They were happy, comfortable and settled in an environment that was stimulating and supporting excellent opportunities for their play and learning.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 6 - excellent

## 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, which would still benefit from further development.

There were individual files for all minded children that held a basic range of relevant information to support her care of the children. We noted the improvement since the last inspection and discussed how she could continue to develop her approach to recording children's needs **(see recommendation one)**.

The childminder had completed recent training in first aid but had not attended any other training since her last inspection. She should now update training in key areas to ensure that her knowledge is refreshed and current, particularly in child protection which was last completed in 2007 and recommended for action at previous inspections **(see recommendation two)**. The childminder should also broaden her approach to training to further expand her awareness of current good practice guidance that could further compliment and enhance her high quality practice **(see recommendation two)**. We also reminded the childminder of the learning and development opportunities and links to good practice available on the internet, including making use of the Care Inspectorate HUB.

The childminder had a suitable child protection policy in place and demonstrated a good understanding of child protection and welfare issues, that could be further enhanced through additional training and key reading.

The childminder had a suitable range of policies and procedures in place to inform her practice that took account of good practice and relevant legislation. The childminder should ensure that all policies are regularly reviewed and updated. The childminder had public liability insurance in place. The childminder did need to ensure that she always worked within the terms of her registration as discussed during this inspection.

Overall this aspect of the service was found to be adequate. Not all recommendations had been met from the last inspection of the service. Although this had not adversely impacted on outcomes for children the childminder should now act on the recommendations made at this inspection to further improve and develop the service.

### Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

### Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 2

1. The childminder should continue to develop her approach to recording for children to ensure that there are good quality personal plans in place to support best outcomes for children.

**National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing, Standard 4: Engaging with Children and Standard 14: Well-Managed Service.**

2. The childminder should continue to update and refresh knowledge through more training, reading and self-directed learning to ensure that her service continues to develop, keeps abreast of latest good practice guidance and continues to support best outcomes for children.

**National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 12: Confidence in Staff, Standard 13: Improving the Service and 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 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.



## Recommendation 2

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 Wellbeing and Standard 14: Well-Managed Service.**

**This recommendation was made on 24 March 2017.**

### Action taken on previous recommendation

This recommendation has now been met. The childminder confirmed that she has recently updated training in first aid and now has a valid three year certificate.

## Recommendation 3

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 Wellbeing and Standard 14: Well-Managed Service.**

**This recommendation was made on 24 March 2017.**

### Action taken on previous recommendation

The childminder was able to evidence a planned date for mains-linked smoke detectors to be installed and shall confirm when this has taken place.

## Recommendation 4

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 and Standard 14: Well-Managed Service.**

**This recommendation was made on 24 March 2017.**

### Action taken on previous recommendation

This area of practice has been improved since the last inspection yet still needs further attention. Additional recommendations are made in this inspection report relating to training and recording.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://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	
16 Mar 2017	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	6 - Excellent 5 - Very good Not assessed 3 - Adequate
10 Feb 2016	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	6 - Excellent 5 - Very good Not assessed 3 - Adequate
28 Jan 2015	2	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 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

Date	Type	Gradings	
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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