

Maxwell, Kirsteen Child Minding

Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)
Inspection completed on: 15 August 2018

Service provided by:
Maxwell, Kirsteen

Service provider number:
SP2013984884

Care service number:
CS2013317276

The service

Introduction

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate in August 2013.

Kirsteen Maxwell (also known as Kirsty) provides a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, with no more than 3 not yet attending primary school and no more than 1 who is under 12 months old. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family. Overnight care will not be provided. Only those named on certificate can care for children.

From 7 February 2018 until 9 July 2018 on a Wednesday between the hours of 15.15 to 15.30 and Thursday between the hours of 11.55 until 13.45 the following condition applied:

'To provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than 4 are not yet attending primary school and of whom 1 are under 12 months.' We discussed this condition with the childminder and she told us that she no longer needed this arrangement to be in place. We asked the childminder to submit a variation to remove this condition following the inspection.

The service operates from the family home in an area of Fintry known as Clachan of Fintry. It is based in a rural setting, surrounded by farm and woodland. Children have access to most rooms on the ground floor of the service, including a designated playroom, a kitchen, downstairs toilet and open plan hall area for quiet, solitary play. There is also direct access to a large garden from the kitchen, giving children regular opportunities for outdoor play.

The childminder states the aims and objectives of the service are:

- "to provide a safe, secure and happy environment that enables the children to develop, learn and have fun whilst in my care
- a range of activities, which are age appropriate, will be provided with outdoor activities being encouraged as well
- I would like to work closely with parents to provide as reliable and individual a service as possible."

What we did during our inspection

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service. We want to ensure they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC), Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it Right for Every Child: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

During the inspection process, we gathered evidence from various sources, including the following:

- the childminder's policies that she shared with parents, including settling in, medication and child protection
- children's records and registration information
- the childminder's training certificates and other documentation
- discussions with the childminder
- observations of the childminder's interactions with the children present at the time of inspection
- the toys, equipment and play spaces available for children.

Views of people using the service

Children benefitted from the caring, nurturing and compassionate interactions they had with the childminder. Strong, positive and trusting relationships had been built between the childminder and the children in her care. Children were given the responsibility and independence to choose their own play and voice their opinions and views freely. They were confident and articulate, showing high levels of compassion and responsibility towards each other, building secure friendships which were meaningful to them. Older children were able to tell us about why they liked being in the service. They said:

"I like to make obstacle courses. I use the wood and the tyres. My friends help me and so does Kirsty (the childminder)."

"I love playing with the Lego."

"It's like a family here."

We sent out three Care Standards Questionnaires before we visited the service and all of these were returned to us. Parents who returned the questionnaires were very happy with the service provided. They told us:

"I am delighted with my child's day to day routine with his childminder. The day is always busy, they spend lots of time outside and all activities are age appropriate."

"I am delighted with the service my childminder provides. She adores him and is worth her weight in gold. He loves going and is always busy. He loves looking for bugs, baking, playing in the garden, playing games, learning numbers and colours. All learning is through play and she regularly sends me photos which I love. This is the best record I could ask for and my preferred method of recording his activities. Kirsteen is the most fabulous childminder. She is wonderful with my child and does all the things I wish I had time to do with him. 5 stars. Best childminder - ever!"

"The care service Kirsty provides is absolutely excellent. There are very few people I feel comfortable enough with to leave my children with, and to be cared for, but I have really no hesitations about them or concerns about them, when I know they are with Kirsty. She is incredibly conscientious, very sensitive to their needs, and very responsive to our requests. My children love going to Kirsty's - her home is such a lovely space for the children to spend time. They feel very welcome and very comfortable in Kirsty's care. She doesn't just 'childmind' until I pick them up, she takes time to develop each of them, intellectually and creatively and they all respond so well to that. In short, I actually don't know what I would do without Kirsty's service and I can't praise her highly enough."

"Kirsty is one in a million. We could not find better care for our family. We are exceptionally lucky."

"Kirsty's home is an ideal environment. Bright and spacious, our children's home from home. She has exceptional quantity and quality of toys and activities. Always safe and welcoming."

Self assessment

The childminder had completed a self assessment which outlined some of the strengths and areas for improvement in her service. More consideration could now be given to the new Health and Social Care Standards as well as the wellbeing indicators when reflecting on the service.

What the service did well

Children were happy, confident and having fun in the childminder's service. They were being supported to achieve their potential and recognised as unique individuals with their own needs, wishes and choices. Families were seen as experts in their own experiences and the inclusive and welcoming ethos ensured everyone felt respected. Children were given independence and responsibility which was tailored to their stage of development alongside a sense of self and supporting others. Family life was at the heart of the service and the play experiences children had were engaging and promoted curiosity and creativity. The childminder's experience, commitment and dedication to the families she worked with helped her to meet their individual needs and be recognised as a core part of the local community.

What the service could do better

No requirements or recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection.

We identified areas for improvement related to recording significant events and sharing these with parents as an update to children's personal plans. In addition, we asked the childminder to ensure she remains proactively up to date with recent best practice guidance to inform her practice.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children were being cared for by a childminder who recognised them as unique individuals with differing needs and interests. The experiences they had in the service were tailored closely to their needs, wishes and choices and children were given a great deal of independence over what they wanted to do when they were in the childminder's service. Children's progress and development was closely observed by the childminder who supported their achievements in children's personal plans and photo albums. The childminder's very good understanding of child development ensured that she linked what she saw in children's play to key developmental milestones and recognised where she could support children further in their play and learning. As a result, children were achieving their potential and were respected for their unique personalities and abilities. In order to further improve the personal plans for children, we asked the childminder to consider how she logs significant events and shares these with parents. Creating a chronology of events which affect each individual child can support everyone to understand trends and themes in children's needs more easily. This would further support the childminder to recognise when children may need some extra help or to recognise aspects in her own service which could be further developed.

Relationships between children, families and the childminder were positive and trusting. An ethos of fun, respect and compassion was evident, with older children supporting younger children like siblings and the childminder nurturing the children in her care, offering cuddles and warm interactions throughout. Her calm and loving nature supported children to feel valued and respected as experts in their own experiences. The childminder was very responsive to their verbal and non-verbal cues, recognising their interests and supporting their emotional wellbeing. The enabling attitude she had towards all the children and families in her care gave children opportunities to explore their own capabilities, make mistakes and learn from them without the fear of negative consequences. The inclusive ethos made everyone feel welcome and reduced the impact of any potential conflict between children in the service. They shared and supported each other to achieve and openly celebrated each other's achievements in an honest and friendly way. The childminder actively made time to speak with children one-to-one when she could and engaged with them positively, helping them to build their confidence and self esteem.

Healthy lifestyles were actively promoted in the service. Children were involved in choosing and preparing snacks which were mainly fruit and a healthy carbohydrate such as toast. When children returned from school, they were able to choose their own snacks and those children who attended all day were provided with packed lunches from home. Positive attitudes towards making and enjoying food were being developed from an early age and mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried to support the family ethos of the service. In addition to the childminder's work on nutrition, active and physical play were essential and well respected aspects of the service she provided. Children were actively encouraged to play outside every day and regular visits to the family farm and other wooded areas gave them opportunities to engage in risky and physical play on a regular basis, whatever the weather.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Children were given a wide variety of play and learning opportunities in the service due to the vast range of resources which were freely available to them in the designated playroom. The open plan, family style living arrangements gave children independence and choice over where they played and who they played with, offering time to be alone and spaces to be with friends. The relaxed atmosphere meant children felt comfortable and welcome in the childminder's home and clear, unrestrictive boundaries were set, offering predictability and certainty for children to play within. This helped to create an inclusive, respectful and responsible environment for everyone and helped children to develop social skills in a safe and secure environment. Children were encouraged to develop their imagination, curiosity and creativity, engaging in problem solving activities and exploring loose parts in their play indoors and outdoors.

We asked the childminder to consider how she could further develop the use of open ended and natural materials in the service to further develop children's investigative and imaginative play.

The setting where the childminder's home was located offered rich and relevant experiences for children, visiting the family farm to see how this changed throughout the seasons and exploring natural environments to develop an appreciation of the natural world. Outdoor play was freely available with children having direct, free flow access to the outdoor play space when they chose this. They were confident when asking the childminder to do this and this reduced any barriers to spending time outside. Time spent outdoors was giving children the chance to engage in risky play, which helped them make informed decisions about positive risks as well as recognise when the risk was too great for them to be safe. This type of play supported their holistic wellbeing and developed their sense of independence and responsibility for themselves. Children supported each other to learn about risk and were proactive in regulating each other's behaviour. This showed a high level of understanding about their own and others' needs.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of staffing

This quality theme was not assessed.

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The childminder was passionate, dedicated and proactive in her role as a main caregiver in children's lives. She understood the significance of the relationships she built with the children and families in her care, taking great care and attention to ensuring everyone felt welcomed, included and respected in her home. Her previous experience in early learning and childcare equipped her with the skills and abilities to offer a high quality and compassionate service which met individual needs very well. Her understanding of curricular frameworks and ability to use these in her practice meant she was well placed to help children achieve their potential and get the most out of life. As a result of this, she had recently been successful in gaining a partnership arrangement with Stirling Council to provide early learning and childcare which is funded by the local authority. This had the potential to support families in the area and meet their needs flexibly, increasing their levels of choice for their child. Her professionalism and personal approach was ensuring everyone, including other childminders, benefitted from improved outcomes and positive experiences of care.

The childminder was engaged in her own professional development and told us about specialist training she had undertaken to understand particular needs in her service. She had recognised areas where she would like to improve her service such as developing woodland opportunities and increasing outdoor play experiences in her garden, which we supported and encouraged. We suggested that the childminder may also want to spend time looking at other best practice guidance such as 'My Childminding Experience', a resource to share ideas between childminders registered in Scotland, which can be found on the Care Inspectorate Hub (www.hub.careinspectorate.com). In addition, we asked that she consider using the Scottish Government resource, 'My Childminding Pathway', as an additional resource for reflecting on the service she provides. This may give her further insight into the strengths of the service as well as areas for improvement which may not yet be identified. We also asked that she consider renewing her training in child protection to ensure this is up to date with the most recent guidance and legislation available. Her partnership arrangement with Stirling Council will most likely offer this type of training alongside other practice being developed in the local authority.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

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

There are no outstanding recommendations.

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 Jul 2014	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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