

Birrell, Heather

Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 8 January 2019

Service provided by:
Birrell Heather

Service provider number:
SP2003905214

Care service number:
CS2003009808

Introduction

Heather Birrell has been a registered childminder since 2000. She is currently registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of six will be under 12, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

The service is provided from the childminder's family home, which is located in Scone, Perthshire. It is close to the local school, shops, parks and other amenities. The area used to provide the service are the living room, conservatory, kitchen and bathroom. Children can also access a secure garden from the property.

Aims of the service include providing a service that ensures a safe, secure environment and stimulation for all children at each development stage.

What we did during our inspection

We wrote this report following an unannounced inspection. This was carried out by an early learning and childcare inspector on Tuesday 8 January 2019. Feedback was given to the childminder at the end of the inspection.

During this inspection we gathered evidence from various sources, including inspection of premises, the relevant sections of policies, procedures, records and other documents. We reviewed questionnaires returned from parents.

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. They are often referred to as the SHANNARRI wellbeing indicators.

Views of people using the service

For this inspection, three parent/carers returned a completed Care Standards Questionnaire (CSQ). The responses from these showed that they all strongly agreed that they were happy with the quality of the care provided. Additional comments included:

"My child is happy to play with childminder."

"I cannot praise Heather's service highly enough. She provides excellent care for my [child] and goes out of her way to provide activities and experiences which are varied and engaging.

Heather is flexible and accommodating whenever I need to ask for slightly altered hours. She sets a good example of manner and politeness for my [child] and uses praise to show them what is expected.

Heather strikes a very good balance of appropriate supervision, while also allowing my [child] to take small risks which allow her to learn. My [child] has become more confident to try new things and try things independently as a result.

I am very satisfied with Heather's service and the care and attention she puts into supporting my [child's] development."

On the day of inspection, one child was present during the inspection. The child was seen to be confident and very happy throughout the day. The childminder was attentive and responsive to the child's needs, ensuring that she listened to their views and acted on their interests. Comments from the child included:

"I am happy, shark is happy"

"We can go to puddles"

"I am sitting"

"I press the enter, or the zero?"

Self assessment

Every year all care services complete a 'self-assessment' telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this is accurate.

The childminder had submitted a self-assessment as requested. There was a good level of information about the service and we discussed the use of the self-assessment as an evaluation tool to reflect on the service, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

What the service did well

Children were supported well within the service. The childminder communicated well with parents and carers in order to support the needs of the child and their families.

We found the environment to be clean, safe and welcoming. The children were kept active through regular visits into their local community.

What the service could do better

Children's personal plans were found to be well-detailed and informally updated. We reminded the childminder to ensure parents sign any changes to their child's care following reviews carried out at least every six months.

Since last inspection, the childminder had yet to take part in relevant training, as previously recommended. A recommendation has been made to the childminder to access training, such as child protection and infection control.

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	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

The performance in this quality theme was found to be very good. Particular strengths were seen in the childminder's nurturing approach to meeting the children's needs.

On the day of the inspection, the child present was seen to be relaxed and at home within the service. They enjoyed playing with a variety of role play toys and interacting with the inspector. The childminder spoke to the children with a warm, nurturing tone. This supported positive relationships, enabling the children to feel safe and secure. It was clear from our observations that there was a good sense of mutual respect within the service. On several occasions, the childminder reacted to the child's interests and needs to enable them to guide their own play.

Children experienced care and support that met their needs and was, therefore, right for them. The childminder achieved this by using a variety of methods to identify and track the progress of their development, such as consultations with parents and developmental trackers. We found the childminder established a variety of stimulating and engaging opportunities for the children to achieve their next steps.

Children, parents and carers had their views, opinions and feedback sought in order to shape care that was right for the child. Parents supported this within the questionnaires, "Heather always follows my instructions and recommendation for looking after my [child]." We found this to be very good practice, as parents were able to feel respected and included within the service.

The childminder held relevant information on the children to ensure they were safe in her care. Children's personal plans were found to be well-detailed and informally updated. We reminded the childminder to ensure parents sign any changes to their child's care following reviews carried out at least every six months.

Medication was found to be managed safely and effectively. The childminder's paperwork reflected that of current best practice. Children were also kept safe through the childminder's good understanding of child protection. We found it had been some time since the childminder had taken part in child protection training.

Snacks and meal times were not observed on inspection. Parents provided all meals and snacks for their children. The childminder promoted healthy choices to parents and families. Children were involved in baking activities and growing fruits, vegetables and herbs to encourage a good understanding of where foods come from.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The performance in this quality theme was found to be very good. The childminder provided a warm, welcoming environment, in which children were free to explore their interests in a homely and friendly setting.

The childminder's house was found to be clean and well-organised. Through risk assessments and daily visual checks, the childminder made sure her home was hazard free, safe and child friendly. Parents supported this in the Care Standards Questionnaires.

Children had access to the outdoors every day. The childminder achieved this by providing direct access to their garden area to the rear of the property, and allowing supervised access in the front. The minded child present remembered the fun of growing a variety of foods in the childminder's garden, "I eating the chives in the garden". In addition, children were able to take part in regular visits in their local community. When asked about their children's experiences, parents told us that they were involved in the following:

"going to the play park in Scone, the one at Scone Palace, Quarrymill and other locations where [children] get lots of chances to play and socialise, and broaden her experience of different environments."

We found this to be very good practice as children were provided with meaningful learning experiences whilst being included in the local environment. The childminder told us of the strong sense of community within the area, and how the children benefit from this.

The childminder was found to support good personal hygiene. We discussed ways she could encourage younger children to be more independent and responsible in reducing the spread of infection, for example, through routine hand washing.

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 performance in this quality theme was found to be good.

The childminder was found to be professional, proactive and responsive in providing good outcomes for children. She knew the children and families well and had good systems in place to support families, such as informal chats and yearly questionnaires. Parents told us they felt involved and well-informed within the service as a result. The childminder told us she would take forward any ideas or suggestions that the children, or parents would give her. We suggested ways in which she could capture this in a way that further included everyone using the service. This could then contribute towards her own self-assessment and quality assurance practices.

We found the childminder was well-organised and had all paperwork available for the inspection. We reviewed policies and procedures and found these to be a good reflection of the service. The childminder had already self-evaluated this as an area for improvement, which we were able to support her with.

During the inspection, we found that the childminder had taken part in a good range of professional development. This included personal reading, discussions with other childminders and a first aid course. We discussed the importance of continually reviewing her own practice and evaluating the impact on children's outcomes. We suggested a format that the childminder could use to record her continuous professional development (CPD). This would enable her to be more reflective and structure next steps in her own development.

Since the last inspection, the childminder had not met a recommendation made to explore training in child protection and infection control. We discussed barriers faced with access courses and suggested a variety of methods the childminder could pursue to overcome this. The childminder recognised the importance of keeping up-to-date with best practice and agreed to access training as soon as possible. A further recommendation has been made. See recommendation 1.

Overall, we found the childminder to be committed to providing very good outcomes for children. It was clear that she had played a valuable role in families' lives. The childminder should address areas for improvement identified in this report and continue to self-assess her service in a spirit of genuine partnership with the children and families in her care.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. Children should experience a care service that reflects best practice and current legislation. The childminder should seek relevant training opportunities in order to ensure her practice follows current best practice guidance.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

Grade: 4 - 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

Recommendation 1

The children's development would be further supported through these keeping of individual profiles reflecting the their stages, developmental progress, achievements and next steps of learning.

Reference: The National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 6 - Support and Development.

This recommendation was made on 15 October 2014.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The childminder had suitable information on the children in her care. We found good communication with parents and other working professionals. The childminder used appropriate developmental trackers to review children's development and identify next steps.

Recommendation 2

The childminder should review and identify training needs such as child protection and infection control which will support her practice.

Reference: The National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 14 - Well-Managed Service.

This recommendation was made on 15 October 2014.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This recommendation had not been met. Therefore, a further recommendation has been made.

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	
15 Oct 2014	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good Not assessed 4 - Good
16 Sep 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good Not assessed
2 Nov 2009	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good Not assessed
24 Feb 2009	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good Not assessed

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