

O'Brien, Karen Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 11 June 2019

Service provided by:
O'Brien, Karen

Service provider number:
SP2008972602

Care service number:
CS2008192446

Introduction

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com

The service is provided by Mrs Karen O'Brien, referred to as the childminder throughout this report.

The childminder provides her service from her home in an established residential estate in Balerno. The childminder's home is close to local amenities, including schools, parks and places of interest. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of seven children under 16 years, of whom no more than 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 old. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's own family. At the time of the inspection four minded children were present.

The childminder's aims and objectives include the following:

"Appropriate play and educational materials and activities are available for all ages and stages of development."

What we did during our inspection

We wrote this report following an unannounced inspection which took place on the 6 and 11 June 2019. On the first day of the inspection no minded children were present. Four children were present on the second day.

During the inspection we chatted with the children, they were enthusiastic about the range of play opportunities available to them. We walked around all the parts of the childminder's home that were used by minded children. We looked at examples of relevant paperwork and documents related to the service and about the children who use it. We spoke to the childminder about the service she provided and observed the quality of the interaction between the childminder and the minded children.

Views of people using the service

The minded children were happy and relaxed. They spoke positively about their experience of using the service. It was clear from our conversations and observations that their ideas and interests were used as the basis for all of the activities they took part in.

Before the inspection took place we sent three Care Standards Questionnaires to the service for distribution to families using the service. All of these were returned to us before the inspection took place. All of the respondents told us they strongly agreed with the following statement:

"Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of care my child receives in the service."

The following additional representative comments were made:

"Karen provides an excellent service which is very flexible. She fosters strong positive relationships with the children she cares for. We feel very privileged to have found Karen. She is consistent in her approach and very nurturing. Our child feels secure in her care. They talk about their experiences in her care very fondly."

Self assessment

The childminder completed a self assessment document before the inspection took place. This was completed thoroughly identifying areas of strength and areas for future development.

What the service did well

The childminder provided children with a welcoming and fun home from home environment. Children were respected, their individual needs and interests were used as the basis of all the activities they took part in.

What the service could do better

The childminder should continue to develop her existing very good service in line with legislation and current best 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

Effective settling in procedures helped ensure the childminder gathered the information she needed to look after the children and meet their needs. Children who were old enough to do so were invited to complete their own information and identify the things that were most important to them when being looked after outside the family home.

By reviewing the information regularly with children and their families the childminder ensured it remained relevant to children's well-being. Parents told us "Our childminder invites me for termly chats to update relevant details in order to best meet my child's needs." and "We have regular catch ups where we go over data held and review information, I have an opportunity to input."

The childminder understood the value of regular communication in supporting families. She had developed a number of ways to do this including, daily chats at drop of and pick up times, phone calls, texts, private meetings and newsletters.

It was apparent from the high quality interaction we saw between the childminder and the minded children that she knew them very well. Strong affectionate bonds had been developed which supported children's overall well-being. Children were empowered and having fun because their interests drove all of the activities and experiences they took part in.

Children had taken part in a number of projects based on their interests which included looking at children's rights, keeping safe, the importance of healthy eating and hydration. Children's comments included "Karen's house is so safe and she is nice and very kind to everyone." and "She really knows me. It's like being at home when I'm with her. She makes me feel welcome and I love that."

Accident and medication records were kept in accordance with best practice guidance. Parents confidentiality was respected and copies of accidents were available to be given to parents.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The childminder's home provided children with a safe, welcoming and relaxed home from home environment. Daily visual risk assessments helped ensure that children were safe and any areas identified as needing attention were dealt with quickly and effectively.

Space within the home was well used, children had access to the open plan kitchen/dinning room /living area, downstairs toilet and garden. The main sitting room was used occasionally if necessary to support children's needs, for example practising a musical instrument. A large notice board for children's use and the provision of named pegs for their belongings helped children to feel welcomed and relaxed. We saw that children moved confidently between these areas accessing the toys and resources they wanted to play with. These included arts and crafts, books and construction. A parent told us "Our childminder has a great range of toys for all of the kids. She takes time to understand the children's interests."

The childminder understood the importance of regular physical activity in supporting children's well-being. She ensured that children had daily opportunities for active play in her own garden and by using the green spaces around her home. On the day of the inspection children asked to go to a nearby park with their bikes. They also chose to take some balls to play with. They quickly organised themselves into different games. The childminder was skilled at offered support when this was requested but did not take over. By encouraging the children to make decisions she showed respect for their abilities and supported their growing independence.

It was evident from talking to the children and from comments made by parents that the childminder used the local environment well to ensure that children enjoys a range of experiences while in her care. Comments included "The children regularly use the local park and have often been to the library." and "My child attends after school and I'm very happy with the active play opportunities and visits that our childminder offers."

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 committed to her professional development and to ensuring that her service remained up to date and operated in line with current best practice. In order to do this she regularly used the Care Inspectorate HUB. The HUB includes information on current best practice, information about new policies procedures and legislation as well as links to relevant professional websites. Membership of the Scottish Childminding Association gave her access to training courses, ideas for activities and links to relevant publications.

The childminder recognised the importance of training in providing a professional well manage service. Since the last inspection she had taken part in training including;

- Safe and Secure - child protection workshop
- Child Led Planning
- Community Child Minding
- Outdoor Play
- Building the Ambition
- Lets Be Friends - preventing bullying.

Policies and procedures were reviewed regularly. Parents told us they were asked for signed confirmation that they had seen any new or revised policies and procedures. A complaints procedure told parents about the range of options open to them should they have any concerns about the service. This included how to contact the Care Inspectorate.

The childminder valued the input of parents and she issued an annual questionnaire which gave them the opportunity to express their views on the service. A child told us "She is so kind and thoughtful she always gives us choices of things to eat and things to do." Parents told us they felt their views were important to the childminder, one commented "She's extremely open to feedback on what she can do more of, better and differently, this leads to a great environment for children."

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	
23 Apr 2015	3	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good
16 May 2011	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good Not assessed
4 May 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good Not assessed

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