

Farmer, Heather Child Minding

Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)
Inspection completed on: 8 August 2019

Service provided by:

Service provider number:

SP2011982636

Care service number:

CS2011298867

Introduction

Ms Farmer provides a childminding service from her own home which is located in a residential area within the village. Her home is within walking distance of local facilities, including the nursery, school and play park. Ms Farmer also uses her car for transporting children.

The aims of the service are as follows:

- To provide a clean, safe and secure environment for each and every child in my care
- To provide stimulating activities appropriate to the age of each child so that they learn to become creative, self expressed and be full of imagination.
- To work with parents to promote each child's good behaviour through guidance, encouragement and praise.
- To help to develop communication skills through a range of play activities and storytelling.
- To help to develop co-ordination and dexterity by means of a range of fun activities.
- To be a positive role model who encourages courteous behaviour and respect for others which will promote social skills and consideration to individual and cultural differences.

The service may operate under the following conditions:

1. The care service may be provided to a maximum of six children under the age of sixteen years, at any given time, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school, and of whom no more than one is less than one year of age.

Numbers are inclusive of the children of the childminder's family and household.

In addition, the childminder can have four children under school age when she is working with her assistant, Kayleigh Wallace.

From 14th February 2019 to 2nd July 2020, on Thursdays during term time from 8 am - 12.45 pm, the service may be provided to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of sixteen years, of whom no more than five are not yet attending primary school when the childminder is working with her assistant. (This only applies when the children of the family identified on the variation application of 13th November 2018 are present.)

2. Kayleigh Wallace may be employed as an assistant by the service.

3. The part of the premises not to be used is the first floor.

4. Overnight childcare will not be provided.

At the time of our inspection, there were eight children registered to use the service, all of whom attended on a part-time basis. Ms Farmer's two grandchildren (the children of the childminding assistant) sometimes attended the service during periods when their mother was present. There was one minded child present during our visit, together with two grandchildren.

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 well-being 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 well-being indicators at the heart of GIRFEC: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included (often referred to as the SHANARRI indicators).

What we did during our inspection

The service was registered by the Care Inspectorate in 2011. We visited at short notice on Thursday 8th August 2019.

We sent three Care Standards Questionnaires (CSQs) to the childminder to distribute to relatives and carers of people who used the service. We received three completed questionnaires and have considered the feedback provided.

During this inspection we gathered evidence from a number of sources. We spoke with the childminder and childminding assistant and observed their practice and interactions with the children. We saw the areas of the home used for childminding purposes and also looked at childminding records.

We took account of all of the above information when we evaluated this service. We provided feedback to the childminder during the inspection.

Views of people using the service

We saw that the two younger children who were present were confident and happy in the service. They engaged well in their play activities throughout the afternoon, choosing to spend most of their time in the garden where they were busy and active. The elder grandchild who was visiting chose to play independently in another part of the home.

Three parents submitted questionnaires, providing feedback on the service which reflected a high level of satisfaction. All three parents strongly agreed that they were happy overall with the quality of care. Individual comments included the following:

"My child loves Heather and as a family we feel lucky and blessed to have her in our lives. She is invaluable and I would recommend her services to any parent."

"Heather is a fantastic childminder. She goes above and beyond to help keep the kids happy."

"I can talk openly to either Heather or Kayleigh (childminding assistant)."

Self assessment

The self assessment was completed to a good standard and provided an accurate reflection of the service as we experienced it.

What the service did well

Ms Farmer provides a caring and nurturing environment where children are valued, respected and well supported. Good use is made of available space and children can confidently choose how they would like to spend their time.

What the service could do better

We recommended some minor amendments to childminding records. Ms Farmer plans to undertake further training, to enhance her existing skills and knowledge, with a view to achieving the best possible outcomes for minded children.

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	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Pre-admission visits enabled parents to learn about the service and helped children settle. These visits were flexible, depending on individual circumstances. Ms Farmer worked closely with parents who remained highly involved in their child's care. One parent told us, for example, "Heather and I have regular communication. Heather respects that and my "instructions" are always followed by her." Effective communication on an ongoing basis helped ensure that children's needs were understood and met.

The childminder and her assistant worked well together. We saw that children responded well to their caring, attentive approach and interaction between adults and children was very positive. Through discussion, it was apparent that Ms Farmer knew the children well as individuals. She had formed close, nurturing relationships and was responsive to the children's needs and interests. Daily routines ensured that children experienced consistency of care and the pace of the day took account of the individual needs of those being cared for, at any given time. We saw evidence of a range of experiences which promoted children's well-being. A parent told us, for example, "My child gets a combination of "learn and play" and enjoys his days at Heather's very much. The balance is just right. My child is learning a lot every day."

Ms Farmer and her assistant were good role models whose respectful and supportive approach promoted children's self-esteem and confidence. Achievements were celebrated. Children were encouraged to be caring and considerate towards one another which helped them to form friendships and enjoy spending time together.

Parents supplied most of the food their children required; however, Ms Farmer provided some healthy snacks and drinks. A parent told us "I send in my son's lunch but Heather has fresh fruit and a variety of healthy snacks there for him too." Another parent told us "Heather regularly gives my child fruit and water and respects the fact that I do not offer my child unhealthy snacks."

Ms Farmer strived to meet children's individual needs. She was aware of the need to maintain a personal plan for each child. She gathered relevant information prior to any new child joining the service and noted some brief observations about each child's progress on an ongoing basis. Records, photos and children's work were shared with parents on a regular basis and their feedback was sought. A parent told us "Heather always asks if we have anything we feel could improve her service and also passes on how she feels my child is developing." Another

told us "I complete review forms and have access to my child's file. We talk about my child's development and how/when he's reached certain milestones." These comments reflect effective partnership working.

Ms Farmer was aware of her role in protecting children and understood her obligation to act on any concerns. She planned to attend further child protection training to update her knowledge in this area.

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 is located in a residential street within a village setting. Children had access to the ground floor and garden. The accommodation was very well maintained and appropriately furnished and equipped for childminding purposes.

We saw that the children had access to a good range of age-appropriate resources, many of which were easily accessible so that they could select what they wanted to play with. Parents confirmed that their children were cared for in a stimulating environment. A parent told us, for example, "Heather has the kids out in the fresh air as much as possible and every day she has different toys out and activities for them." Good use was made of available space. Children had freedom of movement between the sitting room and rear porch which gave direct access to the garden. They had enough space to set out their play materials and could take part in different activities simultaneously, depending on their ages and interests. Daily routines involved time for free play at home as well as outings, including visits to parks, play- centres and the beach. Ms Farmer had recently enabled the children to participate in short weekly visits to a local care home where they enjoyed spending time with the residents. This was proving to be a positive experience.

The enclosed garden provided a safe space for active and energetic play. The children had fun using a range of equipment including swings, space hoppers and a climbing wall, while extending their physical skills. Sand and water were also provided and some of the children had enjoyed planting and harvesting strawberries.

Ms Farmer had a good awareness of safety issues and routinely checked the areas used by children. Safety checklists were in place and we suggested that these could be replaced by a comprehensive risk assessment which could be reviewed periodically. The children learned about taking care of themselves and being responsible through their daily activities. There had been no significant accidents or incidents affecting minded children; however, the childminder was aware of the need to record details of any occurrences and to inform parents about what had happened and any action taken.

We discussed infection control practices. The children were cared for in a clean and hygienic environment and

were supported to learn good routines including regular hand washing. Nappy changing was carried out hygienically. Parents generally kept their children at home if they were unwell. These measures minimised the risk of the spread of infection.

It was confirmed that appropriate insurance was in place. This may provide a degree of protection to the childminder and to families who use the service.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Kayleigh Wallace (childminder's daughter) is named on the certificate of registration as a child-minding assistant which means that she can be actively involved in the care of the children, as directed by the childminder. Appropriate checks were undertaken at the time of the appointment.

At the time of inspection, Ms Wallace was a frequent visitor to the childminder's home and had regular involvement in the service. She worked closely with the childminder and shared her aims and values. The childminding assistant did not routinely operate the service in the childminder's absence although she could be in sole charge of a number of children for short periods of time, for example during school runs.

It was evident that Ms Wallace enjoyed her involvement in the service and trusting relationships had formed with the children. Parents were fully aware of her role and commented positively about her involvement. A parent told us, for example, "My child loves Kayleigh and she is a fundamental part of his experience when he attends Heather's service."

Ms Farmer confirmed that she shared relevant information with her assistant which enabled them to adopt a consistent approach and ensure continuity of care for the children. Ms Wallace demonstrated a strong interest in childcare and had recently completed a relevant qualification. She planned to undertake further learning in relation to caring for children with additional support needs. When possible, Ms Wallace also attended occasional training events with Ms Farmer.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

Ms Farmer had a conscientious approach to her work and impressed as well organised. She shared written and verbal information about the service and actively sought feedback from parents and children. This helped her to evaluate her work and to identify any changes or improvements which may be needed. A parent told us, for example, "I regularly get asked to provide written feedback. Heather is open and honest and I feel I can openly suggests things should I need to. She respects the kids' views equally."

Ms Farmer valued training and planned to undertake a relevant qualification in the year ahead. She was aware of a range of current guidance and knew where to access information about childcare and childminding issues, to keep her knowledge up to date. Ms Farmer had previously been trained in first aid and planned to attend refresher training.

Ms Farmer had a good understanding of regulatory issues. She had submitted information to the Care Inspectorate when asked to do so and was aware of the need to make formal notifications, in certain circumstances. Policies and procedures were in place, including a complaints procedure, and these were shared with parents. Ms Farmer reviewed these from time to time to ensure they were accurate and included up-to-date contact details for other agencies. Record keeping was of a good standard. We asked Ms Farmer to keep a record of the hours worked by her assistant, linked to numbers of children attending.

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

Recommendation 1

Ms Farmer should ensure that medication records comply with current guidance.

Reference: National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare - standard 3 - Health and wellbeing and standard 14 - Well managed service.

This recommendation was made on 20 October 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Medication procedures had been reviewed and improved.

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
17 Sep 2015	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
20 Apr 2012	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership Not assessed

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