

Little Sparkles Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 24 August 2021

Service provided by:
Dawn Thirkell

Service provider number:
SP2020991133

Care service number:
CS2020379291

Introduction

Mrs Thirkell is registered to provide a care service to:

a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age;
of whom no more than 6 are under 12 years;
of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and;
of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/
household

Where the childminder is working together with an assistant they may care for a
maximum of 9 children up to 16 years of age;
of whom no more than 6 are not yet attending primary school and;
of whom no more than 2 are under 12 months.
Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

The childminder's home is situated in a residential area of a town within walking distance of local
amenities, play parks and woodland walks.

The aims and objectives of the service include:

- offer an inclusive service, available to children and families in our community
- ensure each child feels happy, safe and secure, in a compassionate and nurturing environment, allowing them to learn and develop freely during play opportunities
- encourage children to take responsibility for themselves and their actions
- encourage children to develop positive attitudes and respect for themselves and others, in an environment free from bullying and discrimination
- provide a wide range of resources and equipment which are age and stage appropriate and can be used under safe and supervised conditions
- offer activities which meet the needs of each child, promoting their emotional and social, physical and intellectual development, enabling them to become confident, independent and cooperative individuals as they play, learn and develop
- work in partnership with parents to provide high quality play, care and support.

What we did during our inspection

We compiled the report following an unannounced site visit to the service on 18 August 2021. During this inspection we spoke with the childminder and observed the care given by the childminder. We completed the inspection using e-mail to seek the views of parents, and viewed written documentation, including health and wellbeing records, electronically. The inspection was carried out by one inspector.

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 GIRFEC; safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included (also known as SHANARRI).

As part of this inspection, we took into consideration Key Question 5 - Operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during Covid-19 with a specific focus on Quality indicator 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff. We will report on the overall performance of this indicator in Theme 1 Quality Care and Support.

Views of people using the service

Parents told us that they were happy with the service. They considered that the childminder communicated with them really well so that they felt involved in their child's care and development. They appreciated the honest and open approach and how the childminder was always willing to offer advice and support. The childminder had got to know the child really well and provided lots of different and new experiences inside and outside, that also took account of their individual needs and interests. As a result their child had settled very quickly and was always happy to attend.

The young child attending the service appeared happy and confident, they told us they had been to see the cows and got some milk. When playing with a mix of toys they named an aeroplane and told us 'flies in the sky' and also named some shapes and colours during their play.

Self assessment

Not requested.

What the service did well

The childminder provided a stimulating, warm, nurturing service; they knew the children well and provided experiences that supported their development and learning. There was a substantial focus on open ended and real play materials to support curious/creative play and lots of outdoor play experiences.

The childminder had established positive relationships with parents, enabling them to work together, communication was meaningful and effective and in the best interest of the child.

What the service could do better

We suggested that the childminder recorded changes to the service as they occurred to support continuous improvement and incorporated the views of parents and children in the process. The use of a simple improvement plan would be beneficial for the purposes of evaluation.

The childminder continues to develop a formal programme of support for the assistants that monitors their personal and professional development.

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	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

The childminder's caring and nurturing approach was helping children to form secure relationships with them and feel safe. We saw that children were happy, relaxed and assured in the presence of the childminder.

The childminder had gathered detailed information about the child for the personal plan; their needs had been clearly recorded. Action plans to address specific issues had been agreed with parents, all of which helped to support consistency of care. Parents referred to the support the childminder had given to them and their child, and the difference it was making to their child's development.

The childminder was familiar with the benefits of chronologies and recorded specific issues and agreed action with parents. We suggested that having a format for such purposes ready for use within the personal plan may be beneficial and support monitoring. The childminder had a good understanding of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) and had incorporated the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators and used them to assist with recording children's development. The personal plan was regularly reviewed with parents so that information to support the child's care remained up to date.

Parents told us that they were very happy with the level of information shared; verbal communication, a family messaging application and protected social media page with photographs of their child's play and learning experiences, helped them to be involved in their child's care.

The childminder listened respectfully to the children and was responsive to their needs and emotions. They recognised the importance of play experiences that supported repeated play and inspired creativity. A young child chose to select different bangles and trying to place them on a hanger, as they fell off, they tried again and again. The childminder promoted outdoor play in the fresh air at the service and wider community, in recognition of the benefits on children's health and wellbeing. Suitable arrangement were in place for meals, children sat together a lunch time, in high chairs or at the table. The childminder and their assistant sat with the children so that it was a calm and pleasant experience that supported good eating habits.

We were satisfied that the service had appropriate infection control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children. Such as, children being supported to wash their hands well and good ventilation of the premises and outdoor play.

The childminder had an understanding of child protection. To ensure that their knowledge remained up to date to safeguard children they had arranged to attend local authority training. We referred the childminder to the local authority child protection website, for relevant information and agency contact details, in the interim.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Children benefited from being cared for in a safe, clean and homely environment. Suitable equipment was in place, such as high chairs and safety gates also helped to keep children safe. Disposable gloves and aprons were worn during nappy changing to help reduce the potential for infection. The childminder had a suitable format for recording accidents/incidents to ensure that correct information was held and exchanged with parents/carers. The childminder kept the premises and activities under regular review to assess risk.

Children were being cared for in a suitable and comfortable environment that contributed to their confidence and wellbeing. A designated playroom was equipped with a walled storage unit that had open shelving and baskets. This enabled children to select and choose from a wide variety of toys and open ended resources; books and drawing materials were also readily available. Furniture had been arranged so that there was plenty of space for floor play and a large sofa enabled children to take time away from activities. A child was enjoying putting together a wooden train track, and a baby was sitting on the carpet with the childminder and looking through a treasure basket filled with different sensory/textured items. Young children used a small table to play with scented orange playdough they had made earlier. They clearly enjoyed using different items such as milk tops and coloured beads to create different shapes and patterns.

A covered decked area accessible from the playroom was equipped with a large mud kitchen and real items such as pots/pans and old microwave, there was a large sand pit and art/messy area with coloured paints in squeeze bottles and an art easel. Children had a planting/digging area and had been growing their own sunflowers. All of the readily accessible activities supported imaginary, exploratory and creative play. Children also enjoyed watching and saying hello to the chickens kept in a separate part of the garden.

The childminder recognised the benefits of outdoor play in the fresh air to support children's health, wellbeing and development. Children had visits in the community that included walks, play parks, natural environments such as the fairy woods and a fun farm. This helped to support children's understanding of the wider world.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

The childminder's daughter was registered as an assistant; they were familiar with childminding practices and the expectation of their role. The assistant had a kind and caring approach with the children so that their wellbeing was supported. During activities the assistant helped children to learn during play and also provided comfort when needed. Children were clearly happy and assured in their presence. The assistant told us that they were really enjoying their role and felt they had got to know the children's needs well with the support and encouragement of the childminder.

The assistant had completed training and webinars alongside the childminder such as behaviour management and adverse childhood experiences. The childminder was in the process of employing other assistants, as the current assistant was not going to be available during term-time. Arrangements had been made for the childminder and assistants to attend first aid and child protection training in September 2021. The childminder would continue to develop a formal programme of support for the assistants to value their contributions and to help improve their own skills and knowledge.

The childminder had developed a clear policy/procedure for the assistant(s) so that there was clarity and an understanding of the role. They had also completed webinars related to safer recruitment, staff and safeguarding to support their understanding of safe practice as an employer.

The assistant and childminder worked very well together; clearly established roles and responsibilities helped children to know what was happening, feel confident and settled.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

Information from the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and the Care Inspectorate supported the childminder to keep up to date with new initiatives.

The childminder had completed a number of short on-line courses and webinars related to early years to inform and support their new role as a childminder. They had completed food hygiene training and had arranged to attend child protection and first aid training to help safeguard children's wellbeing. The childminder was due to start a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in early years with a view to improving their knowledge and practice to enhance quality outcomes for children.

The childminder had experience of working in an early years setting. They were able to demonstrate that their previous skills and knowledge had been beneficial in the development of the childminding service both as a practical, child centred and management level. Records were well organised and readily accessible. The childminder had developed relevant policies that supported her in running the service and provided a basis for evaluation. These were shared with parents so that they knew what to expect from the service.

We suggested that the childminder used a simple improvement plan to record changes as they occurred to support a continuous approach. This could be as a result of seeking the views of parents and/or children, evaluation of training or reading best practice guidance. Good practice guidance documents and the Care Inspectorate early years improvement programme, would also support reflection of practice, with a view to enhancing outcomes for children - hub.careinspectorate.com

The childminder was striving to provide a service that met the needs of families well. They clearly enjoyed their role as a childminder and embraced the opportunities it provided. Parents told us how the honest and meaningful approach of the childminder helped them to be involved in their child's care and development. The childminder had asked parents for their feedback; they were happy with all aspects of the service and the difference the experiences provided, were making to their child.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

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

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

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.

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