

Innes, Catherine Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 16 March 2022

Service provided by:
Catherine Innes

Service provider number:
SP2003900286

Care service number:
CS2003001531

Introduction

Catherine Innes was registered with the Care Inspectorate as a childminder on 1 April 2011 to care for a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, 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 areas not to be used are the kitchen, bathroom and one bedroom. Overnight care will not be provided.

The childminder provides her service from an upper flat within a residential area to the south of Aberdeen city. Her home is close to local shops, schools and parks.

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What we did during our inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 16 March 2022. One inspector carried out the inspection.

During this inspection we undertook the following:

- Spoke with children during their play.
- Spoke with the childminder.
- Gained feedback from parents using email.
- Observed practice and experiences for children.
- Reviewed documents.

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

The two children who were being cared for at the time of the inspection were too young to tell us about their experiences. However they both presented as being relaxed within the home and readily approached the childminder.

We asked parents and carers of older children if their children wanted to tell us about their experiences and received the following comments:

"We go for walks on the old railway line and even found a rope swing."

"I like going to see Cath because she has yummy apples and bananas to eat after school."

"I feel safe at Cath's house."

We received feedback from three parents and carers of children who used the service. They spoke very positively about the quality of care their children received. We have included some of their comments below.

"Cath shows a warm, caring and understanding attitude towards my child."

"(My child) is very happy to attend Cath's and they have a good relationship. It is very homely and (my child) can relax if he is tired after school and play with the toys or they will go to the park nearby which (my child) particularly enjoys."

"Cath has a range of activities she does every week which vary from week to week which I feel is great as there is a good variety for the children and they don't seem to get bored."

"My child is involved in trips to Duthie Park, the beach, walks on the old railway line and a big favourite the park beside Cath's. Cath also has a garden the children are often in, where she allows chalk, bikes, balls and bubbles. A very fun time indeed."

"My child had asked Cath if she could get some big girl toys like Hama beads and she did just that. My girl was delighted!!"

"Cath has contributed to (my child's) speech a lot."

"Cath goes above and beyond to help my little girl and it makes a working mum like myself know she is in safe hands."

"I am very am very happy with the level of care provided."

Self assessment

A self assessment was not requested by the Care Inspectorate prior to this inspection.

What the service did well

The childminder was very caring and nurturing in their approach with the children. This was very well received by the children who readily approached the childminder and enjoyed their interactions with them.

The childminder used many natural opportunities to support the children with their speech through the fun activities they were engaged in.

What the service could do better

The childminder could further develop their environment to increase the range of loose parts and natural resources easily accessible to the children so that they can make choices.

The childminder should review their training needs and arrange for key training to take place as soon as possible. We acknowledged that training opportunities had been limited during the Covid-19 pandemic.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this quality theme as very good.

The childminder was very caring and nurturing in their approach with the children. They were very responsive to both children's individual needs. We saw that the children were very relaxed and happy in the childminder's care.

Many natural opportunities were taken by the childminder to support the children with their speech through their play. The approach used was appropriate to the needs of the individual child and the children therefore responded well.

Personal plans were in place for each child with key information about their needs. Parents had completed 'All About Me' forms which contained information on their child such as likes and dislikes, routines, milestones and achievements. This helped the childminder meet the individual needs of each child. It was clear, through our discussion and through observing the childminder in their interactions with the children, that they knew the children and their families very well. This helped to build positive relationships and provide very good quality care and support.

The childminder was aware of how to keep children safe and protected, including who to contact if they had any concerns. The childminder had undertaken child protection training and regularly watched a DVD, however they would benefit from up to date child protection training to refresh their knowledge and ensure their knowledge was up to date.

The children took a packed lunch and these were found to reflect a healthy diet. Lunchtime was a pleasant experience with positive interaction throughout and support given where it was needed in a very child focused way.

The service had appropriate infection prevention and control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children and staff. These included supporting children with good handwashing practice. A parent told us "(my child) now enjoys doing the dishes and washing her hands a lot more since being with Cath."

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The childminder's home provided a welcoming and comfortable space for the children. There was a range of resources for the children to select from. We saw them particularly enjoying role playing a tea party in the pop up tent that they had requested that morning.

The children had access to the living room, hall, bathroom and a playroom where they could choose from a wide range of toys. Action had been taken since the last inspection to make the resources in the play room more accessible to the children so that they could make independent choices.

We spoke with the childminder about the benefits of loose parts and more natural resources which encouraged children to use their imagination more than resources which had a fixed purpose. The childminder did state that they used resources such as cardboard boxes and pebbles and pots, pans and wooden spoons. This could be extended by ensuring that a range of loose parts are available to the children to self select from on a daily basis. The childminder told us that they use more natural resources in the garden which they access regularly and that the children had great fun with items such as tyres and twigs.

Good use was made of the community including a toddler group at a local community centre, use of close parks and ones further away. The children also benefited from use of the nearby disused railway line which provided opportunities to walk peacefully and enjoy nature. The children also enjoyed visits to the beach and time in the childminder's fully enclosed garden. Parents and carers were very positive about the community experiences offered to their children. One parent told us that the childminder "takes a keen interest in getting to know each child individually and tailors activities and trips to their needs and wants, or even current interests. My child was learning at school about the harbour so one day after school Cath took the children to Fittie to watch the boats and of course see the harbour."

A recommendation was made at the last inspection due to there being a strong smell of cigarette smoke in the living room although we understood that the childminder did not smoke during working hours. We found

this to be much improved on this occasion. The childminder had been keeping the house well-ventilated. Strong air fresheners which could have been a potential irritant to children's breathing had also been removed.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

This quality theme was not assessed.

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Since the last inspection of the service the childminder had undertaken Covid 19 training. This had provided them with a good understanding of their role in maintaining a safe environment for children and families and reducing opportunities for transmission of Covid 19.

Further training undertaken since the last inspection included elementary food hygiene and training in relation to anaphylaxis.

We found that the childminder's paediatric first aid renewal was due on 2 March 2022. We understood that due to the pandemic there had been a significant delay in childminders being able to access face to face first aid training. Promptly following the inspection the childminder arranged to undertake first aid training and this was confirmed by the training provider.

The childminder demonstrated that they has a good understanding of how to safeguard children and action they would take if they had concerns. They had last attended child protection training in 2015 however kept this refreshed by regularly watching a training DVD. We suggested that it would be beneficial to complete a recognised child protection course on a regular basis to keep up to date with any changes in practice. Following the inspection the childminder confirmed that they had arranged to undertake further child protection training. We provided feedback to the childminder about how they could review and further develop their child protection policy.

The childminder had been keeping a continuous professional development record where they recorded the training they had undertaken and what they had learned from it and how they would use it in their practice.

The childminder reviewed their service annually, requesting feedback from parents and carers through questionnaires. Very positive feedback was received with no suggestions about how they could improve their service. They also encouraged feedback from children using a smiley/sad face form. Again children expressed a high level of satisfaction with the service provided.

A complaints procedure was in place. It clearly detailed how a complaint could be made and provided details of the Care Inspectorate. The childminder should develop the procedure further to include a timescale for the resolution of complaints.

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

Recommendation 1

The childminder must ensure a smoke free environment to reduce the known risks to children's health.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'My environment is relaxed, welcoming, peaceful and free from avoidable and intrusive noise and smells.' (HSCS 5.18).

This recommendation was made on 18 June 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The childminder did not smoke whilst childminding. Since the last inspection she had taken action to ensure that the house was kept well-ventilated. Strong air fresheners which could have been a potential irritant to children's breathing had also been removed.

This recommendation was therefore found to have been met.

Recommendation 2

The childminder should include the ways in which she consults with children and their families in the aims and objectives of her service.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'I am actively encouraged to be involved in improving the service I use, in a spirit of genuine partnership.' (HSCS 4.7).

This recommendation was made on 18 June 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The childminder's aims and objectives had been further developed to include the ways in which she encourages feedback from children and their families.

This recommendation was therefore found to have been met.

Recommendation 3

The childminder should systematically quality assure her service; documenting her improvement journey in a cycle of reflection, plans for improvement identified training needs, how new learning has been put into practice and ongoing review of the impact on children's care and experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19).

This recommendation was made on 18 June 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Since the last inspection the childminder had put in place a continuous professional development record where they recorded the training they had undertaken and what they had learned from it and how they would use it in their practice.

Through discussion the childminder was able to say what improvements she had made since the last inspection and what she was currently working on.

This recommendation was therefore found to have been met.

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
30 Apr 2019	Unannounced	Care and support 3 - Adequate Environment 3 - Adequate Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 4 - Good
29 Feb 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 4 - Good Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 4 - Good
5 Jan 2015	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 3 - Adequate
2 Nov 2010	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed
15 Dec 2009	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership Not assessed

Date	Type	Gradings	
19 Mar 2009	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed

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