

Sutherland, Margaret Child Minding

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Wick
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 August 2022

Service provided by:
Margaret Sutherland

Service provider number:
SP2003907638

Service no:
CS2003013989

About the service

Margaret Sutherland is registered as a childminder to provide a care service to a maximum of eight children at any one time under the age of 16

Margaret Sutherland lives with her husband in a detached house in a quiet residential area of Wick, Caithness. The children had access to the ground floor which included a very spacious living room and kitchen/dining area and bathroom. The children had use of the upper level of the house which was converted into a playroom. They also had direct access to a large enclosed garden to the rear of the home. The childminder also made very regular use of various local resources including trips to the forest ,walks to the riverside and playparks.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 August 2022 between 15:30 and 17:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with 3 people using the service and 3 of their family members
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- The childminder was aspirational and had an enabling attitude which supported children to achieve their potential.
- Children received an outstanding level of care and support from the childminder who had an excellent understanding of nurturing approaches and attachment.
- Children's individual holistic wellbeing needs were very well supported through the use of effective personal planning information.
- Excellent communication resulted in high quality family engagement and contributed to the outstanding level of individualised care and support children experienced.
- Children were very well supported to learn and develop through play.
- The premises were very homely, well maintained and welcoming which allowed children to feel safe, secure and loved.
- The childminder was committed to the ongoing development of her service and had a clear focus on improving outcomes for children and their families.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

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

1.1 nurturing care and support

Children received an outstanding level of care and support from the childminder who had an excellent understanding of nurturing approaches and attachment. This knowledge was used to support children's relationships, contributing to them feeling valued, loved and secure. Interactions between children and the childminder were warm, kind and caring. The childminder knew the children very well and showed exceptional care and attention towards children and their families. She provided continuous encouragement, reassurance and praise throughout the inspection. This resulted in confident, happy children who thoroughly enjoyed their time with the childminder. One child told us "Margaret is a great childminder." "She helps me." The childminder was also very responsive to meeting children's emotional and wellbeing needs. Comfort and cuddles were offered when needed. This contributed to children being very relaxed in the childminders care and home.

Children's individual holistic wellbeing needs were extremely well supported through the use of effective high quality personal planning information. This impacted very positively on their wellbeing. To promote continuity and consistency in care, children and families were fully involved in developing and reviewing personal plans. As a result children's needs were exceptionally well met in a manner that reflected their wishes and choices.

The childminder had formed trusting and respectful relationships with families using her service. One parent told us "we could not ask for a better child minder, she goes above and beyond." This was supported through strong partnership working which resulted in high quality care and empowered families to support learning and development. For example the childminder had undertaken joint training with families to support their understanding in paediatric first aid and early language development.

Excellent communication resulted in high quality family engagement and contributed to the outstanding level of individualised care and support children experienced. They received a daily overview of their child's learning and achievements which included photographs of children's play experiences as well as informal discussions when collecting their child. This provided them with a chance to share comments and feedback. Additionally, it enabled the childminder to respond quickly and sensitively to any changes in the child's life.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were very well supported to learn and develop through play. A parent told us "the care and learning my son receives from Margaret is fantastic." "She provides a wonderful variety of learning opportunities for him to thrive and reach his potential."

We saw children leading their own play experiences and independently selecting resources and activities of their choice. Some children played purposefully and cooperatively with their peers while others played independently. They engaged meaningfully with the activities and experiences offered to them. As a result, children presented as happy, confident individuals. Planning approaches were centred around their ideas which resulted in the childminder providing experiences that were child centred. This impacted positively on

children's emotional wellbeing and development.

The childminder was skilled and thoughtful in her interactions. She took into account children's understanding and adapted her interactions to support children's age and stage of development. We heard her using effective questioning to extend children's thinking and learning which supported them to develop skills in early language, literacy, and numeracy. Additionally she took time to listen to older children's needs and wishes and responded sensitively and appropriately. For example on the day of the inspection one of the children was sharing their interest in learning the piano. The childminder was responsive to this and during the inspection she had organised to get a keyboard to help the child practice when they were at the childminders house.

Children had access to story books and materials such as chalk for mark making. This supported them to develop skills in early literacy and encouraged early language development. On the day of the inspection a younger child was highly engaged and interacting with the childminder as she read and discussed pictures in a book the child had selected. This contributed to the development of early reading skills.

Effective processes were in place to track children's progress. This enabled effective communication and information sharing with children and their families. For example children had individual "scrap books" that detailed their interests, learning and development. On the day of the inspection one of the children was very proud showing us their "scrap book." They confidently articulated their achievements and successes and enjoyed reflecting on their time with their childminder. This demonstrated the sense of enjoyment and happiness they had when in the care of the childminder. As a result children were being well supported to reach their full potential.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

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

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The premises were very homely, well maintained and welcoming which allowed children to feel safe, secure and loved. This was highlighted as a strength by a parent who told us that the environment is "A most warm and welcoming household that is safe and comforting."

There was a designated playroom which was an inviting space for children to explore quality learning experiences, through their play. There was a range of resources which captured the children's interests and supported their play and learning experiences. The childminder recognised the benefits of having open ended and natural resources to extend the children's learning through play. For example children had real life resources in the play kitchen and shop. This developed their curiosity and creativity.

A cosy, quiet, sensory area supported children to rest and have quiet time. This provided very good opportunities to support children to self regulate which impacted positively on their health and wellbeing. In addition to this children could use the childminders living room as an additional space to chill out. They could also access the childminders kitchen where they undertook craft and baking activities as well as eating their meals and snacks.

The childminder recognised the benefits of outdoor play and provided children with very good opportunities to be outside. Children had access to a large enclosed garden which supported a variety of play experiences,

including messy play involving mud and water and bubbles. Children had ownership of the childminder's garden, one child was very proud of their own designated area, where they had planted sunflowers which was allowing them to develop an awareness of the world around them. As well as the garden the childminder accessed a well-resourced outdoor space in the local community, which she had developed alongside another childminder. This area allowed children to explore a natural environment, which provided opportunities to be active and healthy as well as providing access to fresh air. The forest reflected children's interests and curiosities with appropriate resources and materials to promote curiosity, enquiry and problem solving skills. One child told us they "loved going to the forest" and had helped create the wavy path.

Children were provided with very good opportunities to mix with other children and develop their social skills. The childminder also made good use of the local amenities with regular trips to the play park, riverside and community places of interest. This promoted positive health and wellbeing experiences for everyone. She demonstrated a good understanding of the potential risks to children when out in the local community, contributing to keeping them safe.

The childminder had a good awareness about her responsibilities in managing information and stored information securely within her home.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led

The childminder was committed to the ongoing development of her service and had a clear focus on improving outcomes for children and their families. Vision, values and aims had been developed and shared with families which reflected the service offered. Involving parents and children in the day to day running of her service was a key priority. She ensured that parents were involved right from the beginning through the settling in period. She shared policies and procedures and responded to ideas and routines highlighted by parents.

We saw evidence of how parents were involved in the cycle of self-evaluation. This contributed to the strong relationship's families had with the childminder as they felt valued and respected. She encouraged the children and their families to give feedback informally. She had also circulated short questionnaires for parents and carers to complete on a regular basis. The parents who provided feedback told us they felt fully involved in deciding how the service could be developed further and that their views and suggestions were used to develop the service further.

The childminder had a clear development plan in place to support improvements within her service. Children's views were actively sought to inform developments. For example the childminder was in the process of developing outdoor play experiences and making changes to her indoor environment to further support children's curiosity, imagination and exploration. She used best practice guidance to support her with making changes as well as involving all children in the planning. This allowed them to express their ideas and wishes, contributing to them feeling valued and included.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

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

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and experience

The childminder was aspirational and had an enabling attitude which supported children to achieve their potential. She was passionate, motivated, and enjoyed caring for children. She understood the importance of developing close attachments with children and responded to them with compassionate care. The childminder listened to children's views and helped them to develop their play. This resulted in children receiving care and support that was right for them.

Parents were very complimentary of the childminder, some comments included:

"Absolutely brilliant, friendly she does so much with my son and brought him on so much"

"Could not receive any better service for my child."

She was enthusiastic about the care she provided and the impact this had on the children and wanted the best outcomes for them. She worked very closely with other local childminders, sharing information and good practice between them. She told us this provided her with a good network of support, which ensured high quality practice and experiences for children.

The childminder was aware of the importance of ensuring that she had the appropriate knowledge and skills to offer high quality care and experiences for the children. The childminder was reflective and was able to identify areas for development to support individual children in her care. The childminder had recently completed a wide range of training which was resulting in improved outcomes for children in her care. For example "words up training" which further enhanced her interactions to support early language development.

The childminder was proactive in relation to keeping up to date with best practice. She read various various publications and any best practice guidance she received to support her in developing her service. This contributed to supporting very good experiences and outcomes for children.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

In order to keep children safe and minimise the spread of infection, the childminder should ensure that current guidance for infection prevention and control is followed.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 2: A safe environment, Standard 3: Health and wellbeing and Standard 14: Well-managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 18 October 2017.

Action taken since then

The Childminder kept children safe and minimised the spread of infection by following current guidance for infection prevention and control. This area for improvement has been met.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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