

# Stepps Childcare Child Minding

Glasgow

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
17 August 2022

**Service provided by:**  
Cheryl and Robert Dickens

**Service provider number:**  
SP2007963249

**Service no:**  
CS2007142613

## About the service

Cheryl and Robert Dickens provide a childminding service from their property in a quiet residential area in Stepps, North Lanarkshire. The childminders are registered to provide a care service for a maximum of 11 children up to 16 years of age. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminders' family. Where one of the childminder partners is working alone they may care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age.

The service is close to local primary schools, shops, parks and other amenities. The children are cared for in the open plan kitchen/diner and lounge area, and dedicated playroom. There are two toilet facilities located both up and downstairs. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden and summer house.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 August 2022 between 09:15 and 12:45. 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 two parents
- reviewed feedback from 11 parents
- observed children's play experiences
- observed interactions between the childminders and the children
- spoke with the childminders
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Both childminders knew the children well and were responsive to their needs.
- Communication with families was very good and they felt involved in their child's care.
- Children benefitted from a wide range of play experiences which were child led and met their needs and interests.
- Children's health and wellbeing was promoted by regular access to outdoors.
- The childminders were committed to developing their professional knowledge.

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

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were settled, confident and comfortable in the childminders' care. The childminders had warm and caring interactions which helped children feel loved, safe and secure. For example, one child was supported to settle with cuddles and spending time on the childminder's knee.

Personal plans contained information that supported meeting children's needs. Families were involved in sharing information and planning to meet individual care needs. For example, details about their interests, health and likes and dislikes. To further support children to achieve, personal plans could include identified strategies and links to the 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators. We signposted to 'Guide for Providers on Personal Planning Early learning and childcare' which is available on the Care Inspectorate Hub.

Children enjoyed pleasant mealtimes in an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere, where their needs, choices and preferences were respected. For example, children were offered choices at mealtimes and a substitute was available if they did not like their meal or snack. This helped families feel supported and encouraged children to develop positive attitudes towards healthy eating. One parent told us that "The food choices are good and I am happy with the quality of food. Good balance of food groups and a variety of different foods".

The childminders were knowledgeable about children's health needs and ensured that emergency plans were in place if necessary. We discussed that the paperwork for managing medication should be reviewed to assist in the safe administration of medication. For example, recording clearer information about children's symptoms and including expiry dates for medication. We signposted the childminder to 'Management of medication in daycare and childminding services' which can be found on our website.

Children's emotional wellbeing and security was developed through safe and sensitive sleep routines, which also reflected families wishes. The childminders recognised when children appeared to be tired and offered them space to sleep and rest when needed. Travel cots were available in quiet spaces to ensure children could rest in comfort.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children could choose where to play in the setting and were supported to be independent with their preferences respected. Many children preferred to stay at the child sized table in the kitchen area, playing games and jigsaws, whilst interacting with one of the childminders. One child choose to go to the playroom and find the dolls. The child told us "I like dollies and the figures. Outdoors I like the sand and the water".

Children's play was enhanced by the variety of resources and activities on offer. There was a good balance of children's choice and adult led activities to support children with literacy, numeracy and language development. Many play activities were spontaneous and childminders responded to children's interests, supporting children to actively lead their own play and learning. One parent told us "A lot of thought has been put into making sure there is various enjoyable activities to take part in".

Children's learning was extended through skilful questions and interactions. The younger children's play and learning was supported further by the childminders' knowledge of child development. For example, the childminders had developed meaningful knowledge about schemas, which is where children repeat patterns of behaviour in play. The childminders were at the early stages of supporting children with this in practice.

Children benefitted from a wide variety of experiences in the outdoors which had an overall positive impact on their health, wellbeing, physical and social skills. In addition to playing in the garden area, the children accessed a variety of parks and woodland areas. This helped develop children's thoughts, ideas and imagination. Recent training undertaken by the childminders helped support the children further to extend their play and learning whilst exploring the outdoors. Parents told us "they do great work outdoors with the children as they go on nature walks and have developed their back garden amazingly for the children".

## How good is our setting?

**5 - Very Good**

### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

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

The children were cared for in a warm, comfortable, homely setting which helped them feel safe and secure. The play spaces were bright, clean and well maintained.

Children had the option to choose from a variety of play areas. For example, a well resourced garden, large child size table for games and art activities, lounge area and a bright playroom with a wide variety of toys. This helped promote children's choice and independence.

Children benefitted from accessing a wide variety of toys such as books, puzzles, games, cars, dolls and pretend kitchen area. The childminders were aware of children's interests and toys were changed to meet their needs or choices. The effective use of an outdoor summer house provided a quiet area for children to listen to stories or have a space to relax.

We discussed with the childminders that play spaces could be further improved by introducing more natural open ended materials to help develop creativity, curiosity and problem solving. We signposted the childminder to 'Loose Parts Play: A toolkit' available on the Care Inspectorate Hub.

Children were cared for in a well organised, clean and tidy environment. This meant they accessed toys easily and knew where to find them, promoting their safety, confidence and independence. The childminder told us they carry out daily visual checks of the environment to check for any risks, allowing them to respond to any potential hazards quickly.

Children's safety and wellbeing was promoted through effective infection control practices. For example, children were encouraged to wash their hands before eating or after visiting the toilet. Appropriate nappy changing practices were in place and personal protective equipment was used, which helped prevent the spread of infection.

## How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

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

The childminders demonstrated a positive commitment to improving their service and they regularly sought the views of the children and families. For example, questionnaires and social media helped them plan for recent changes to the service.

Daily communication with parents helped foster positive relationships and allowed childminders to respond to any comments or requests. This was valued by parents and helped them feel confident in the service. One parent told us "communication is always great and we are always fully up to date on what our child has been doing for the day".

Effective improvement plans were in place to meet the needs of the service and in particular to support the recent expansion, where the number of children being cared for had increased. For example, the improvement plan set out how play spaces would be audited to ensure children had space to play.

The childminders used current best practice documents to help evaluate their service such as 'Realising the Ambition' and 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare'. This helped strengthen positive changes to improve outcomes for children. The childminders have welcomed suggestions throughout the inspection process to help inform future improvement plans.

## How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

### 4.3 Staff deployment

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

The childminders were both very committed and passionate about their roles. They tried very hard to improve the service to ensure they provided the best possible outcomes for children and families.

Both childminders knew the children well, they understood the importance of building good attachments and reflected on this when caring for children. During the inspection we observed how they adjusted their roles to meet the needs of the children. For example, one young child had formed attachments with one childminder and they ensured they were available to meet their needs. Parents told us that the childminders were "caring and nurturing" and "they treat the kids like their own".

The childminders were very professional and we found they had considered children's needs as they planned for daily routines. For example, careful consideration was given to how they would manage daily school drop off and pick ups.

The childminders worked well together and shared roles effectively. They ensured there was always appropriate supervision in place and communicated well about children's needs. This contributed to creating a positive environment for children to play and learn.

Both childminders were very committed to enhancing their professional skills and knowledge. They had both participated in child protection, food safety and paediatric first aid training. This helped ensure children were kept safe. Further training with nature school and speech and language has helped ensure they are well placed to support children with a delicate balance of extending and enriching their learning as well as knowing when to step back and give children space to develop their ideas.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
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
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good



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