

# Denise Whitelaw Registered Childminder Child Minding

Wick

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
23 August 2022

**Service provided by:**  
Denise Whitelaw

**Service provider number:**  
SP2015987502

**Service no:**  
CS2015342175

## About the service

Denise Whitelaw is registered as a childminder to care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16.

Denise Whitelaw provides a childminding service from her home in a residential area of Wick. She made use of the downstairs playroom, hall, kitchen and upstairs bathroom. The childminder made very good use of the fully enclosed garden, which contained a wide selection of age appropriate toys and equipment. The childminder also made very regular use of various local resources including forest walks, visits to the harbour, beach, play parks, and local toddler groups.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 17 and 23 August 2022. 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 children using the service and reviewed three online questionnaires from families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

**Key messages**

- The childminder provided a positive and nurturing environment for children to play and learn.
- Children were relaxed, very happy and enjoyed spending time with the childminder and each other.
- The childminder listened to the children and provided activities and experiences that linked to the children's interests, offering challenge and fun.
- The childminder took time to get to know families and children prior to starting.
- Each child was valued as an individual and their needs were effectively met.
- The childminder could introduce a more formalised self-evaluation approach to support the ongoing journey of improvements required in meeting children's care and development needs.

**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?	4 - 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 experienced warm, caring, and nurturing interactions from the childminder who supported their care needs. She knew the children very well and was responsive to their emotional and wellbeing needs. Comfort and cuddles were offered when needed, which gave them reassurance. This supported children to feel safe and secure during their time at the service.

Each child was valued as an individual and their needs were effectively met. The childminder had a good understanding of their interests, and routines. Personal planning information ensured continuity and consistency. This was supported through ongoing communication with families who were involved in updating and reviewing their child's care plan. They received a daily overview of their child's day which included updates on sleep and eating as well as photographs of their play experiences. This provided families 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. A parent told us "Denise always put the kids first and (child) is always happy when there. We are kept updated with what has been happening and feel she is getting the right balance of activities required for her age."

Sleep routines reflected best practice guidance and met children's needs. This contributed to good sleep habits. As a result children emotional security and well being was well supported.

Mealtimes were relaxed and sociable experiences for children. They were given opportunities to develop their independence skills, for example, serving their own food. The childminder sat with children during mealtimes which promoted close attachments and supported early language and communication skills.

### 1.3 play and learning

Children were observed to be happy and enjoying their time with the childminder. They had a wide variety of exciting opportunities which met their developmental needs, interests, and curiosities. These experiences offered children rich play and learning which included exploring, experimenting, being creative, taking risks and problem solving. As a result, children were highly engaged in their play. On the day of the inspection all children thoroughly enjoyed exploring in the childminders garden.

The childminder was playful in her interactions with children and there was lots of chatter and laughter. She took time to listen to children and used careful questioning to promote children's curiosity and creativity. She valued children's interests and supported their play, learning and development through following children's line of enquiry at their own pace. Children's perspectives were listened to and taken account of. This contributed to children feeling valued and respected.

Open ended resources were being used to promote curiosity and imagination. For example children were building towers from loose parts, counting with balls and mark making with chalk. These experiences contributed to the development of early language, literacy and numeracy skills.

Effective processes were in place to track children's progress. For example children had individual virtual learning profiles that detailed their interests, learning and development. This information was shared regularly with parents and carers. As a result, individual children received care and support that was right for them.

## 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 childminder's home offered a homely, stimulating and welcoming environment. This sent a message to children that it was a place where they would be loved and could have fun. The children made good use of the space available both indoors and outdoors. Designated play spaces contained many opportunities for children to be creative and have fun while learning and developing. Children were able to direct their own play and activities, choosing and freely accessing appropriate materials and resources to support their learning. This promoted their confidence in decision making. They were provided with hands on experiences and exploration through sensory play, role play, and imaginative play. This encouraged building relationships, creativity, and fun.

The childminder recognised the benefits of outdoor play. She provided very good opportunities for children to be outside, which encouraged active energetic play and access to fresh air. The childminder made good use of the local amenities with regular trips to the play park, beach, Staxigoe Harbour and Dunnett Forest. 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 childminders garden was designed for fun and learning. On the day of the inspection children were having fun outside playing and engaging with a range of play materials. This was highlighted as a strength by a parent who told us their child loves the garden and outdoor play spaces and how they really like the fact the childminder takes them out and about to different play parks and spaces.

## How good is our leadership?

**4 - Good**

### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

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 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. Through regular communication with the parents and children, the childminder was able to provide a service that met the needs and interests of the children she was caring for. The use of technology helped her to regularly share the children's experiences, successes and achievements with parents. This approach helped parents feel they were included in their child's day and allowed them to provide feedback and identify any areas for improvement.

The childminder reflected on her daily practice to support her to improve the experiences for children and families. We discussed the benefits of introducing a more formalised self-evaluation approach to support the ongoing journey of improvements required in meeting children's care and development needs. We

suggested she make use of national practice guidance to support self-evaluation. This could include 'Realising the Ambition,' 'The Health and Social Care Standards' and 'A Quality Framework for Day Care, Childminding and School Aged Children.'

## 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 values

The childminder was warm and caring in her approach. She understood the importance of responsive attachments and nurturing relationships. This supported children to feel valued, loved and secure.

The childminder was very knowledgeable about children's development and aware of the individual needs of each child. She used her knowledge to respond to their needs and interests. This resulted in children receiving care and support that was right for them. A parent told us "Denise is friendly and knowledgeable. Nothing is a challenge."

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 "early communication which further enhanced her interactions to support early language development and supporting "risky play" which meant positive approaches to the benefits of risky play were embedded in practice. This contributed to children building their self confidence.

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 proactive in relation to keeping up to date with best practice and regularly accessed useful websites such as the Care Inspectorate hub, the Scottish Childminding Association hub and other childminding forums and Facebook pages. She read various publications and best practice guidance to support her in developing her service. This contributed to supporting very good experiences and outcomes for children.

## 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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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