

Smart, Angela Child Minding

Aberdeen

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 October 2022

Service provided by:
Angela Smart

Service provider number:
SP2016988419

Service no:
CS2016350526

About the service

Angela Smart provides a childminding service from her property in a quiet residential area of Portlethen.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children under the age of 16 at any one time, of whom a maximum of six will be under 12, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one will be under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

The service is close to local primary schools, shops, parks and other amenities. The children are cared for in the living room, kitchen diner and upstairs bathroom. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 29 September 2022 between 10:20 and 14:00. 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 children using the service
- received feedback by email from four families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were relaxed, very happy, and clearly really enjoyed spending time with the childminder and each other.
- Children were being cared for by a kind, nurturing and responsive childminder who listened to their views and interests, respecting them as individuals.
- The childminder provided a homely, warm, caring and nurturing environment for children to play and learn.
- The childminder has developed very good relationships with children and families.
- The childminder should continue to develop the self-evaluation of her service, identifying areas for development and improvement.

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

1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

The childminder's warm and friendly interactions helped children to form secure and positive relationships. Children were relaxed and comfortable in their surroundings as they played happily throughout our visit.

A gradual approach was used to support children settling in when the childminder worked with parents to get to know parents and children. The childminder discussed with us how some children benefitted from extended visits. Parents commented on how settled their children were. For example, "My child has really settled well with Angela. He is always smiling at the end of a good day. Angela offers a safe and happy environment for him and he is doing really well."

The childminder spoke confidently about each child that she cared for and clearly knew them well as individuals. This supported children to feel safe, secure and valued. The childminder also discussed the individual needs of the children with the parents on a regular basis. This approach helped to support effective communication and consistency and continuity of care. As a result parents shared they were very happy with the level of care and support their child received. "My child has some dietary allergies and she copes amazingly well and still manages to get him to eat a good balanced diet. With Angie's support she has really helped him try more foods and has established a great reward system to encourage him to try new things."

The childminder provided a home cooked lunch and food choices were healthy, nutritionally balanced and followed best practice documentation. Lunch took place at a relaxed pace and was a nice social experience for the child present. The childminder shared that the children also like to help prepare snack and lunch supporting them to develop important life skills.

We looked at a range of documentation which helped the childminder support the children and meet their ongoing needs, wishes and choices. This information made up the children's personal plans. Plans were completed fully with parents prior to their children starting and reviewed regularly with families. For children with any allergies, parents completed a detailed allergy form to support the childminder to keep children healthy and safe.

Comments from parents included; "We get to discuss my child's individual needs regularly" and "Angela ensures the plan is reviewed regularly and any changes agreed by us both."

All about Me's were also in place to support the childminder to get to know children's personal and individual preferences. Older children were encouraged to complete these with the support of the childminder helping them to feel included and responsible.

The childminder was confident in recognising signs of abuse. She had attended child protection training to support her to keep up to date with current guidance and practice. A child protection policy was detailed and contained current guidelines to support the childminder should she have any concerns.

1.3 Play and Learning

The childminder interacted with children in a way that builds confidence and encouraged children's contribution. For example encouragement and praise was given to the children regularly.

During the inspection, the childminder sat with the children at their level while they played with the toys available. The childminder used open-ended questioning, which supported the young children's language and speech progression.

We were able to see that the children were familiar with the toys and activities indoors and had access to a range of toys and play activities such as musical instruments, books and vehicles. Resources were set out depending on children's interests. These were clean, in good condition and appropriate for children's individual needs and interests.

Other activities regularly available to children were arts and crafts, water play, baking and sensory play. A floor book evidenced photos of activities and examples of how children's learning was extended. For example, children made their own fairy doors after going to visit the fairy woods and helped plan their own graduation to school nursery by creating their own hats, invitations and decorations. Parents commented positively on the experiences available to their children. "Both our children have enjoyed several years at her setting. It always amazes me how much activities they get through even in the short before school session they attend."

The childminder had a good understanding about the importance of children having opportunities to play outdoors. The enclosed back garden accessed a mud kitchen to support children's natural curiosity. In addition to playing in the garden, children had opportunities to visit interesting and places in the local and wider communities, including clubs, parks, woods and beaches. This approach helped enrich children's learning and contributed to them forming strong links with their community. One parent commented, "My child loves all the activities Angie does with them. He particularly enjoys going to the music class on a Tuesday and the café on a Wednesday."

The childminder had a good understanding of child development which she used to support children's care and learning. For example, she physically supported the younger children who were learning to walk and used lots of language interacting with the children to support their speech.

Some observations of play and daily discussions with children and their families supported the childminder to identify children's interests and next steps and strategies based on individual needs. The childminder should continue this approach regularly to evaluate children's progress and achievements. This responsive approach would ensure children are developing a broad range of lifelong learning skills.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

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

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder had created a warm, comfortable, welcoming, and homely environment for the children to play and relax in. There was good natural light and ventilation. The childminder ensured that the children had ample space to move around, play and learn in. Toys and resources were easily accessible from cube

type storage boxes and were reviewed regularly based on the children's ages and current interests.

The childminder's home was bright, clean and well maintained. She had appropriate infection control measures in place and followed best practice guidance. This supported a safe and healthy environment for the children in her service.

Children benefitted from playing outdoors in the childminder's garden which was a secure, interesting play space for children to have fun playing in the fresh air. The garden had different surfaces for children to practise their skills with a range of outdoor play resources to support their play experiences.

Children were encouraged to make safe choices and the childminder carried out daily visual safety checks of her home to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children. Risk assessments were in place for indoors, outdoors and outings. Risk assessments were clearly dated and showed planned review dates to support the childminder to review these regularly.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder had a range of policies that supported her service and helped inform parents about what they could expect. New parents to the service received a welcome pack sharing information about the service and the vision and aims of the service. This was well organised and reflected good practice.

The childminder recognised the importance of effective communication with parents. Parents felt well informed about the service and trusting relationships had been built between their family and the childminder. The childminder used a variety of different ways to communicate with parents. One parent shared with us "We communicate through a number of methods, face to face, text or through the Family app so we always feel we have a very open line of communication and are well informed about my child's development". The childminder also discussed how photographs gathered to record children's successes and achievements through play experiences were used to inform parents about play activities.

The childminder took an informal approach to self-evaluation. For example, she had made improvements to paperwork and the environment since starting her service. To help formalise her self-evaluation process the childminder should familiarise herself with the Care Inspectorate guidance 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged children'. We highlighted how they could use this as a self-evaluation tool to develop how they evaluated their performance in delivering high quality care and learning for children.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

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

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge, and values

The childminder recognised the importance of nurturing, warm, responsive attachments and interactions

which created a happy environment for children where they were more likely to feel safe. Parents agreed with one commenting "We knew the minute we met her that she would be perfect for taking care of our child. Angie is so good with the children and my child has certainly taken to her well."

The childminder had a positive and enabling attitude which supported the children to feel respected and included. For example children regularly made gifts for their families on special occasions and created posters to support them to wash their hands properly.

The childminder recognised the importance of effective communication with parents. Daily chats, a private Facebook page and an online App were used to update the parents on their child's day. This provided an important link with home, helping to provide a continuity of care. Parents were happy with the level of communication.

The childminder had recently undertaken a childcare award relevant to her role. She shared this has had a positive impact on the way she cares for and supports children. For example, she identified that some children may require different approaches to support and promote positive behaviour.

To support her to keep children safe, the childminder had attended core training including first aid, child protection, food hygiene and infection prevention and control.

We suggested that use of a reflective journal would help to identify the benefit and impact of their training and learning and any gaps in knowledge. We discussed how reviewing best practice guidance documents on the Hub on the Care Inspectorate's website would help support learning.

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

It is recommended that the childminder develop a formal review system for children's care plan information to ensure that this is reviewed whenever there is a significant change and at least ever six months in line with legislation to ensure children's safety.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 15 March 2019.

Action taken since then

A formal review system for children's care plan information was now in place. Plans were now reviewed with parents whenever there was a significant change and at least ever six months in line with legislation to ensure children's safety.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

It is recommended that the childminder develop her permission to administer medication policy, practice and records in line with current best practice guidance to ensure children's safety.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'My future care and support needs are anticipated as part of my assessment' (HSCS 1.14).

This area for improvement was made on 15 March 2019.

Action taken since then

The childminder had developed her permission to administer medication policy, practice and records in line with current best practice guidance to ensure children's safety.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

It is recommended that the childminder develop a risk assessment to show how she ensures children's safety when on outings from the service.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'My environment is safe and secure' (HSCS 5.17).

This area for improvement was made on 15 March 2019.

Action taken since then

The childminder had developed her risk assessments to include how she ensured children's safety when on outings from the service. Risk assessments were clear, detailed and showed planned review dates to support the childminder to review these regularly.

This recommendation has 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.

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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