

Cockburn, Heather Child Minding

Edinburgh

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 November 2022

Service provided by:
Mrs Heather Scott Cockburn

Service provider number:
SP2003906816

Service no:
CS2003013097

About the service

Heather Cockburn delivers a childminding service from their home in a residential area of Edinburgh. The home is close to local primary schools, shops, parks, and other amenities. The areas used to provide their service is a lounge area, kitchen come dining area and a toilet. There is an enclosed garden to the rear of the property.

They are registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children under 16 years, of whom no more than three are not yet of an age to attend primary school, and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. These numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family.

At the time of inspection the childminder was delivering their service before and after school only for a short period of time.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection that took place on 07 November 2022 between 13:30 and 16:45. To prepare for this inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluations we:

- spoke with and observed three children using the service
- gathered written feedback from three families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and play experiences
- reviewed documents.

Feedback was given to the childminder via telephone call on 11 November 2022.

Key messages

- The childminder should look at opportunities to involve children in planning and reviewing their care within their stage of development.
- The childminder should develop their self-evaluation processes and strengthen their knowledge of good practice guidance and frameworks.
- Children experienced quality interactions with a childminder who was responsive to their individual needs and knew them well.
- Children's interests and learning opportunities were extended with the use of the local and wider community facilities.
- The childminder acknowledged the value of working with families to promote trust and build positive relationships.
- Children's views were respected, with them being able to make requests and suggestions throughout their day.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing Care and Support

Children experienced quality interactions with a childminder who was responsive to their individual needs and knew them well. For example, the childminder could confidently talk about each individual child in their care and the support they required. Children were laughing and sharing jokes with the childminder as they walked home from school. It was clear to see that strong relationships had been formed. This supported children to feel safe, comfortable and relaxed.

Personal plans were in place and reviewed with parents as and when changes happened. The childminder could confidently talk about children's individual needs, wishes, likes and dislikes. One parent shared, "Heather cares for my children with kindness and is very flexible about meeting our childcare needs". The childminder now needs to reflect this knowledge in children's personal plans and look at opportunities to involve children in planning for and reviewing their care. The childminder was receptive to this feedback and recognised how involving the children with this would be a positive experience. This will continue to support children's positive experiences and children's voices will be captured within the personal planning approach. To support this development, we directed the childminder to the Care Inspectorate document, 'Guide for providers on personal planning: early learning and childcare' (2021).

The childminder had built a strong relationship with the local school where their minded children attended. The childminder had knowledge of children's daily school routines and activities that children were taking part in. This supported the childminder to understand the experiences that children had throughout their day. This was evident when the childminder collected children from school and nursery as they spoke about their day and initiated conversations around activities that the children had taken part in. For example, their visit to the school library to select books. This contributed to children feeling valued and supported them to reflect on their day while sharing their experiences and stories.

Snack time was relaxed and unhurried. The childminder sat with children and chatted about their day and how they were feeling. Children were supported to choose their own snack from a selection of healthy options. This was a keen interest of the childminders and they recognised the importance of healthy eating. The childminder made reference to NHS good practice guidance, 'Settling the table' (2018), when reflecting on healthy eating. Children laughed, chatted and spent time with their friends as they ate their snack. This supported children to build strong relationships, relax after a busy day at school and discuss what they would like to do for the rest of their day.

QI 1.3 Play and Learning

Children were freely exploring resources that had been stored in boxes in the lounge area. Children were busy in their play and were having fun interacting with their friends in the service. For example, two children decided they would take part in their own Lego competition and asked the childminder to judge their creative designs. This supported children to practice skills such as planning and design, as they developed and built on their own ideas.

Children's interests and learning opportunities were extended with the use of the local and wider community facilities. The childminder understood the importance of children being active and was keen for children to access daily outdoor play in all weathers. For example, visiting the various local parks or community centre to take part in further activities and meet with friends. One parent shared, "Heather takes them to the park for lots of physical exercise every day after school". This contributed to children having quality active experiences and develop a sense of belonging within their own and the wider community.

The childminder did not have a formal planning process in place, however we could see evidence of them responding to individual children's interests throughout the inspection. For example, a child was showing an interest in restaurants and cafes and the childminder had introduced a box of resources to support and extend this. The childminder had worked with the children to develop a menu and visual prompts to support the different roles that children had been playing. For example, one child shared "I will be the customer, if you be the chef". Children were recalling personal experiences, using their imagination and developing their literacy skills as they developed their own stories, characters and created their own game.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder had created a relaxed, homely and welcoming atmosphere. Children were comfortable within the environment as they freely moved between the kitchen and lounge area. Low level storage gave children the opportunity to freely access a selection of resources that interested them and sparked their curiosity. For example, one child decided to bring out the Lego, while another two children were reading stories. The childminder introduced different resources to meet individual children's interests that were attending each day. This positive environment supported children to have space, comfort and freedom to explore and develop their own ideas.

Children had access to an enclosed garden space to the rear of the property. The childminder understood the importance of outdoor play and encouraged children to be outside every day. This choice was given to the children, with most days children choosing to visit the local parks on the way home from school. This supported children to lead their own play, influence the environment that they played in and have their voices heard.

The environment was clean and well maintained. The childminder encouraged children to use hand sanitiser on arrival home from school. Moving forward the childminder should ensure that all children are supported to practice good handwashing procedures. For example, children should where possible be washing their hands with soap and water. This would contribute to children learning about the importance of good infection prevention and control practices that support them to stay safe and reduces the risk of possible infection spread.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder acknowledged the value of working with families to promote trust and build positive relationships. Parents and carers told us they receive regular updates from the childminder at drop off, pick up and throughout the day. This included updates on care routines, activities, and achievements. One parent shared, "I regularly discuss my child's needs and Heather always has time for a catch up in the morning and during drop off and pick times". Families told us they felt confident in the childminder's care for their children, one parent shared, "Heather has been a huge part of my child's life and we as a family are grateful for the help and support". As a result, children and parents felt valued and it was clear that positive relationships had been built across the service.

Children's views were respected, with them being able to make requests and suggestions throughout the day. For example, children discussed which park they would like to visit after school and which resources they would like to use when they returned to the service. The childminder had previously used questionnaires to gather children's views. Moving forward the childminder should look at further opportunities to gather and record children and parents views. This would contribute to children and families feeling valued, having their voice heard and building their confidence in sharing their own ideas and feelings.

The childminder had built a strong relationship with a small group of local childminders. This had supported ongoing reflective discussions and the sharing of good practice and new ideas. For example, the childminder gave examples of how this had supported them to reflect on the Covid-19 guidance and keep up to date with the fast pace changes and new guidance over this period. As a result, the childminder was able to continue to meet the wellbeing needs of each child in their care during this very challenging time. Moving forward, the childminder should look at different ways to self-evaluate their service and keep up to date with current thinking and good practice guidance. We discussed the benefits of introducing a more formal approach to self-evaluation and signposted the childminder to the Care Inspectorate document, 'Quality Framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged childcare'. This would contribute to children and families experiencing a high quality service that continues to develop and meet their changing needs.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge, and values

The childminder had attended mandatory training to support core areas of practice, such as food hygiene, child protection and first aid. The childminder was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association and shared how this had supported them within their role. For example, the childminder gave examples of contacting them for further information when needed. This supported the childminder to gain support and guidance as and when required to best meet the needs of the children in their care. This contributed to positive outcomes for all.

The childminder was able to share how they had adapted their service over the past few years to remain open and bring their practice in line with guidance. For example, the childminder had increased the opportunities for children to spend longer periods of time outdoors. The childminder accessed ongoing support through their local childminding peer group, who spent time together and had meaningful reflective discussions around guidance and shared good practice. This contributed to children experiencing new ideas and opportunities that reflected their current interests.

The childminder kept up to date with guidance and information through the Care Inspectorate provider updates and through accessing the Care Inspectorate website, the 'Hub'. We discussed looking at the varied resources that can be found there, for example, short video clips and quick wins to support ongoing professional development. This would contribute to children experiencing a high quality service that supports them to thrive.

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

To ensure parents are made aware of what food their child will be provided with, we recommend that the childminder should develop a sample menu to show parents what food will be on offer to their child.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard: 3 Health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 5 November 2015.

Action taken since then

Since our last inspection the service had stopped providing meals to children. The service now provided a light snack after school only. Children were able to select from a small selection of healthy snack options. For example, children selected their own fruit.

The childminder was aware of good practice guidance such as, 'Setting the Table' (NHS, 2018) and used this to inform her practice. Children were supported to discuss and plan snack choices across their week. As a result, children were being supported to make healthy snack choices and learn about why that was important.

Previous area for improvement 2

When administering medication we recommend that the childminder makes it clear to parents that they are responsible for giving their child the first dose of any medication.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard:
3 Health and wellbeing

This area for improvement was made on 5 November 2015.

Action taken since then

The childminder had updated their medication policy and procedures to reflect this. The childminder only had children for a short time before and after school therefore was not often required to administer medication. However, the childminder was clear of parents being responsible for administering the first dose of any medication. This supported children's health and wellbeing needs to be met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The childminder should ensure she carries out observations of the children to allow her to track each child and ensure they are reaching their full potential. In order to achieve this she should:

- Add the GIRFEC information to her welcome pack so service users are aware of it.
- Use the 'Shanarri Indicators' as a tool to record each child's development.
- Inform parents of how she will use this whilst caring for their child.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard: 3 Health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 5 November 2015.

Action taken since then

Since our last inspection the childminder had changed how they deliver their service. The childminder now only offered spaces before and after school for a short period of time. The childminder had addressed this area for improvement following our last inspection and had updated information being shared with families. The childminder could confidently talk about children's interests and how they were being supported. The childminder shared photos and updates with families relating to activities and experiences that children were taking part in. Due to the change in service delivery, the appropriate level of action had been taken by the childminder.

Previous area for improvement 4

In order to ensure she has up to date knowledge in protecting children whilst in her care we recommend that the childminder attend a training course in Child Protection.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard: 3 Health and Wellbeing. Standard: 13 Confidence in Staff.

This area for improvement was made on 5 November 2015.

Action taken since then

The childminder had attended child protection training and had clear procedures in place to support their practice. The childminder was able to discuss their role in safeguarding children and where they would access support and guidance if required. Moving forward the childminder should ensure that they continue to refresh their skills, knowledge and understanding in this area of practice through ongoing professional development. This would contribute to children being kept safe and receiving the right care at the right time.

Previous area for improvement 5

To keep up to date with new legislation and current best practice documents, we recommend the childminder visits the Care Inspectorate Website. This information can be found at www.hub.careinspectorate.com

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard: 14 Well-managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 5 November 2015.

Action taken since then

The childminder received the Care Inspectorate provider updates which supported them to keep up to date with new guidance and good practice documents. The childminder had accessed the Care Inspectorate, 'Hub' to download good practice documents to support their practice. For example, the Care Inspectorate document, 'My World Outdoors' (2007). The childminder should continue to access the Care Inspectorate website, the 'Hub', to access the variety of resources that are available to support their ongoing professional development.

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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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