

Heather's Childminding Services

Child Minding

STONEHAVEN

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
16 December 2022

Service provided by:
Heather Chapman

Service provider number:
SP2012984116

Service no:
CS2012312096

About the service

Heather's Childminding Services provide a childminding service from her property in a quiet residential area of Stonehaven.

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 dedicated playroom. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13 December 2022 between 13:30 and 16:30. 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 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, 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 supported children to form secure and positive relationships. Children were relaxed and comfortable in their surroundings as they played happily throughout our visit.

The childminder discussed with us how some children benefitted from extended visits to support them to settle. Parents commented positively on the settling process "Heather made the settling in period as easy as possible for them. Starting by getting to know them and them getting to know her whilst out at the park/groups etc with me around followed by an hour at her house then increasing the amount of time which made it easier for them and for me."

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. "We are very satisfied with the care and support our children receive whilst they are in Heather's care. They are always happy when I return to collect them and enjoy telling me all about their day."

The childminder provided home cooked lunches, and food choices were healthy, nutritionally balanced and followed best practice documentation. Snack took place at a relaxed pace and was a nice social experience for the children present.

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 with parents prior to their children starting and reviewed regularly with families. We advised the childminder that plans should be signed and dated when reviewed to support with regular reviews.

We suggested the use of All about Me's would further support the childminder to get to know children's personal and individual preferences. Involving children in the process would support them to feel further respected and valued.

The childminder shared that some children tend to sleep on the sofa when tired. We advised the childminder to consider how to make this as safe as possible and reduce the risks to children's safety.

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. The childminder used open-ended questioning, which supported the young children to develop skills in understanding, thinking and problem solving.

The children were familiar with the toys and activities indoors and had access to a range of toys and play activities such as dressing up clothes, books and jigsaws. Resources were clean, in very good condition and appropriate for children's individual needs and interests.

Other activities regularly available to children were arts and crafts, sensory play and matching games. Floor books recording children's wishes and experiences were at an early stage of development. The childminder should continue to include children in this process. Parents commented positively on the experiences available to their children. "My child loves playing, painting, reading books enjoys helping with daily tasks" and "my children enjoy role play activities, their favourite at the moment is the pop up shop and building dens."

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 natural curiosity. In addition to playing in the garden, children had opportunities to visit interesting 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 children enjoy going to music on a Wednesday morning. They also enjoy trips to the beach and the park."

The childminder had a good understanding of child development which she used to support children's care and learning. For example, she used lots of language interacting with the children to support their language and speech progression. One parent shared "My child had a speech delay which Heather has experience with. He is very well supported and his speech is coming along brilliantly."

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. Parents agreed; "Heather is very welcoming and provides a lovely home from home environment which my children have settled into."

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. Appropriate infection control measures were in place and the childminder followed best practice guidance. This supported a safe and healthy environment for the children in her service.

Children benefitted from lots of fresh air and exercise, playing outdoors in the childminder's garden which

was a safe and secure play space. The childminder spoke of children being able to access a wide range of outdoor play resources to support children's play experiences.

Risk assessments were in place for indoors, outdoors and outings. We suggested these should be clearly dated and show planned review dates to support the childminder to review and update these regularly to support a safe environment.

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. The childminder should review her child protection, medication and complaints policy to ensure they reflect most current guidance. The vision and aims of the service were not documented. We suggested that children and parents be involved in this process to create a shared vision for the service.

The childminder recognised the importance of effective communication with parents. Parents felt well-informed about the service and trusting relationships had been built between families and the childminder. One parent commented "Heather is dependable, reliable, and we have confidence in her abilities to care for our children."

The childminder used a variety of different ways to communicate with parents and shared photographs gathered to record children's successes and achievements through play experiences to inform parents about play activities.

One parent shared with us "We get emails with updated paperwork etc and verbal updates on drop off and pick-ups so everyone is kept up-to-date. Also WhatsApp messages and pictures of daily activities. It's great to see them happily playing or painting etc."

The childminder took an informal approach to self-evaluation. 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 "Heather is fantastic at her job, and is friendly, reliable, and approachable. My

children love spending time with her which is a huge help. They are well looked after and have a great time there."

The childminder told us they enjoyed their childminding role and that they wanted the best outcomes for the children and families who attended the service.

Being a member of the Scottish Childminding Association, receiving updates from the Care Inspectorate and using ways to engage with other childminders supported the childminder to keep up-to-date with new developments.

The childminder had 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. To support her to keep children safe, the childminder had also attended core training including first aid and child protection.

We suggested that use of a reflective journal would help to identify the benefit and impact of training and learning and any gaps in knowledge. We discussed how accessing a variety of other training and reviewing best practice guidance documents on the Hub could also support practice and individual learning.

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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