

Maggie's Childminding at Old Mill Farm Child Minding

Auchterarder

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 January 2023

Service provided by:
Margaret Gallacher

Service provider number:
SP2014986151

Service no:
CS2014328823

About the service

Margaret Gallacher provides a childminding service from her property, Old Mil Farm which is situated between Dunning and Auchterarder. The childminder is currently registered to provide care for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age. Numbers are inclusive of the childminders own children.

The children are cared for in a building converted into 'The playshed' which offers indoor play experiences, a small kitchen and bathroom. The children have access to vast outdoor space which includes a garden and woodland area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced which took place on 12 January 2023 between 09:30 and 12:30. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed children using the service
- spoke with one parent
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children were nurtured and supported throughout their daily experience.
- The childminder effectively supported the children to extend their play and learning through questioning and interactions.
- Children should experience a snack time that is safe and allows opportunity for choice
- Children's progress and achievements should be recorded and evaluated to effectively support and challenge their learning
- To support children's health and wellbeing, the childminder should ensure that effective infection prevention and control practices are in place for children.
- The childminder needed to become familiar with best practice guidance in order to provide positive outcomes for children.
- Quality assurance processes and self-evaluation were not effective in promoting continuous improvement and good outcomes for children.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were nurtured and supported throughout their daily experience. Strong relationships had been formed between the children and the childminder. This resulted in children feeling safe, secure and comfortable in the setting.

The childminder effectively picked up on children's cues and non verbal actions to support their care and well-being needs well. For example, we observed children become cosy and settled as they became tired before lunch time. This supported the childminder to be flexible in the routines of the day. The indoor environment had a cosy area where children could rest and relax, contributing to children's wellbeing and comfort.

Children's personal plan information was basic and supported the childminder to build early attachments with the children. This contributed to the trusting, positive relationship between the childminder and the children. We reminded the childminder to review and update personal plans with parents at least once every six months or when there were significant changes in a child's life. This would ensure that children's current needs were being appropriately met.

On the day of inspection, children did not receive a choice of snack and did not sit down when eating. The childminder assured us that this was not a regular snack routine for the children. We discussed the potential for children choking whilst eating and discussed ways in which all mealtimes could be improved. We signposted the childminder to 'Good practice guidance: prevention and management of choking episodes in babies and children' and 'Keeping children safe: supporting positive mealtime experiences in early learning and childcare (ELC)' to support her understanding of good eating habits. An area for improvement has been identified around meal times (**see area for improvement one**).

Children were confident with the daily routines and were well supported to be independent. This enabled children to experience smooth transitions in a relaxed and unhurried way.

Children and families were very well supported in their transition into the service. The childminder told us settling in visits were flexible and supported the needs of the families and ensured children were confident in their attendance. One parent we spoke to commented how well the transition was managed by the childminder and supported their children's wellbeing at all times.

1.3 Play and learning

The childminder effectively supported the children to extend their play and learning through questioning and interactions. On the day of the inspection, we saw the childminder facilitating appropriate conversations which supported the development of skills in early language and literacy. For example, the childminder got down to children's level, used eye contact and facial expressions to support communication.

Children were engaged in play. We saw that the play was child led and they were able to choose from a range of toys on offer. This contributed to the children being confident and happy. The childminder was responsive to the children's needs. The childminder was able to discuss children's development and how she was supporting them in their learning. However, children's progress and achievements had not been recorded and evaluated to effectively support and challenge their learning (**see area for improvement two**).

The childminder was encouraging independence by supporting the children to change their shoes and put their slippers on. The children were keen to do this asking for support when needed. This contributed to developing children's independence.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children experience a mealtime which is safe and promotes opportunities for choice and social engagement, the childminder should review and improve the mealtime provision.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and participate in menu planning..' (HSCS) and also; 'I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.' (HSCS 1.35).

2. To ensure children are supported to reach their full potential, the childminder should develop personal planning which captures children's developmental progress and identify next steps in learning. This is to ensure that children's needs are planned and met. To achieve this, plans should include, but not limited to:

- set out how children's needs will be met
- record how children have progressed
- be put in place within 28 days of a child starting at the service
- be reviewed every six months or more often if the child's needs change
- be shared and updated with children, parents and carers.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that; 'as child, 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).

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced an indoor environment that was warm and welcoming with plenty of natural light and ventilation. The childminder had considered the layout of the 'playspace' to support children's play experiences. Children were observed to be happy in their play and accessed resources available independently. This supported children to lead their own play and follow their own interests.

The service offered a wide range of outdoor facilities, including a large woodland. The childminder had developed and reviewed risk assessments to support children to access these activities safely. We discussed with the childminder ways in which these could be improved, for example, to reflect changes in the environment, different cohorts of children. This will further contribute to children experiencing safe and positive outcomes.

We identified significant infection prevention and control concerns relating to effective hand hygiene, correct disposal of waste and intrusive smells from pets. This resulted in children being at potential risk from spread of infection. Children did not wash their hands before eating, after nappy changing and returning from outdoors. The bin was overflowing and open in the kitchen area, this was used for all waste, including soiled nappies. These areas identified were not in line with current best practice guidance from Health Protection Scotland (**see area for improvement one**).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health and wellbeing, the childminder should ensure that effective infection prevention and control practices are in place for children. This should include but not limited to:

- ensuring effective hand washing routines are implemented and established for all children
- ensuring all waste is appropriately managed
- ensuring children experience an environment that is free from intrusive smells

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

How good is our leadership?**3 - Adequate**

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvements are led well

Vision, values and aims of service were shared with parents when they started at the service. This meant that parents had a clear expectation of the service upon starting. The childminder was passionate and committed to ensuring values of service were upheld and this was reflected in her practice. She had developed positive relationships with parents that supported her to meet children's needs effectively. A parent told us that they valued the daily communication which supported them to build relationships and exchange information with the childminder.

Quality assurance processes, including self-evaluation, were not in place so did not lead to continuous improvement. The inspection process highlighted gaps in children's personal plans; concerns regarding infection, prevention and control practices; provision was not in line with best practice guidance, and no appropriate car insurance in place. These areas highlighted should be have been identified by the childminder through regular quality assurance checks. This would ensure the service is fit to meet children's needs and are adhering to the standards children and their families should expect from a care service. We discussed the benefits of using quality audit tools, such as: 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare', in order to support this and reflect on the service **(see area for improvement one)**.

We found that the childminder used informal daily discussion to ensure that children and their families could be consulted on the day-to-day running of her service. The childminder ensured that parents were involved from the outset and through the settling in period. Policies and procedures were shared at enrolment and the childminder was willing to respond to ideas and suggestions if highlighted by parents. We discussed ways in which families could be involved in the identifying service developments, supporting them to work in genuine partnership to improve outcomes.

Areas for improvement

1. To continue to improve outcomes for children, quality assurance and self-evaluation should be developed, including meaningfully involving children and families. The childminder should become familiar with best practice guidance and use this to support her to reflect and plan for continuous improvement.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which states that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children experienced warm and caring interactions that supported them to feel safe and valued. The childminders responsive interactions promoted individualised support for the children. The childminder had an enabling attitude which supported children to achieve their potential. They used skilled interactions to promote children's independence and develop social skills.

We saw the childminder provide good care and support to the minded children present. During the visit the childminder was attentive and responsive to the needs of the children. There was lots of positive interaction, chatting, praise and encouragement when required. As a result, children were happy and confident with the childminder who was caring and warm towards them.

Children and families were befitting from the childminder's commitment. However, the provision could be enhanced through keeping up to date with best practice documents in early learning and childcare sector. We have highlighted a number of best practice documents within this report which would assist the childminder to inform her practice and improve outcomes for children. There was a need to develop the approach to continuous professional development to ensure improvements in practice secured improved outcomes for children over time (**see area for improvement one**).

Areas for improvement

1. To promote positive outcomes for children, the childminder should develop their knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibilities. This should include, but not limited to, becoming familiar with best practice documents to support high quality play experiences and outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled' (HSCS 3.14).

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

The childminder should undertake core training including first aid and child protection to ensure children are protected and safe from harm.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state "I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes" (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 28 October 2019.

Action taken since then

The childminder had undertaken first aid and child protection training since the previous inspection. This contributes to keeping children safe from harm.

Previous area for improvement 2

The childminder should ensure they use relevant best practice documents to inform and improve their practice. Using these to build current knowledge, consider what the service does well and what could be better would help to further improve the service.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice" (HSC 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 28 October 2019.

Action taken since then

The childminder has made no progress with this area for improvement since the previous inspection. A further area for improvement has been identified within this report.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate

How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate

How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate

How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	3 - Adequate

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