

# Wiltshire, Alyson Child Minding

Inverness

**Type of inspection:**  
Announced (short notice)

**Completed on:**  
6 February 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Alyson Wiltshire

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003904730

**Service no:**  
CS2003007972

## About the service

The childminder provides a service from their property in a quiet residential area of Smithon, Inverness. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children up to 16 years of age of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and no more than one shall be under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family.

The service is close to the local primary school, shops, parks and other amenities. Childminding takes place on the ground floor of the property with children having access to the lounge, kitchen and hall areas. The toilets are accessed in the upstairs of the property. Children can access the enclosed garden space from the kitchen.

## About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place on 2 February 2023. 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:

- observed children's play experiences;
- observed interactions between the children and the childminder;
- spoke with the childminder;
- looked around the childminder's home and garden;
- reviewed feedback from one family; and
- reviewed service documents and records.

## Key messages

- The childminder provided a warm, nurturing care experience where children and their families were valued and respected.
- The childminder knew the children very well and was responsive to their needs.
- Children were provided with a range of activities that supported their play and learning.
- Communication with families was effective and they felt involved in their child's care.
- Effective self-evaluation processes supported the ongoing development of the service.

## 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?	5 - Very 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, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children attending the service were happy, settled and relaxed in the care of the childminder. Their needs were met through nurturing and responsive interactions, which helped children feel loved, safe and secure. For example, when a child required support with personal care the childminder was warm and caring, singing a rhyme which nurtured the child's security and confidence. One parent told us "I know my child is safe, healthy and happy at Alyson's.". Personal plans were in place for all children and contained important information that supported meeting children's needs. For example, details about their interests, health and likes and dislikes. The childminder spoke with parents regularly about the individual needs of children. This approach supported effective communication and consistency of care for children. One parent commented "My child responds very well to Alyson's approach and on occasion I have sought advice from her to better manage something myself with my child.". As a result, children received the care that was right for them and tailored to their individual needs. We discussed with the childminder ensuring plans were reviewed with families every six months, recording any changes.

Snack was unhurried and relaxed, which ensured a caring and positive experience for children. The childminder recognised that mealtimes were a rich opportunity to promote close attachment and develop language. The childminder provided a balance of healthy snack choices, for example, fruit, yoghurt, oatcakes and vegetables. The children also had opportunities to bake and eat their own bread. One child shared "I made bread for my Mum". This supported children to develop positive relationships with food and make healthy food choices. Children were given responsibility in the organisation and preparation of snack. For example, children collected plates, cutlery and set and cleared the table. As a result, children were supported to develop their independence and skills for life.

The childminder understood the importance of sleep for children's overall development. They had recently updated and reviewed the service sleeping policy to ensure sleep routines were reflective of individual children's needs and family wishes, which promoted good habits around sleep. This contributed to keeping children safe.

Whilst no children attending the service required any medication, we reviewed procedures and paperwork in place. We were satisfied that safe administration of medication procedures were in place, to help ensure children's health needs could be met.

There were effective systems in place to record and share accidents and incidents. We reminded the childminder to follow the best practice guidance 'Records childminding services must keep and guidance on notification reporting' to ensure any necessary notifications are shared with the Care Inspectorate at the appropriate times.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were provided with a range of activities that supported their play and learning. The children were able to choose from a selection of toys and play equipment, that met their stage of development and interests. For example, the younger child had access to various resources to support their curiosity and problem solving skills. These included construction materials, small world toys, books of interest and jigsaws. School age children enjoyed arts and crafts, imaginative play with dolls and playing and interacting with the younger child. One child commented "I like playing with XXXXX because he likes it when we sing songs". These experiences supported children to feel valued and have their wishes and choices respected.

Day to day routines and experiences were utilised to support children's learning and development. For example, the childminder created natural opportunities to develop and consolidate counting and sharing during snack. While supporting play, the childminder commented on objects and labelled new vocabulary to the younger child which they then repeated and used in conversation. These opportunities supported children to develop key skills in language, literacy and numeracy.

The childminder demonstrated an understanding of child development; they followed best practice guidance and used approaches which were child-centred and responsive to the interests of the children. For example, the childminder supported the younger child by noticing and providing resources to facilitate schematic play around transporting objects. As a result, the child benefited from high quality learning experiences through play.

Children benefited from effective planning that considered their interests, allowing them to feel valued. The childminder was in the early stages of using a floor book approach to record planning and children's experiences. A recent interest around animals was documented which included the children's thoughts, ideas and words. This supported children to feel included and have ownership of their learning. Observations of children's learning were shared regularly with families through a messaging app, at pick up and drop off times and in children's individual profiles.

Children's play experiences were enhanced by regular visits to the local community. Visits to the local toddler groups, a local café, as well as meeting up with other childminders helped to promote children's social skills and develop their confidence.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported with regular opportunities for outdoor play. They participated in daily walks in the community as well as visiting the local playpark and Smithton Woods. The children had access to the childminder's enclosed back garden which contained a range of resources such as a mud kitchen and other loose parts to promote children's creativity and curiosity. As a result, children's physical development and overall wellbeing was supported.

## 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, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefited from a homely environment that was well furnished, comfortable and offered lots of natural light and ventilation. Resources were well organised and children benefited from having access to play resources in the living/dining room. A cosy space had also been created in the hallway which children used for play and to rest and relax. The organised layout enabled children to lead their learning and gave them a strong message that they mattered.

Children benefited from a wide range of resources that reflected their interests. These were easily accessible and included construction toys, small world play, games, books and puzzles. The dining table offered space for a range of art and craft activities which met the needs of varying ages and stages of development. This supported children's choice and overall sense of wellbeing. We spoke to the childminder about further developing the availability of loose parts and open ended play resources for the younger child and signposted best practice guidance 'Growing my potential promoting safe, responsive, nurturing care and learning experiences and environments for babies and young children aged 1 and 2 years'.

The childminder understood the importance of keeping children's personal information secure. Robust records of personal data collected, and how this was used and shared, followed relevant best practice guidance.

The property was well maintained indoors and outdoors. Risk assessment strategies were implemented to ensure that children's safety was promoted and potential risks were minimised. Effective infection prevention and control measures were in place. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at key times and effective nappy changing and cleaning procedures meant that the spread of infection was kept to a minimum.

## How good is our leadership?

**5 - Very Good**

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

### Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder provided a warm and welcoming service, helping children feel loved, safe and secure. They meaningfully engaged with families and children, and asked for feedback about the service through informal chats and questionnaires. This helped the childminder to reflect on the needs of the children and make changes to support them. One parent told us, "Currently I have no suggestions or anything I feel needs improved upon. I am confident that if I did, Alyson would welcome any comments and be happy to discuss."

Policies and procedures were in place to keep children safe and support their health and wellbeing. These were shared with parents prior to starting at the setting and were regularly reviewed.

Effective and meaningful communication to support family engagement was embedded. Children's play experiences and achievements and other important information was shared with parents through a variety of methods. These included phone calls, text messages, emails, newsletters and face to face discussions. This helped the childminder to maintain clear and effective communication which supported families to feel valued and respected.

Effective self-evaluation processes supported the ongoing improvement of the service. The childminder regularly accessed best practice guidance on the Care Inspectorate Hub to support the implementation of improvements. For example, the childminder evaluated aspects of their service using 'Space to Grow' and from this developed more planting and growing experiences for children outdoors. The childminder had used the Care Inspectorate bitesize resources to improve the effectiveness of their quality assurance processes. This demonstrated a good knowledge of best practice guidance, the importance of self-evaluation and supported positive outcomes 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, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children experienced warmth, kindness and compassion in the responsive interactions we observed with the childminder. This supported the development of strong relationships with the children. The childminder understood what children needed to help them grow and develop, and responded to their needs in a caring manner. This helped children build good attachments and positively supported their wellbeing.

The childminder recognised the importance of maintaining their skills and knowledge in keeping children safe and protected. They had attended online child protection and food hygiene training as well as practical paediatric first aid training. In addition to core learning, they had completed training such as 'Think STEM! An Introduction for Childminders and Exploring Your Senses' as well other professional learning opportunities provided by the local authority and the Scottish Childminding Association. The childminder used the knowledge gained from these professional learning opportunities to reflect on practice and improve experiences for children.

The childminder was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association and had supportive links with local childminders. This provided opportunities for sharing ideas, developing knowledge and reflecting on practice, contributing to positive 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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good



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