

Green, Sarah Child Minding

Dundee

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 April 2023

Service provided by:
Sarah Green

Service provider number:
SP2005945877

Service no:
CS2009231838

About the service

Ms Finnie provides a childminding service from her spacious, modern house within a quiet, residential area of Monifieth. There are local amenities nearby such as schools, shops, parks and beaches.

The children have access to a dedicated playroom, living room, large kitchen/diner, sunroom, toilet and fully enclosed back garden. Children can also play in spacious hall areas.

Ms Finnie is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 12, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and no more than one is under 12 months.

Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family.

Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate.

Overnight service will not be provided.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on the afternoons of 20 and 24 April 2023. The inspection was carried out by an 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 practice and daily life;
- spoke with the childminder about the service; and
- spoke with two children and gathered views of families using the service.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, kind and caring interactions, supporting them to feel safe and secure.
- Children were supported to make choices and lead their own play and learning. They enjoyed varied play experiences, which support their learning and development.
- Children had formed trusting relationships with the childminder, who knew them well and was responsive to their needs.
- The childminder provided a welcoming, clean and homely environment for children.
- The childminder made very good use of the local community to provide broader experiences to children.
- There were very good opportunities for outdoor play in the fresh air, which supported children's health, wellbeing and development.
- The childminder was experienced, well trained and knowledgeable. She was committed to training and professional development to further support children and the development of her service.
- The childminder should continue to review and adapt her recording, with greater emphasis on supporting children's progress and tracking next steps. She should also develop her improvement plan, to extend evaluation and the impact of improvements on outcomes for children.
- The childminder should continue to review arrangements for sleeping 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?	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 experienced warm and nurturing care. The kind, affectionate and respectful interactions helped them to feel secure, settled and valued in the childminder's care. Children played and had fun with the childminder, who was responsive and attentive to their needs. Children had formed warm attachments and trusting relationships with the childminder, who spoke to them in gentle and encouraging tones. This caring and supportive atmosphere was conducive to children's wellbeing and development, as they were happy and confident in the setting. Parents' comments confirmed these positive relationships. One parent commented; "Sarah has formed a lovely relationship with my child. He loves attending her setting and looks forward to their chats on the way home from school". Another parent commented; "Sarah is very nurturing with my daughter".

The childminder knew children well and understood their needs, interests and preferences. This knowledge was well documented in personal plans which supported the childminder to meet individual need. Observations and recording of children's development was linked to the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators which are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. These were used to track children's progress, celebrate their achievements and support some next steps in learning. We discussed how some of the information recorded could be streamlined, with greater focus on how next steps are supported and reviewed.

A variety of methods were used to communicate and share information with families. This included regular updates on a closed Facebook page, and we saw that some parents used this as a two way communication method.

The childminder was aware of good practice relating to mealtimes and nutrition. Parents currently provided all meals and snacks for their children, with the childminder ensuring that a sociable and enjoyable mealtime experience was enjoyed by the children, including picnics and opportunities to eat outside.

Individual wipeable mats, gloves and aprons were used to prevent the spread of infection during nappy changes. The childminder described a robust approach to handwashing, which was embedding positive habits to keep children safe and well.

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and Learning

Children experienced varied play and learning opportunities that supported them to thrive and develop skills. The childminder discussed how she facilitated play and supported individual interests, with weekly routines providing a balance of home based play and activities in the local community. The childminder shared some of the benefits and positive outcomes for children from attending the local toddler groups. This included children's growing confidence, development of social skills and experimenting with art and craft activities provided by a specialist visiting arts worker.

The childminder's knowledge of child development led to positive outcomes for children, as she used her knowledge and experience to effectively support children in their play. She understood and supported individual interests and preferences. Children were supported to play independently, with the childminder using observation effectively to intervene and enhance learning.

The childminder strongly promoted outdoor play and learning, with children accessing outdoor play on a daily basis, both in the garden and in the community. Children enjoyed broad experiences where they connected with nature, were active, problem solved, used imaginations and were creative.

Children were engaged and confident in their play. They had very good opportunities to be creative and imaginative with role play materials, loose parts and some open ended resources. Literacy and numeracy was well supported in age appropriate ways, with singing, counting and age appropriate conversations naturally threaded into children's play. The childminder gave examples of how learning was embedded on a routine walk home from school, including talking about the numbers on house doors, bus numbers, looking out for numbers, reading road signs and looking at their shapes.

Feedback from children included; "I like the fun activities we do, playing in her garden and with the other children. We go places on in- service days".

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Quality indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities.

The childminder had created a warm, welcoming and homely environment where children were comfortable and at ease. This hygienic and well cared for home was organised with children's needs in mind, with children playing freely throughout ground floor rooms and accessing the outdoors when they wished to. One parent commented that "The house is very welcoming". The childminder was mindful of children's safety without restricting their experiences and independence. Her home was routinely risk assessed which meant the space was safe for children. Safety was supported through the service's well considered policies and procedures. For example, policy for the safe use of the trampoline and for safe contact with the family dog.

The organisation and availability of resources supported children to freely choose what they played with and enabled them to extend and develop their ideas for play. Natural materials for loose parts play were included in indoor and outdoor play. These resources enabled children to engage in quality play experiences that encouraged them to experiment, be curious and problem solve. The tuff tray was used to set up themed activities that reflected children's interests. For example, a pirate ship and related resources on one day of this inspection. The childminder had identified in her improvement plan the need to extend natural and open ended play materials and to gradually reduce the amount of plastic resources on offer. This demonstrated her reflective practice and commitment to improvement that took account of best practice.

The childminder understood the positive impact that outdoor play had on children's overall wellbeing and keenly supported daily outdoor play, fresh air, physical activity and varied outdoor experiences. The safe and fully enclosed garden was well organised, it offered children space for physical games, use of loose parts, water and sand and use of wheeled toys. Outdoor play was enhanced by regular use of community facilities. This included daily walks to and from school, with play and fun embedded within these journeys. A small wooded area close to the childminder's home was used to play hide and seek and to explore the natural world, trips to local parks and beaches and other places of interest were planned with the children. Children learned about being safe in the community as they walked to and from school and discussed risks and safe behaviours.

The childminder used a travel cot for some children who needed to sleep. One child currently slept in a buggy that enabled the child to lie flat. These arrangements were individually agreed with parents. Further review of sleeping arrangements should be considered, with alternative options sought to ensure that children are always comfortable, not restricted, able to stretch and move freely.

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 was committed to the ongoing development of her service and had a clear focus on improving outcomes for children and their families. Consultation with children and families was embedded within the service, as the childminder developed positive relationships and channels for communication and information sharing. She had recently used questionnaires to gather the opinions of children and parents. We discussed how she could use this feedback more meaningfully to inform development of the service, feeding back to families any changes that had been introduced as a result of their feedback.

Children's ideas and voices were captured through routine conversations and activity planning. The childminder made some limited use of Mindmaps to gather children's ideas. We discussed how the introduction of a floorbook could also be useful in recording children's ideas and play experiences. This could increase children's involvement, their sense of independence and responsibility and value their input into their learning. The childminder made good use of photographs to capture children's fun and activities in the service, which were shared with families through the closed Facebook page.

Children benefited from a reflective childminder, who continually aimed to improve the service and outcomes for children. She had developed an improvement plan, with current goals to develop resources and extend and embed 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged children' into her daily practice. We discussed how the improvement plan could be developed to include timescales and some review and evaluation of progress, with focus on the impact on outcomes and benefits to children.

The childminder had policies and procedures in place which were shared with parents; these had all recently been reviewed and updated where required to reflect best practice. This helped parents to understand the work and ethos of the childminding service.

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 benefited from care provided by an experienced and well trained childminder who understood children's needs. The childminder's calm and caring manner ensured that children were well supported and received attentive care.

The childminder demonstrated a commitment to her own learning and development. She had completed an SVQ in childcare and three years of the BA course in Childhood studies. She was unsure if she would return to complete the fourth year after a break away from studying. She felt that she had learnt so much from this training, reinforcing and adding some theory to her many years of childminding practice. This training had boosted her confidence and motivated her to continue developing her service for families. A training record evidenced that the childminder continually aimed to extend and refresh her knowledge. She kept updated in all core training, including Child protection, First-aid and infection control. Recent training also included Transitions matter, Recovery play and the Quality Framework. The childminder briefly evaluated any training attended. We discussed how this could be extended by highlighting key learning and the impact of training on developing the service and improving outcomes for children.

Regular networking with other childminders provided opportunities for discussion, learning and sharing of good practice. The childminder kept updated with information from the Care Inspectorate and accessed early years forums and organisations for further information and learning to support practice and the ongoing improvement of the service.

The childminder had created a warm and welcoming atmosphere, where children and their families were valued and respected. She was confident and knowledgeable in her role. One parent described the service as, "Friendly family home, reliable, flexible, clean, caring". Another parent commented "Sarah has been a perfect childminder."

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 review her policies annually as part of the service evaluation, in conjunction with parents and carers.

This is in accordance with: National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 13: Improving the Service, Standard 14: Well-managed Service.

This area for improvement was made on 25 January 2016.

Action taken since then

All policies had recently been reviewed and updated as needed to reflect any changes and new guidance. This area for improvement had 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?	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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