

Barnes, Veronica Child Minding

Kirriemuir

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 April 2023

Service provided by:
Veronica Barnes

Service provider number:
SP2003901193

Service no:
CS2003002702

About the service

Veronica Barnes provides a childminding service from her property in a quiet residential area of Kirriemuir, Angus. The childminder may care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age: of whom no more than 6 are under 12 years; of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months.

Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

The service is close to local amenities, including a primary school. Children are cared for within a play space within the kitchen/ lounge area. Children also have access to a downstairs toilet and a large, enclosed garden to the rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13 April 2023 between 11:30 and 15:15. One inspector carried out the inspection. 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.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed children and spoke with three parents using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences.
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder continued to provide a high standard of care and support to children. Children enjoyed responsive, warm and gentle interactions from the childminder.
- The range of play experiences supported children's learning through appropriate levels of challenge due to the skilled interactions of the childminder.
- Parents were very happy with the care, play and learning experiences their children received.
- The childminder had an enabling attitude towards improvement. As a result, she regularly engaged in reflective practices and self-evaluation.

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.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were very nurtured through daily experiences. They experienced consistent warmth and compassion, resulting in them feeling safe and valued within the setting. The childminder was very attuned to their individual needs, ensuring that they were given care that was right for them. Parents told us that they were very happy with the service. They shared that their children "enjoy it so much and learn so much [and] as a result [they have] increased days and hours they attended."

Children's wellbeing benefitted from effective personal planning. Good, detailed records were in place for all children to ensure their health and wellbeing needs were fully considered within their care. Parents were encouraged regularly to share relevant information to ensure they were accurate and right for the child. The childminder continually assessed the information she held on children to ensure it was effective in providing a clear picture of children's needs. This supported children to reach their full potential.

Parents felt well informed of their children's experiences. One parent shared that "at the end of the day they were given an in-depth update of all the days happenings". This enhanced information sharing and enabled everyone to feel included within the service.

Mealtimes were a nurturing, relaxed experience. The childminder was mindful of children's needs and supported them to eat at a time that was right for them. This supported healthy eating habits and respected children's choice.

Children were kept safe because the childminder had a very good understanding around safeguarding children. Appropriate procedures were in place and she understood the importance of safe storage and administration of medication. Whilst no children required medication to be routinely administered, an appropriate policy and recording system was in place if needed.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children were seen to be relaxed and having fun in the service. They had a good range of toys available to them inside the service. Their interests were well considered when planning the items on offer to them each day. For example, small toy animals and farm toys were available for children who had recently developed a strong interest in them. The childminder extended this further by taking children on regular walks to explore nature within their environment, including horses nearby. This showed that children's likes were very well considered to ensure their experiences were exciting and stimulating for them.

Children were empowered to direct their own play and learning. The childminder used her wealth of skills and experience to create play and learning opportunities. For example, numeracy and literacy had been added to the outdoor playhouse to provide more opportunities for children to play and learn. Parents found that the childminder designed children's experiences "impeccably and was constantly stimulating [their] child through play, chatting, being outside, reading to". This enabled children to learn through skilled interactions.

The childminder monitored children's achievements through tracking their individual development. Skills relative to their age and stage, for example kicking a ball, were well tracked to ensure that they were reaching their full potential. Parents were kept up to date with achievements through face to face communication and sharing regular updates. This supported a close, nurturing approach to children's play and learning that enabled everyone to feel involved and included.

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.

2.2 children experience high quality facilities

The setting was well furnished, comfortable and homely. Children were clearly settled and at peace within the environment. This was a result of the nurturing space that the childminder had created for them. During the day, the childminder continually adapted the spaces depending on children's needs. For example, a small child sized bench was added to the kitchen area to allow children to sit and have snack.

Setting's indoor and outdoor environments were developmentally appropriate spaces. The childminder told us that one playhouse had recently been damaged by a fallen tree. Some pieces were safely and appropriately repurposed to create opportunities for loose parts play. This was sustainable and practical for children to develop their play and learning. We saw examples of children using these to make obstacle courses and steppingstones. As a result, children were able to direct their own learning and challenge themselves.

Children benefited from a variety of experiences within the local community. Other childminders would meet on occasions to enable further opportunities for children to socialise and engage in local events. Children also benefitted from regular walks within the local community to the woods and farms. The childminder told us they particularly enjoyed seeing the horses and tractors. This promoted positive social experiences and enabled them to feel a part of their wider community.

The childminder carried out regular risk assessments and visual check to identify and minimise hazards within the environment. The childminder used her very good knowledge of the children to adapt the space depending on their individual needs, age and stage of development. We observed that children's opportunities were not restricted as a result, as the childminder was mindful to enable risky play with full supervision. This supported children to explore their abilities and learn from their mistakes in a safe, well-maintained environment.

The childminder securely and effectively stored children and families' personal information such as, personal plans. She showed a very good understanding of her responsibilities regarding storing and processing children's personal information. To support this, she was a member of the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) where she could receive guidance in relation to the gathering and processing of information.

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.

3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

A clear vision and aims had been created which were reflective of the service provided. These included providing children with experiences within the local community to contribute to their development and working in partnership with parents. The childminder was motivated about her role and keen to support her service to develop and improve to ensure the best outcomes for families using the service. Parents shared that in their experience the service was "second to none".

Families were meaningfully involved and influenced change within the setting. Their views and opinions were sought annually through questionnaires and informal conversations. Parents told us that were able to discuss everything "very informally and Veronica always took on board and implements any suggestions" they had. This promoted positive partnership working with families to ensure that the service was right for them and their child.

Children's voices were listened to and acted on. Children were given key roles in developing the service and their individual experiences. For example, children had taken a keen interest in den making. The childminder worked skilfully with them to measure and buy material they needed to make the dens. This created an engaging and enjoyable learning experience whilst promoting inclusion and responsibility.

The childminder had started to evaluate her service using the Care Inspectorate 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school-aged children' to identify strengths and areas for improvement. She used documents such as My Active World and Realising the Ambition, to build on her knowledge of current best practice. This supported a structured approach to self-evaluation. We spoke about the benefits of recording developments as they occurred, to support a continuous approach to improvement and help measure the impact developments have on 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.

4.1 Skills, knowledge and values

The childminder was warm and friendly. She knew the children and families very well and as a result were able to meet their individual needs, wishes and choices. She was attentive and responsive to children during our visit. This allowed children to receive consistent care of a very good standard and helped children to feel safe and secure. When asked what they felt a strength of the service was, parents commented that they felt the "entire care package stands out, [as well as] her friendly and approachable manner".

The childminder had an enabling attitude toward improvement and demonstrated that she would continue with professional development to enhance children's experiences. A variety of professional development had been undertaken, including first aid and child protection. Self-directed research and reading, and through accessing childminding forums kept her up to date on guidance and early learning topics. This contributed to positive outcomes for children as the childminder was continually reflecting on her practice to improve.

The childminder provided a caring and welcoming service, which helped children to feel loved, safe and secure. Parents told us they found the childminder to always be "warm, kind, nurturing - and wise".

Children benefitted from the childminder's experience and skilled interactions which contributed to their success and enjoyment.

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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