

Jennifers childminding service

Child Minding

Banchory

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 April 2023

Service provided by:
Jennifer Morpeth

Service provider number:
SP2021000047

Service no:
CS2021000076

About the service

Jennifers Childminding is registered to provide a service to care for a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children in the childminder's family.

The service operates from the childminder's home in Banchory. The downstairs areas of the property were used for the purpose of childminding. Children had access to the living room area, kitchen, upstairs bathroom and a fully enclosed back garden. The service is close to a local primary school, parks and other local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 April 2023 between 14:30 and 18:00. 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 and information submitted by the service.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- received feedback by email from two families;
- spoke with the childminder;
- observed practice and children's experiences; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were loved, nurtured and supported by the kind and caring childminder who clearly had children's best interests at the heart of the service provided.
- Children were seen to be having fun and were engaged in meaningful play experiences.
- The childminder provided a welcoming, clean and homely environment for children.
- Effective communication between the childminder and parents resulted in strong partnerships with families.
- Children benefitted from a skilled childminder who had accessed a range of training opportunities.
- Children experienced daily outdoor play experiences, which kept them active and allowed them to have regular fun, playing outdoors.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were loved, nurtured and supported by the kind and caring childminder who clearly had children's best interests at the heart of the service provided. The childminder knew children well and took a genuine interest in them as individuals. As a result, children were settled, confident and happy in the childminder's home. Throughout our visit we saw the children invite the childminder into their games. All parents strongly agreed that the childminder knew their children well.

The childminder spoke confidently about individual children's needs and strategies they used to support children. Each child had a personal plan containing information to help meet their needs. We found that some children would have benefited from a care plan, detailing support strategies for specific needs. The childminder had taken immediate action to ensure care plans were in place for children who may require them. We discussed the reviewing of personal planning and asked that these are reviewed with parents every six months, or earlier if needed, to help ensure information was up to date. This would support the childminder to ensure children's needs are fully met and children receive care that is right for them. We signposted the childminder to the Guide for Providers on Personal Planning on the Care Inspectorate Hub to support the development of personal planning.

Children benefited from a relaxed, unhurried and positive snack experience. Children ate at the dining table, promoting a family atmosphere. The childminder was focused on the children, responding to their needs, offering reassurance and help when needed. Children were supported to be independent, where appropriate, allowing them to be included and help build life skills. Children were very aware of the snack time routine and were seen to gather the equipment and food from the kitchen, set the table and serve their own drinks. Snack choices were healthy and children had been involved in the planning of the snack menu. This encouraged children to be healthy and ensured they were nurtured.

The childminder had systems in place to obtain permission to administer medication to children. There was a policy in place, allowing the childminder to ensure medication was safely managed. We suggested the childminder considers adding more information, for example how soon after the first dose of a new medication could the child attend the service. This would support children's health and wellbeing. The childminder has since actioned this.

Children benefited from a childminder who had a good knowledge of child protection. The childminder was confident in explaining what they would do if they had concerns about a child. There was a child protection policy in place and we recommended that this be updated to reflect current guidance. Although the childminder had a good knowledge of children, we discussed the need for effective record keeping and the use of chronologies to document significant incidents in children's lives. We signposted the childminder to Practice guide to Chronologies on the Care Inspectorate Hub.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children were engaged, confident and having fun. They were supported to lead their play, choosing independently from a range of resources and toys. Resources were age appropriate and stored effectively to support children's choice. Children were seen to choose where they wanted to play and the resources they wanted to use. We discussed how children's play and learning could be further developed by loose parts being added to the indoor and outdoor environments, supporting children's curiosity and imagination. Parents shared with us, "Jennifer is very kind and caring and environment is really stimulating and entertaining for all children who attend the setting." We signposted the childminder to the Loose Parts Play: A Toolkit on the Care Inspectorate Hub.

There was a balance of spontaneous play and planned experiences based on children's individual needs and interests. We saw the childminder had provided opportunities for planting which had been an ongoing activity. Children were asked if they wanted to participate and were allowed to lead this activity. Some children decided to plant and others decided they wanted to decorate plant pots. Children were seen to direct their own play and learning, which allowed them to feel respected. A parent told us there is a variety of activities on offer.

The resources, activities, interactions and engagement from the childminder supported children's skills in language, literacy and numeracy. For example, children's language development was supported by the childminder through appropriate conversations and role modelling. The childminder used open ended questioning to encourage children to problem solve. Children also engaged in fun experiences that supported literacy and numeracy. For example, the childminder and children played a Pokémon game at the park, which supported children's imagination, wellbeing and language and literacy skills.

The childminder regularly observed children to assess their progression and stages of development. Photographs, observations and evaluations were used to show children's learning and celebrated achievements. These were evidenced in children's 'scrap books.' Children were confident in sharing their books with us and talked confidently about what they had been doing. This ensured children's successes were celebrated and shared, giving children the message that they were valued.

The childminder used floorbooks to record planning for non-term time days. These were completed by children, capturing the children's current interests and ideas. We discussed how this could be extended to record planning throughout the year. This would provide opportunities for children to practice mark making and literacy skills. It would also allow children to revisit their play and learning.

Children had daily opportunities to play outdoors. The childminder supported children to access the local community, helping them to stay active and extend learning beyond the childminder's home. Outings included visits to local parks, library and café. This promoted children's physical and social skills and supported them to be a part of their local community.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

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.

The spaces that children had access to were clean, welcoming and homely. The childminder's home was secure, took account of child safety and was furnished to a high standard. The environment was comfortable with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Spaces accessed by children enabled them to rest, play and have fun. A parent told us the environment was "warm and welcoming."

There was a range of good quality, age-appropriate resources, which were accessible for the children to independently select. Children had ownership of the spaces available to them and it was clear that they mattered. We saw children's artwork, photos and canvasses were displayed throughout the childminder's home. This gave children the strong message that they were loved and important.

Children benefited from free flow between the indoors and outdoors. The spaces and layout helped children to move freely and supported choice. Safety measures whilst children were outdoors had been considered, for example, through effective monitoring, checks being carried out and the garden being free from hazards. Well considered risk assessments were clear and had been reviewed to support best practice. This allowed children to be safe whilst having fun.

Infection control measures provided a safe environment for children. We observed the childminder and the children mostly practice good, effective handwashing routines. Children washed their hands when coming indoors, before eating and after using the bathroom. We suggested children wash their hands after eating snack to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Cleaning was carried out effectively, which ensured the risk of infection was minimised. Records of accidents and incidents were in place and the childminder shared these with parents where necessary.

The childminder had effective measures in place for the storage and management of children's personal files. This ensured children and families' privacy was protected and their data was well managed.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvements are well led.

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The childminder's aims and objectives for the service clearly showed the service the childminder provided and helped children to be safe and included, as well as supporting achievement. The aims and objectives were evident in the interactions and relationships developed with children. The childminder told us these were shared with children and families in their induction. We suggested when reviewing these in future, the childminder consults with the children and families using the service, supporting them to feel valued and included.

The childminder had developed positive relationships with families and regularly shared information to help ensure they were informed. Communication took place face to face at drop off and collection times, as well as through text messaging. The childminder regularly asked children and parents to complete questionnaires. They discussed how the responses were always very positive and did not offer many suggestions for improvement. We discussed how questionnaires could be more specific, which might allow the childminder to gather more targeted feedback. All families strongly agreed that the service was well led and managed. One parent told us, "Already an excellent service."

The childminder told us how they have reflected and improved since the service opened. They spoke of changes that they had made to the daily routine, which ensured children had daily opportunities for physical activity. Children were able to talk about how they had reflected on the handwashing routine as a group and the children had come up with a solution to ensure it was a calm experience. We saw the children choose numbers as they entered the house and the lowest number went first. As a result, the handwashing routine was well managed and calm. The childminder discussed how allowing the children to test their own solutions to the problem had resulted in children being more likely to follow the rules and routines. This also showed children that their ideas were important.

The childminder was in the early stages of self-evaluation and improvement planning. We discussed how the 'Quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' on the Care Inspectorate Hub could support with the development of self-evaluation processes.

There was a range of policies and procedures in place to support the smooth running of the service. These were mostly reflective of current best practice. We suggested the childminder considers the addition of a missing child policy. This would further support children to be safe whilst using the service.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

4.1 Staff skills

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The childminder's warmth, kindness and compassion enabled children to feel valued, loved and secure. Interactions with children reflected the childminder's strong value base, they modelled respect and supported children to show care towards each other. The childminder's calm approach contributed to a comfortable atmosphere in which children felt safe and able to express themselves freely. Investment was given to building secure attachments and strong bonds with children, allowing the children to be comfortable and relaxed. The childminder talked about building strong relationships with families through daily conversations, being approachable and accommodating.

Children benefited from the childminder's commitment to professional development. The childminder had accessed a range of training and development opportunities. This meant children experienced a good range of play experiences, as well as good quality care routines. We suggested this could be developed further by recording post training evaluations to include a detailed reflection of learning. Reflections of learning would enable the childminder to revisit and reflect on how learning opportunities developed their practice and help them to implement learning into practice. All parents strongly agreed that the childminder had the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to care for their child and support their learning.

The childminder had considered children's safety well and children were well supervised throughout the session. The childminder had provided children with high vis clothing for the park and the walk from school to the childminder's home. We saw regular headcounts being performed. The childminder effectively tracked where children were, both whilst out in the community and at the house. This meant children were kept safe and secure.

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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - 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?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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