

Flett, Helen Child Minding

Orkney

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
26 April 2023

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2009976178

Service no:
CS2009234413

About the service

Helen Flett provides a childminding service from their home in Firth. Children have access to the dining kitchen area, living area, the second bedroom, toilet areas of the childminder's home for play, rest, and meals. An enclosed garden provides outdoor space for children to play. The childminder's home is close by a local primary, nursery school, parks and green spaces.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to 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 of the childminder's family.

The parts of the premises not to be used for childminding purposes are the main bedroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 April 2023. One inspector carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- Spoke to one child during their play
- Spoke with the childminder
- Spoke with one parent by telephone and received one questionnaire return
- Observed practice and experiences for children
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The children present were confident and comfortable in the childminder's care and had a clear sense of belonging.
- The childminder was warm, caring and responsive, in what children had to say.
- Children experienced a well-furnished, comfortable bright home from home environment with plenty of space to play.
- The childminder had developed positive relationships with parents and carers and worked in close partnership.
- Parents were very happy with the service provided.

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

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

The childminder was warm, caring and responsive to what the child had to say. This supported children's overall wellbeing and sense of being nurtured and safe. The childminder had built very positive relationships with parents, families and children. This led to information sharing to benefit the care of children. Parent comments included; 'my children feel safe and secure at Helen's house. She knows what interests my children and she plans activities they enjoy.'

The childminder sat with the child while they ate together creating an unhurried and relaxed snack time. Meals were provided by parents in a pack lunch box. The childminder also had a range of healthy snack options for any children that required extra. The childminder had attended paediatric first aid and knew what to do in an emergency if a child choked on their food. This helped to keep children safe.

The childminder worked well with parents and children to create and maintain personal plans for each child. These set out what their needs and wishes were and how they were met by the childminder. Personal plans were updated regularly with important changes and new information and key times throughout the year. The childminder worked closely with parents to maintain home routines for young children and provide important comfort such as cuddles, sleep and rest. This essential information sharing provided consistency and continuity for children.

1.3 Play and learning

The childminder planned activities and routines to suit children's interest. Most play experiences developed children's language skills through good interaction and involvement in play by the childminder. We observed how the child present lead their own play for the session as toys and equipment were easy to access. They enjoyed colouring and having a kick around with the football. The child told us that this was some of their favourite activities.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

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

Children experienced a well-furnished, comfortable bright home from home environment with plenty of space to play. The living room provided the main play area for children to explore and enjoy their toys. The kitchen/dining area provided a dining table for all to sit at whilst enjoying meals together and later for art and craft activities. The bathroom was kept in a clean, safe and orderly fashion for children to use safely. Parents were happy and commented; 'Helen provides a kind, caring environment' and 'the environment is excellent and homely.'

Toys and equipment were mostly suitable for the age ranges and provided opportunities for extending curiosity and learning. Most toys were plastic based. We discussed with the childminder how loose parts

should now be integrated more as restrictions during the pandemic ease. This would support the further learning and development of all ages of children.

The child present spoke to us about playing outdoors and enjoyed going to the park and visiting other places. Children comments included; 'I like playing outside with all of Helen's toys' and, 'I like Helen.' We could see from children's learning journeys that they visit places in the community in all weathers, such as parks, the beach and a local area called 'Happy Valley.' We could see through photographs that children had all-weather suits and enjoyed outdoor play suitably dressed.

The childminder provided a clean home environment and maintained infection control procedures throughout the day, such as effective handwashing and regular cleaning of their home. This helped to keep children well and safe.

The childminder was mindful of confidentiality and kept children's personal records safely in a locked cabinet. Information was not shared with anyone unnecessary to ensure the trust of children and families.

How good is our leadership?

4 – Good

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

The childminder had developed very positive relationships with parents and carers and worked in close partnership. The childminder used daily conversation and communication apps to build relationships and exchange information. This supported the childminder to meet children's care needs.

The childminder implemented and met their aims and vision statement. This helped parents know what was important to the childminder and gave shared expectations of the quality of care that would be provided to meet the needs of children and families. These included:

- To provide a homely environment for the bairns
- I will ensure that adequate safety precautions are taken at all times
- Parents will be kept informed regularly of what activities their child has done
- The childminder treated children fairly and with respect and used interactions well to promote positive relationships with children.

Opportunities were available for children and their families to become meaningfully involved and influence change within the setting. The childminder used opportunities every six months to ask parents to give formal feedback. The childminder had recently worked with parents to create a plan for self-evaluation throughout the year. This detailed ways in which parents wanted to be involved, how they wanted to give feedback and their preferred methods of communication. Working in this way meant that those involved with the service were happy with the care being provided. Parent comments included; 'this service is already fantastic. There is nothing that we can think of that would make this service better.'

The childminder should continue to find creative ways of quality assuring and self-evaluating the service being provided moving forward. The childminder should find ways to use the guidance documents, such as 'A quality framework for daycare of children, and childminding and school age children.' Other guidance document that childminding service should follow are available of the Care Inspectorate Hub web page.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

Children benefited from compassionate and responsive care. The childminder took the time to listen to children and hear what they had to say. They shared positive interactions encouraging language and discussion as well as promoting children to think about their views and thoughts. The childminder had a good understanding of how children develop and ways in which to support their progress. We observed the child present enjoying the day's activities and progressing in their development.

Children benefited from the strong relationships that had been built between parents and the childminder. This provided a strong base to provide care for children that supported their holistic care and wellbeing needs.

The childminder held up to date training certificates in key areas, such as paediatric first aid, child protection and food hygiene. They were able to discuss key learning from these and demonstrate how they kept children safe from potential harm.

Following the last inspection the childminder had embarked on additional professional development to support their practice. Some of the courses they attended included 'Getting to grips with children's rights' and 'Realising the ambition: Being Me, National practice guidance for early years in Scotland.' The childminder had used notes and learning from these to pick out specific areas that would be of support to their role. The childminder was keen to find other sources of professional development that would create new learning opportunities. We spoke with the childminder at length suggesting a range of webinars, websites and organisations that could provide this.

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

To support ongoing improvement and the changing needs of children, the childminder should ensure that:

- Parents, children, and other stakeholder have opportunities to meaningfully feedback to the service
- Feedback is used to promote positive development
- Self-evaluation using quality indicators and best practice influenced ongoing improvement and development.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19); and

'I am supported to give regular feedback and how I experience my care and support and the organisation used learning from this to improve.' (HSCS 4.8).

See guidance here:

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/4807/qf-elc-revised-may-2022.pdf>

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/3783/self-evaluation-for-improvement-your-guide.pdf>

<http://www.childmindingjourney.scot/>

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/how-we-support-improvement/care-inspectorate-programmes-and-publications/early-learning-and-childcare-improvement-programme>

This area for improvement was made on 14 June 2022.

Action taken since then

The childminder had further develop self evaluation methods. They worked closely with parents shape this in a way that would be meaningful for all involved. Parent feedback and children's ideas were used to shape activities and ensure all involved continues to be happy with the service provided.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure continued and improved quality of experiences for children, the childminder should complete professional development opportunities and use learning from these to develop practice.

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, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.' (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 14 June 2022.

Action taken since then

The childminder had attended professional development courses and had used learning from these to positively impact on her practice and how she cared for children.

This area for improvement has 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - 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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