

Sarah Howie Childminding Child Minding

FALKIRK

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 April 2023

Service provided by:
Gillian Howie

Service provider number:
SP2021000204

Service no:
CS2021000324

About the service

Gillian Howie (known as Sarah Howie) operates a childminding service from their home in a residential area of Reddingmuirhead, Falkirk. The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age, of whom no more than six are under 12 years, 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 own family.

The service offers children a dedicated playroom space which opens into the kitchen/dining area. There is access to toilet facilities on the same level. Outdoor space at the rear of the property offers children a safe and secure area to play. The service is close to local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 26 April 2023 between 13:00 and 14:45. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children in the service
- reviewed digital responses from three families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were cared for in a homely environment that was comfortable, welcoming and offered them space to play and relax.
- The childminder had developed positive relationships with children and families.
- Children experienced nurturing and caring interactions from the childminder.
- The childminders understanding of child development meant that children enjoyed fun activities which were appropriate for their age.
- The childminder should continue to develop their self-evaluation and quality assurance procedures.

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?	4 - 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 these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

The warm and responsive interactions we witnessed supported children to feel loved and secure. The childminder understood the importance of developing positive relationships to ensure clear communication provided consistency of care and routines for children. Families told us that the childminder knew their children well. One parent shared, "Sarah is amazing with the kids and keeps me informed with all things that I need to know about my child and activities." This meant that the care provided met the needs of individuals and respected the wishes of parents.

Families provide packed lunches and snacks for children. Although we did not observe snack or mealtime, the childminder spoke knowledgeably about the importance of everyone coming together to eat. They recognised the importance of sitting and eating with children, when possible, to keep them safe as they ate. They also understood that a relaxed, unhurried mealtime provided a positive social experience and was a rich opportunity to promote close attachments.

Personal plans for children had been developed by the childminder and included the views of families and children. The information was used to support children's overall wellbeing and took account of the wellbeing indicators.

At the time of inspection no children required medication. We were satisfied that appropriate procedures were in place to safely administer, record and share information with families when it was needed.

Quality indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children had opportunities to lead their play and learning. They could independently access activities offered in response to their needs and interests. There was a balance of spontaneous and planned activities which promoted children's choice. We observed the childminder responding compassionately whilst supporting a young child to engage with age and stage appropriate toys and books. Families told us the childminder provided "a caring environment with lots of activities." As a result children were happy and developing confidence as they explored, played and learned.

High quality observations of children's learning were recorded for each child. These were linked to a range of current guidance and identified possible next steps in children's learning. This meant that children were cared for by a childminder who was motivated to encourage and support children to reach their potential. We discussed with the childminder, ways to involve children in the process of recording and sharing their learning. This would promote a sense of achievement for children and give them opportunities to celebrate their success.

The local community was well used by the childminder to extend children's experiences. They had fun as they visited parks, woodland areas and met with other children and adults at local groups they attended. As a result children's opportunities for play and learning were improved as they developed strong connections to their own and wider communities.

How good is our setting?**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and 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 benefitted from a very well-furnished, comfortable and homely environment that was clean and offered lots of natural light and ventilation. The dedicated, open plan, play space was well organised and offered them ample space to play and explore a variety of activities. Children had direct access to the kitchen/dining area as well as a door leading to the fully enclosed and secure garden. They also had access to the quiet, cosy living room area where children could relax and sleep. The carefully considered layout enabled children to lead their learning and gave them a strong message that they mattered.

The childminder understood the positive impact that outdoor play had on children's overall wellbeing. At the time of inspection the garden was being prepared for development. The childminder told us their plans. They explained that the all-weather materials they intended to use would ensure children had access to outdoor space and fresh air throughout the year. Children told us they liked to play outside. One child shared how they liked playing football in the garden. We discussed the benefits of loose parts play and natural resources, and how these could encourage children's creativity and imaginative play. Outdoor experiences meant children were learning about the benefits of an active lifestyle that promoted their health and wellbeing.

The property was well maintained indoors and outdoors. Risk assessments were regularly reviewed and updated to ensure children's safety was promoted as 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 cleaning procedures meant that the spread of infection was kept to a minimum.

The childminder understood the importance of keeping children's personal information secure. We could see that children's personal plans were kept in a locked file. The childminder asked families for permission before taking photographs and shared their confidentiality policy with families using the service.

How good is our leadership?**4 - Good**

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

Quality indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvements are led well

The childminder had a clear vision and aim for the service, "to provide children with a home from home, in a nurturing environment." Their values were evident in the warm and responsive interactions observed during the inspection. One family told us that "Sarah is kind, she knows what children want and need and she's really fun." Another family said "I feel my child is happy and safe when in Sarah's care." The positive ethos meant that children felt loved, valued and respected.

Secure, trusting relationships had been established with children and families, and the childminder knew them well. The views of families were gathered through a variety of questionnaires and informal discussions with the childminder. These were used to influence the care provided and should be considered further as they begin to formally plan improvements within the service. We discussed the importance of

gathering and recording the views of children. This would help to ensure children and families felt involved and that their views were considered in developing the service.

The childminder should consider developing a more formal way to record their own evaluation of the service. We discussed ways for them to document their reflections and highlighted best practice guidance which could support this. For example, A Quality Framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school aged childcare and the Care Inspectorate bitesize resources. This could support the childminder to evaluate what is working well and may help to inform any further improvements.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

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

Quality indicator 4.1 - Staff skills, knowledge and values

The nurturing, warm and responsive interactions we witnessed supported children to feel loved and secure. The childminder understood the importance of listening to children and families. This enabled them to build relationships and provide appropriate care and support for individuals. As a result children's emotional wellbeing benefitted from strong, positive attachments.

Responsive care, comfort and reassurance given to children throughout the inspection clearly demonstrated their developing attachments with the childminder. The rights of the child were promoted and evident in the childminders practice and in their interactions with children. As a result children were confident as their overall wellbeing was supported and their needs were being met.

The enthusiastic childminder had a good understanding of child development. They were mindful of this as they planned learning experiences. They ensured activities were age and stage appropriate but also offered challenge for children. The childminder was committed to their own continuous professional development. They were proactive in sourcing information using best practice documents and attending online sessions. This supported positive outcomes for children as the care they received was based on current guidance. The childminder should record their learning and evaluate the impact it had on their service and outcomes for children. This will help them to identify further training opportunities.

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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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