

Mathewson, Amanda

Child Minding

Dunfermline

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 August 2023

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2003904564

Service no:
CS2003007613

About the service

Amanda Mathewson operates a childminding service from their home in a residential area of Dunfermline, Fife. The childminder may provide care to a maximum of eight children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of six will be under 12, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months.

The service offers children indoor space to play and rest in the open plan kitchen-dining-sitting area. There is direct access to toilet facilities on the same level. Children have access to the fully enclosed garden to the rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 7 August 2023 between 12:30 and 15:00. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

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

Key messages

- Children were cared for in a comfortable, welcoming and homely environment.
- Children had regular access to fresh air and exercise as they played and made use of local outdoor spaces.
- Positive, trusting relationships had been established with children and families.
- Children were cared for with warmth, kindness and a nurturing approach.
- The childminder offered a variety of home cooked meals and snacks for 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 these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children were cared for with warmth, kindness and a nurturing approach. They experienced care which was well considered to meet their individual needs. The childminder knew children and families very well. They took into account personal preferences and personalities, which ensured the care provided met the needs of individuals. One family told us that the childminder, "has a holistic approach and nurtures each child as an individual." Another family said, "the care is always geared towards the needs of each individual child." This resulted in children being happy and relaxed as their overall wellbeing was supported and their needs were being met.

The childminder offered a variety of home cooked meals and snacks for children. They used best practice guidance to support nutritious choices and explained how children were involved in menu planning. Children were encouraged and supported to develop important life skills as they helped to buy and prepare ingredients. This provided rich opportunities for children to learn the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle.

We did not observe mealtimes during the inspection. However, the childminder described how everyone came together to eat in a relaxed and unhurried manner. The childminder explained how they sat with children as they chatted and ensured children were safe. This provided children with a positive social experience and promoted 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 SHANARRI 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 were supported to access activities offered in response to their needs and interests. We observed the childminder responding warmly to children's verbal and non-verbal requests. For example, the childminder understood when younger children quietly communicated that they were ready to move on to another activity. The childminder was prepared and well-resourced to offer children, of all ages, enjoyable experiences that would interest and challenge them. Children told us that they liked coming to the childminder's and playing with their friends. Families said, "she provides a stimulating, differentiated and structured day and caters for all needs - nothing is too much." This ensured all children felt included, and promoted children's choice and independence.

The local community was regularly used to extend children's experiences. They had fun as they visited parks, explored nature and made use of local amenities. As a result children's opportunities for play and learning were improved as they developed strong connections to their own and wider communities.

Observations and photographs were used to record children's learning. This supported the childminder to plan possible next steps for learning opportunities and highlighted children's progress. Floorbooks further evidenced children's experiences and the fun they had. These also gave children opportunities to record their ideas, thoughts and reflect on their achievements. This promoted children's sense of pride and self-esteem as they shared and celebrated their successes.

The childminder recognised the importance of sharing information with families. They used daily diaries to communicate and describe what younger children's days had involved. For example, they detailed what they had eaten throughout the day, if they had slept and the fun they had had. Families were encouraged to share information from home in the same way, or through informal conversations at drop off and pick up times. This meant that children and families were supported by a childminder who understood the importance of routines to support children's wellbeing.

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 were cared for in a comfortable, welcoming and homely environment that offered them space to play and relax. The open plan kitchen-dining-sitting area was well organised and provided ample space to play, eat and rest. Children's independence was encouraged as they accessed toileting facilities on the same floor. The carefully considered layout enabled children to lead their play and 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. We observed children playing and having fun in the enclosed, secure garden at the rear of the property. Due to the number of steps leading into the garden, younger children were supervised and supported by the childminder to safely access this area. Children also had regular access to fresh air and exercise as they played and made use of local outdoor spaces. Outdoor experiences meant children were learning about nature and the benefits of an active lifestyle, that promoted their health and wellbeing.

The property was well maintained indoors and outdoors. Infection prevention and control measures were in place. Regular cleaning of toys and resources meant the spread of infection was minimised. Handwashing at key times should be encouraged to further enhance infection prevention and control measures.

We suggested the childminder explored developing more detailed risk assessments for the service. We discussed how involving children in the development of risk benefit assessments would provide opportunities for them to learn important life skills. This would also ensure potential risks were identified and minimised as children enjoyed the variety of experiences offered by the service.

The childminder understood the importance of keeping children's personal information secure. They asked families for permission before displaying or sharing photographs of children and followed General Data Protection guidance to ensure appropriate systems were in place.

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvements are led well

The childminder had a clear vision and aim for the service, "to provide a safe, caring and happy place for children." Their values were evident in the kind, nurturing and respectful interactions observed during the inspection. The childminder told us that children and their families were very much like part of a big family. Families said, "we all just love Amanda, she is such a fun, loving person and the children are so happy at Amanda's 'Happy House'. I wish Amanda lived with us!" and "she creates a safe, fun and inclusive environment in her home." The positive ethos meant that children felt loved, valued and respected.

Positive, trusting relationships had been established with children and families and the childminder knew them well. Their views were gathered through observations, informal discussions and questionnaires. These were used to influence the care provided and were considered when planning improvements within the service. The childminder also made good use of the Care Inspectorates' document, A Quality Framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school aged childcare. This supported them to reflect on the service they provided and helped to identify potential areas for improvement. As a result children and families felt involved and respected as their views informed the care provided.

The childminder had developed working relationships with the local authority and the Scottish Childminding Association. They worked in partnership with Fife council to provide funded childcare for some children. This meant that children experienced high quality care and support from a service that was dedicated to meeting their needs.

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 kind, compassionate and fun interactions we witnessed supported children to feel loved and secure. The childminder understood the importance of listening to children and families. Regular communication with families meant that the childminder was able to respond to individual needs and preferences. This enabled them to build strong relationships and provided appropriate care and support. As a result children's emotional wellbeing benefitted from positive attachments.

The skilled and knowledgeable childminder demonstrated a very good understanding of how children develop and learn. They had achieved a recognised early learning and childcare qualification and were motivated to continue their professional development. They explained how they had sourced and attended relevant training courses to ensure they had skills to support children. Families valued this and told us, "Amanda demonstrates an excellent knowledge of current theories and documents and is regularly undertaking courses to develop the children's experiences." This meant that children were cared for with warmth, kindness and a nurturing approach.

Responsive care, comfort and reassurance given to children throughout the inspection demonstrated their attachment with the childminder. This meant children were happy and relaxed as their overall wellbeing was supported and their needs were being 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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