

Carol's Childminding Service

Child Minding

Falkirk

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 August 2023

Service provided by:
Carol Christie

Service provider number:
SP2017989189

Service no:
CS2017358188

About the service

Carol Christie trades as Carol's Childminding Service and provides a care service from their family home in a residential area of Falkirk. The childminder is registered to provide care to a maximum of six children at any one time aged under 16 years, 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 service is close to local amenities including green spaces, shops, the local nursery and school. The service is delivered from the ground floor of the family home and children have access to the living room, bathroom and an enclosed garden to the rear of the property. Children also access a kitchen/dining area under supervision.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, which took place on 15 August 2023 between 13:00 and 15:15. A second visit was made on 17 August 2023 between 9:45 and 10:45, feedback was given during this visit. 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 two children using the service
- Gathered feedback from two parents and carers
- Spoke with the childminder
- Observed practice
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing, compassionate and responsive care.
- Children were happy, confident and having fun in a homely care setting.
- Play and learning experiences promoted individual development and wellbeing.
- Trusting relationships promoted positive partnership working with families.
- The childminder was skilled and passionate about offering children high-quality experiences.
- Young children could be offered increased opportunities to express their views.
- Quality assurance systems should be formalised to support continuous improvement.

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 made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on the children's experiences.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children experienced compassionate care. Nurturing interactions contributed to their feeling of being safe, loved and well cared for. Trusting relationships promoted children's confidence as they remained happy and settled in the childminder's care.

The childminder knew the children very well and quickly responded to their immediate needs. Gathering important information enabled the childminder to provide the right level of care and continually support their individual wellbeing. Effective working with families helped to develop specific strategies when additional support was needed. This promoted continuity of care. One parent told us, "My child has thrived in the small, nurturing setting that Carol has provided to our family."

The childminder skilfully listened to the children and sensitively responded to their individual cues when seeking reassurance. Gentle discussions and specific books encouraged children to explore their feelings and emotions. This promoted positive mental health and demonstrated respect for children's individual wellbeing. The childminder was in the process of developing tools to further promote children's learning and understanding of their emotions. This will deepen children's feeling of security in the childminder's care.

Personal care was sensitively supported, promoting children's independence, privacy and dignity. Parents strongly agreed they were happy with the care and support their children received in the service.

Children enjoyed unhurried and sociable mealtimes. The childminder sat with the children, role modelling positive eating habits. Healthy snacks and discussions promoted children's learning of keeping themselves fit and well. Children were developing important life skills as they set the table and laid out their own packed lunches. They could be given more opportunities to plan and prepare snacks. This will promote independence and ownership of the mealtime experience.

Effective systems supported the safe administration of medication. The childminder should now update medication procedures to ensure all relevant information is gathered as detailed in the best practice document 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services'.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Daily activities and experiences were planned well based on a good knowledge of children's individual interests and current needs. This promoted learning through play and by having fun. Enhanced recording of individual learning and identified next steps will provide clear tracking and evaluation systems to support continued development progress. This will also guide the planning of future experiences.

Children were given good opportunities to make suggestions about daily activities. For example, a child showed great interest in fire engines. Chatting with the children helped the childminder plan activities to extend their learning about fire engines and firefighters. The childminder should now consider how young children could further contribute to the daily planning. For example, the use of visual tools. This will strengthen children's voice, ownership of their time in the service and further show children their views matter.

Children's learning was promoted through a range of activities and experiences. Language and literacy skills were encouraged as the children enjoyed selecting books to look through and read with the childminder. Their love of books was evident as they listened to stories, anticipating familiar words and rhymes. The childminder skilfully asked questions to deepen the children's thinking about the stories and characters in the books. The children enjoyed making towers with bricks and worked well together to solve challenging problems. Open ended and natural materials such as wood and blankets supported play and creativity as the children explored what they could do with these materials. Parents strongly agreed their children had opportunities to be involved in meaningful, interesting and fun play experiences. One parent commented "I love the fun environment that Carol provides my child which enables them to thrive and develop."

Children enjoyed regular use of nearby parks, walks in the surrounding area, visits to the library and trips to the local shops. This promoted a positive connection with their local community.

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.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

The childminder created a warm, welcoming, clean and homely environment for children and families. Soft seating gave children comfortable spaces where could rest and relax. This enabled them to set their own pace of day and supported emotional wellbeing.

The lay out of the living room, dining area and garden had been well considered to enable children to move freely between play spaces. Children independently accessed and explored the wide range of activities available. This promoted individual choice and supported children to lead their own play and learning. Parents were happy with the care environment provided and made positive comments about the range of indoor and outdoor activities.

Effective monitoring and maintenance of the care setting reduced the risk of harm and kept children safe. To further promote children's safety the childminder could enhance the level of information detailed in the risk assessments to include outings and trips within the local area.

Children experienced some opportunities to enjoy risky play. This encouraged exploration and children's understanding of keeping themselves safe while enjoying new challenges. This is an area of play that could be developed to support continued learning and enhanced experiences. We highlighted the guidance document 'My World Outdoors.' This will support the childminder to enhance risky play activities.

Children were supported well to follow and understand good hand washing practice and respiratory hygiene. Effective actions were taken to prevent the spread of infection and protect children's health and continued wellbeing.

Appropriate measures were taken to protect the privacy and dignity of children and families. This included safe storage of personal information and confidential spaces where families could speak to the childminder. This gave families confidence that information about them and their child would only be shared with relevant people.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on the children's experiences.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led.

Children's experiences reflected the childminder's personal aims and objectives for their service. This included providing a homely environment where children felt safe, welcomed and nurtured.

Positive communication and trusting relationships enabled effective information sharing between parents and the childminder. This meant families were kept informed about their child's experiences and what was happening in the service. Sharing written policies, procedures and any planned changes meant families knew what to expect from the service.

The childminder was reflective of their service and the care and support provided. Regular questionnaires, daily chats and contact through electronic messaging encouraged families to express their views and contribute to the development of the service. For example, parents had suggested increased opportunities for outdoor activities. The childminder listened to these comments and took good action to ensure children enjoyed daily outside experiences. Chatting to children and observing them supported the childminder to gather their views of the care setting. To encourage young children to further express their thoughts, the childminder should consider additional ways they and their families could be involved in evaluating the service.

The childminder was planning to develop their skills and knowledge relevant to early learning and childcare. We suggested they create a formal way to record identified strengths and planned improvements. This will help the childminder to clearly track and monitor action plans and continually evaluate the progress. We guided the childminder to the improvement section on the 'HUB' within our website. We also discussed the 'Quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare.' Using this document will support the childminder to drive enhanced outcomes for children.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on the children's experiences.

Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge, and values.

The childminder's compassionate approach supported children to feel valued, loved and secure. Nurturing relationships and supporting families encouraged an inclusive environment and demonstrated children were at the heart of the service.

Children were supported well to achieve their potential. The childminder's enabling attitude encouraged them to enjoy and celebrate their successes and achievements and those of others.

Children benefitted from the childminder's good understanding of child development and how they learn. Skilfully recognising the children's differing personalities and preferences meant care and support was tailored to promote individual routines, progress and development. This demonstrated respect for children and a keen desire to promote their overall wellbeing.

The childminder was passionate about maintaining and improving children's experiences through continually enhancing their own professional learning and development. They had successfully completed various training and spent time reviewing relevant best practice guidance documents. We encouraged the childminder continue their learning and highlighted current documents which can be found on the 'HUB' section of our website. This included 'Growing my Potential' and the 'Health and Social Care Standards - My support my life'.

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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