

# Childminder inspection report

**Cassidy, Maria**  
**Falkirk**

Service provided by: Cassidy, Maria

Service provider number: SP2006961951

Care service number: CS2006137361

Inspection Type: Announced (Short Notice)

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# 1 Introduction

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

Maria Cassidy is registered to provide a childminding service to a maximum of 8 children at any time under the age of 16 with no more than 6 children up to 12 years, no more than 3 not yet attending primary school and no more than 1 being under 12 months. This is inclusive of children who are members of Ms Cassidy's family. Ms Cassidy's partner, Scott Johnstone is an assistant in the service.

The service is provided from a two storey family house located in Camelon, close to local schools, nurseries and other community facilities. Internally, the children have access to the lounge, kitchen and downstairs toilet. Externally, children can access the safely enclosed garden.

At the time of the inspection, three children of school age were registered with the service, one of whom was present on the day of the inspection.

In summary the main aims of the service as stated by Ms Cassidy are; to provide a caring and safe environment for children in which they can learn and grow.

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service. We want to ensure they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it right for every child (also known as GIRFEC). Set up by Scottish Government, GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people. It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people - and what they can do to improve. Getting it right for every child is being woven into all policy, practice, strategy and legislation that affect children, young people and their families.

There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it right for every child. They are: safe; healthy; achieving; nurtured; active; respected; responsible; and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI indicators, We use

these indicators at inspection, to assess how services are making a positive difference for children.

### **What we did during our inspection**

We wrote this report following a short announced inspection. The inspection was carried out by one inspector on Tuesday 28 July 2015, between 10.00 am and 12.30 pm. We provided feedback to the childminder at the end of this visit.

As part of the inspection, we took account of the completed annual return and self assessment that we asked the service to complete and submit to us.

We sent three care standard questionnaires to the service to distribute to parents, all of which were completed and returned prior to our inspection.

During the inspection, we spoke to the childminder and the child in her care.

We observed how the childminder worked with the child and considered their experiences and activities.

We looked at a range of documentation used in the provision of the service, including records and photographs which helped to evidence how the childminder managed her service and planned to meet the individual needs of the children in her care.

### **Views of people using the service**

There were two school aged children present during the course of our inspection one of whom was the childminder's eldest daughter and the other a nine year old minded child. We observed the children play together throughout our visit and spoke to them both. They were playing a range of different card games and were having great fun together.

The minded child was clearly relaxed and happy in the childminder's care. He was happy to tell the inspector about some of his experiences and activities with the childminder, her family and the other minded children.

We looked together at the photograph albums and saw examples of a wide range of activities that children regularly participated in together. We saw how

they enjoyed extensive opportunities to be creative, with activities such as painting, drawing, craft and baking.

Children independently chose their board games and sports activities. They regularly experienced trips and outings locally and further afield. They often celebrated birthdays and special occasions together, along with other family members.

Three parents returned care standards questionnaires before we completed our inspection. All expressed their complete satisfaction with all aspects of the service. They praised the quality of care and support their children received and could not be any happier with the childminding service. They told us:

"Having previously had a very poor experience of childminding, I have been delighted with the quality of the service provided to my son. ....he genuinely looks forward to spending time at her house. and always has positive feedback about his experiences there."

"Our son loves going there and thrives in the environment she creates...she does a fantastic job and we love her almost as much as our son does."

We include further views and comments throughout this report where relevant.

### Self assessment

Every year all care services complete a 'self assessment' telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this is accurate.

The childminder submitted a completed self assessment for her service. The childminder told us about some of the things she did well and some areas she planned to develop in her service. This provided a useful insight to the service before we carried out our inspection.

### What the service did well

The childminder provided an exceptionally high quality service for the children in her care. She genuinely welcomed children into her home and set out to care for them in a warm, caring and nurturing family environment, where they were valued as individuals. We could see that she had formed strong attachments with all the children in her care and that their health, happiness and wellbeing were her primary concern.

The childminder provided a wide range of experiences to meet children's different needs and interests. She spent time with the children in her care, both individually and as a group. She joined in their play and had fun with them. She chatted, listened, reassured, supported and advised them very confidently and this resulted in children feeling respected and valued.

She excelled in working with them to identify and develop their own interests, skills and abilities, so that they had opportunities to experience personal achievements and to grow in confidence.

The childminder had established excellent relationships with families using her service and ongoing communication meant that these families were fully involved and included in all aspects of their children's care and wellbeing during their time with the childminder.

The childminder regularly kept up to date with training courses and on-line training.

We found that the childminder continually strived to make improvements to benefit the children and families using her service. She used evaluation processes to help her identify where she might improve. This helped her be objective about her service and target her areas for development.

### **What the service could do better**

We have discussed with the childminder that she could use personal reading and research to further inform and evaluate her practice. Personal reading is a valid form of personal development and training. Good practice guidance, articles and journals can be referenced regularly and provide valuable information that can benefit childminder, children and families in a variety of different situations. The childminder should keep a date record of any personal reading and research and note any positive effects on her service.

## **2 The grades we awarded**

We grade the quality of care and support, the quality of the environment and the quality of management and leadership. If the childminder employs an

assistant, we also grade the quality of staffing. In each case, we award a grade on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent.

<b>Quality of care and support</b>	<b>6 - Excellent</b>
<b>Quality of environment</b>	<b>5 - Very Good</b>
<b>Quality of staffing</b>	
<b>Quality of management and leadership</b>	<b>5 - Very Good</b>

### 3 Quality of care and support

#### Findings from the inspection

We graded the service as excellent in the quality of care and support provided to children and their families.

All parents using the service highly praised the quality of care and support their children received. They strongly agreed with all of the statements contained in our questionnaires and from their written responses we saw how much they valued the service. They told us:

"We are delighted with the service Maria provides."

"Our son loves going there and thrives in the environment she creates."

"We are always confident and happy for him to be with Maria."

"She does a fantastic job and we love her almost as much as our son does."

Our discussions with the childminder reflected her aims and intentions to extend her caring family home to include her minded children and we thought that this was clearly evident in the way she included the children in planning and decision-making. She described in detail how she welcomed children and encouraged them to feel part of the family home. Our discussions with the child present on the day confirmed that this was working well. He told us:

"Yes it's really good here! We do lots together, play games, make things and have fun. Maria always asks me what I would like to do and we all like to do things together."

As we looked through the photographs in the album, he pointed out "Oh Yes - that's the hot tub we bought. Playing in it was great fun and we didn't get freezing like in a paddling pool!"

"That's the museum in Edinburgh, we went on the train - it was fantastic. I think we might be planning to go there again!"

The childminder told us that the boys were, "very good at maths and science", and confirmed that they were certainly planning another trip to the museum. She told us, "One of the boys loves anything to do with space just now, so we have plans for that as well." It was clear that the childminder knew the boys and their interests very well and included them in making plans to encourage and develop their interests.

Our inspection found that that children were settled, confident and happy in the childminder's home and that strong attachments had been formed between the minded children, the childminder and her family. The childminder's overall approach with children and families cultivated a very warm, caring and nurturing environment, where children's views and thoughts were valued and respected.

The childminder consistently involved parents and children in the service they received. She recognised the values of effective communication and from the outset, she gathered information about children's routines, health needs, likes, dislikes and interests. As a result she knew the children in her care very well and put their needs at the centre of the service she provided. She continued to adapt and change care according to their personal growth and developing interests and following consultation with the children and their parents.

The childminder consistently shared information with parents about their children's well being, progress and achievements. She had introduced personal plans and reviewed these regularly to ensure that information was updated and this contributed to the overall quality of children's experiences.

One parent told us:

"I am confident with every aspect of care Maria provides for XXXXX (child). I am



regularly updated about any changes and/or upcoming events." XXXXX is very happy and comfortable and feels very much part of the family."

The childminder provided children with water, fruit juice and fruit as part of the service but does not provide hot food. She encourages parents to provide their children with healthy snacks and packed lunches during school holidays. She promotes children's awareness of eating healthily and from time to time encourages them to play food tasting games which they enjoy. The childminder is knowledgeable about the Foods Standards Agency and refers to nutritional guidance information as necessary.

The childminder had appropriate child protection policies and procedures in place. She knew what action to take if she had concerns in this area to keep children safe. She regularly updated training in child protection.

The childminder took responsibility for supporting children's learning about personal safety. This includes stranger danger, road safety and being responsible.

Since the last inspection the childminder had updated her policy and practice in relation to medication. She had downloaded the document, management of medication in day care and childminding services and used this to update her policy.

The childminder demonstrated an excellent approach in supporting children to respect themselves and each other. She helped them to mix socially with others, supported their learning in how to resolve issues which might occur and how to compromise with each other.

As a result of this, we felt that children learned important values that they could use in everyday life to help them respect each other and develop friendships.

Our discussions with the childminder, we evidenced that she was knowledgeable and comfortable in talking about Getting it right for every child and the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators and that she took account of these in assessing the outcomes and experiences of the children she looked after.

### Grade

**The quality of care and support is graded 6 - Excellent**

## Requirements

Number of requirements - 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 0

## 4 Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

We found that the quality of the environment was very good.

In the returned parental questionnaires, parents strongly agreed that the environment was safe, secure, hygienic, smoke free, pleasant and stimulating for their children. They thought that there was plenty of space for their children to play with a suitable range of toys and activities and confirmed that they could choose their activities. They were pleased with the children's access to fresh air and energetic physical play and their use of local facilities and trips and outings.

We saw many examples of children visiting local parks and places of interest, such as the Falkirk Wheel and the Helix park, as well as special trips and outings. Children confirmed that they were included and involved in planning their activities.

We found that children were cared for in a safe, clean and child friendly environment. Children played in the living room and kitchen areas as well as outdoors in the garden. Resources were accessible to promote children's choice and for them to independently select what they wanted to play. As a result they were involved, able to choose and have their views respected. They told us that they usually liked to do a lot of things together.

We saw that the childminder made effective use of the space in her home and garden to ensure that daily routines and activities met the needs of children in her care. Children felt very much at home in the childminding environment. Their art and craft work was displayed in the kitchen, promoting their sense of belonging as well as celebrating their achievements.

The childminder had updated her service policies and procedures, including for example those on health and safety, risk assessments, infection control and emergency procedures. These clearly outlined the measures taken to maintain a safe and suitable environment. The childminder carried out risk assessments for her service and put suitable measures in place to reduce risks where required. She had introduced new risk assessments as necessary, for example for use of the trampoline and the hot tub and for outings and trips. Also, where parents asked for children to have increased responsibility and independence as they matured, the childminder used the risk assessment process to help reduce any risks attached to activities, for example riding their bike home from school.

Appropriate measures were in place to manage safety in the childminder's home, for example, medication, cleaning materials and hazardous substances were kept out of children's reach and stored securely. The childminder paid very good attention to maintaining safety, cleanliness and hygiene in her home and as a result parents could have confidence that their children's safety and wellbeing was prioritised.

She kept the home tidy and encouraged children to follow some simple house rules which helped to maintain a safe environment. We advised that the childminder could date record her ongoing reviews of home and garden risk assessments. This would help to show that existing risk assessments were regularly subject to review.

Resources were plentiful, varied, suitable for the children attending and well maintained.

Infection control practice in the service was very good and service policies provided details of good practice, for example, cleaning and maintenance of toys and equipment used in the service, handwashing, nappy changing procedures and exclusion periods for children who were ill.

We found that the childminder accessed training to regularly update her skills and knowledge and this contributed positively to a safe environment for children. An example of this was a valid first aid certificate, meaning that she could respond appropriately to minor accidents and injuries when necessary.

### Grade

The quality of environment is graded 5 - Very Good

### Requirements

Number of requirements - 0

### Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 0

## 5 Quality of staffing

We only assess this where the childminder employs an assistant.

## 6 Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

We graded the service as very good in this quality statement.

The childminder has several years experience in childcare and childminding. Over this time she has continued to develop a professional approach to running her business. She has become increasingly skilled in using evaluation, assessment and review techniques to help her identify areas for improvement.

The childminder has acted upon the recommendations and advice made as a result of inspection. She regularly attends training and seeks feedback from the children and families who use her service. Consequently, these processes also help her to further develop the quality of the service she provides.

Since the last inspection, we found that the childminder had reviewed and updated her service policies and procedures to ensure they better reflected the service she provides.

The childminder had amended policies to take account of good practice guidance in the management of medication.

She had introduced personal plans for the children in her care. These included individual files for each child containing child information records, all about me forms, signed permissions for taking children on outings, taking photographs and giving medication when instructed to do so by parents. Gathering and using information in this way meant that information was appropriately stored, accessible and able to be updated as necessary.

These changes and updates demonstrated the childminder's ongoing commitment to improving outcomes and experiences for children and families.

The childminder sought parents and children's views formally through questionnaires and informally through daily discussion. This helped her to evaluate what was working well in her service. Feedback from both children and parents was very positive and we saw some very touching comments contained in thank you letters and cards received from children and families over time, which evidenced just how much families valued and appreciated the care, attention and support received from the childminder.

To promote good quality care, the childminder showed commitment to keeping her skills and knowledge up to date through regular access to training and personal development. Most recently she had updated child protection, food hygiene and first aid training as well as getting it right for every child. We found that the childminder had a comprehensive understanding of the needs and developmental stages of young children.

The childminder had access to a range of good practice guidance including 'Setting the Table' and Building the Ambition. She was familiar with the Care inspectorate Hub website and uses this to refer to good practice guidance. We discussed 'Building the Ambition' document with her and advised that she might make use of this in her work with pre-school children in the future.

The childminder had a clear complaints policy, which was made available to parents and families.

Overall parents showed confidence in the quality of the childminding service. They were comfortable in their relationships with the childminder and found her to be reliable, trustworthy, approachable and helpful at all times. They were confident that the welfare of their children was her first priority.

### Grade

The quality of management and leadership is graded 5 - Very Good

### Requirements

Number of requirements - 0

### Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 0

## 7 What the service has done to meet any recommendations or requirements we made at our last inspection

### Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

### Previous recommendations

1. Ms Cassidy should develop a policy which sets out the service arrangements for working with children's personal plans.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standards 4, 5 and 7.

**This recommendation was made on 07 August 2013**

The childminder has introduced personal plans for the children in her care, although has not introduced a specific service policy. She has identified this as an oversight and has agreed to formulate a policy relating to personal plans to share with parents.

2. Ms Cassidy should review and update her policy on the care of sick children to ensure that it complies with up to date best practice guidance.

**National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 2.4: A Safe Environment.**

**This recommendation was made on 07 August 2013**

The childminder has reviewed and updated her policy and it now complies with good practice guidance.

**3. Ms Cassidy should further develop her policy on medication taking account of the guidance, 'Management of Medication in Day Care and Childminding Services'.**

**This recommendation was made on 07 August 2013**

The childminder has reviewed and updated her policy and it now complies with good practice guidance.

## 8 Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## 9 Enforcements

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection

## 10 Other issues

## 11 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
7 Aug 2013	Announced (Short Notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good Not Assessed
14 Oct 2009	Announced (Short Notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	6 - Excellent Not Assessed 6 - Excellent Not Assessed
8 Dec 2008	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent



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