

Rafferty, Melanie

Child Minding

Dollar

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 February 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2009976492

Service no:
CS2009235291

About the service

Melanie Rafferty operates a childminding service from their family home in Pool of Muchart, Dollar. They are registered to provide care to a maximum of six children when working alone and 10 children when working with an assistant of whom, no more than 10 are under 12 years. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 21 February 2024 between 14:45 and 17:15. Feedback was given following the inspection. 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 using the service
- spoke with three families on the day and received feedback via an electronic link for six families
- spoke with the childminder and assistant
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children experienced warm and caring interactions that supported their wellbeing.
- Children were happy and having fun as they chose from a range of resources.
- Well maintained and comfortable spaces supported children to lead their play with friends.
- Positive partnership working between the service and families had been made.
- Effective infection, prevention and control measures were embedded, and children were confident in these routines.
- Children benefitted from regular connections with nature.
- Children should have opportunities to be more involved in mealtime routines.
- The service must ensure they are operating within their conditions of registration at all times.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
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, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced caring approaches from the childminder and the assistant who knew each child's likes and preferences. They were calm and responded with warmth and reassurance. As a result, children experienced positive interactions.

The childminder and assistant were attuned to children's needs. This resulted in positive attachments being formed. Families felt the childminder knew children well, was kind and caring and flexible in the service offered. This meant that children had built positive relationships and felt safe in the setting.

Effective communication with families meant that the childminder worked in partnership with parents. This enabled them to meet children's needs, resulting in children experiencing positive and effective links between home and the service. Families told us they appreciated the service and felt lucky to have the service in the village.

Personal plans were in place for children and had been reviewed with families in line with guidance. We encouraged the service to involve children in this process. This would ensure that what matters to them is recorded and planned for.

Children experienced a relaxed and sociable snack time. They told us they enjoyed homemade flapjacks, toast, and pancakes. Snacks were prepared by the childminder and assistant. Children had some opportunities to take on leadership roles as they helped serve foods. This routine should be further developed to support children in preparing foods, giving them opportunities to develop independence and skills for life (see area for improvement 1.)

The service had a system in place for recording and administering medication. At the time of our visit, no children required medication. We were confident this would be managed effectively should medication be needed to support children's healthcare needs.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy, settled, and confident to explore the play spaces. They chose from activities that had been provided to meet their interests. Children told us "Everything is good, Mel is kind", "I like we get to choose what we want to do or relax".

Play resources were of a high standard and age appropriate. The childminder had thought about toys and activities for older children, supporting all children to play, learn and achieve their potential. Children told us they liked the variety of activities, and their favourite resources were Lego and the computer. They played for sustained periods of time at the Lego, creating their ideas. The use of technology was well managed to ensure children experienced a breadth of different play types in the session. As a result, children were happy and having fun.

Children benefitted from engaging with nature in the wider community every day. They were supported to access the local park and community woods promoting their physical development. They also walked to, and from school along a path between green spaces. This offered children opportunities to climb the small hill and ensured they benefitted from fresh air before and after school. Children told us they enjoyed the outdoor activities they took part in during holiday club. This included den building, cooking on the fire pit and trips out. As a result, children developed a connection with nature.

Planning approaches were informal, and child led. Children were asked how they would like to spend their time in the setting. They told us they tell the childminder what they would like to do, and resources are provided. The childminder was aware that for some children they need to rest and relax after a day in school. Spaces offered them this opportunity. This supported their wellbeing.

Areas for improvement

1. The service should review their current mealtime routine to ensure experiences promote independence and offer children more opportunities to develop skills for life.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'If appropriate, I can choose to make my own meals, snacks and drinks, with support if I need it, and can choose to grow, cook and eat my own food where possible'(HSCS 1.38)

How good is our setting?

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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced an environment that was clean, comfortable, homely, and well maintained. Regular safety checks had been carried out that included children taking part in practice evacuations of the setting.

The setting benefited from natural light. Children were able to sit and enjoy looking out onto green spaces that offered a sense of calm and relaxation.

Resources were clean and easily accessible to support child led play. As a result, children were able to make independent choices. The outdoor areas to the front and back of the house provided safe play spaces and were easily accessible from the Livingroom.

Detailed risk assessments were in place and had been reviewed regularly. These stated how any potential risks to children would be managed. We encouraged the service to involve children in this process to support them to develop an understanding of how to manage risks in their everyday experiences.

The childminder had detailed policies in place to support the delivery of the service. We encouraged the service as part of their continued review process to ensure policies reflect current practice.

Children benefitted from a service that promoted their health and wellbeing. Infection, prevention, and control guidance was followed. Children had access to the bathroom on the ground floor for handwashing and personal care. They spoke confidently about their hand hygiene routines and why this was important.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are led well

Children and families experienced a welcoming, warm, and happy ethos from the childminder and assistant. The setting offered a homely experience where children were able to relax and enjoy time with friends.

There were strong connections between the childminder and families that promoted partnership working. Parents told us that the childminder was very accommodating, supportive, and children loved going. This supported positive outcomes for children as their care routines were well managed between home and the service.

The childminder used questionnaires to gather the views of children and families to support the evaluation of the service. Regular contact with parents and informal communications meant families influenced the care provided. The childminder and assistant recognised they did not record areas that were suggested for improvement on a development plan but were responsive in improving outcomes for children. We signposted the service to the Care Inspectorate document 'A Quality Framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school aged childcare.' This would support with the ongoing self-evaluation of the service.

The childminder may provide care for a maximum of ten children when working with an assistant. On the day of our visit, we found that the number of children being cared for exceeded this. As a result, the childminder was not operating the service based on the conditions of registration. We highlighted the potential risk that this could pose to children's safety and wellbeing. The childminder must ensure they are operating within their conditions of registration at all times (See requirement 1.) We asked the childminder to notify the Care Inspectorate that conditions of registration had not been exceeded. The service responded as requested.

Requirements

1. With immediate effect, the childminder must ensure the safety and wellbeing of children is maintained by delivering their service within the constraints of the conditions of registration as stated on the service certificate. This should include but is not limited to ensuring the number of children cared for at any time does not exceed the number stated on the registration.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

How good is our staff team?

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 4.3: Staff deployment

The childminder offered a service with the support of an assistant who was named on their registration. They worked together to offer care before and after school and during holiday periods. Children told us they enjoyed trips out, den building in the woods and nature walks during extended time in the service. As a result, children had fun.

The childminder and assistant worked effectively as a team to meet children's needs. They were clear about their roles and responsibilities and deployed themselves to ensure routines were established. As a result, children experienced care and support that was consistent and individual to them.

Children and families experienced a transition programme that met children's needs. It was important to the childminder that the service was right for the child and the child's views should be listened to. During our visit one family shared their child was visiting to support them to settle into the setting. The child told us they liked coming and wanted to attend more days.

Children benefitted from positive interactions as the childminder and assistant deployed themselves to meet children's preferences. Busier times of the day were managed well to offer families time to talk with the childminder, updating them with important information.

The childminder and assistant demonstrated commitment to their training and development. Courses included Fire safety training, first aid, child protection and promoting equality and diversity. They used learning from training to offer children varied learning 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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