

# Smith, Wilma Child Minding

Banff

**Type of inspection:**  
Announced (short notice)

**Completed on:**  
14 February 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Wilma Smith

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003900726

**Service no:**  
CS2003002104

## About the service

The childminder provides a service from a terraced house in a coastal village in Banffshire. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children up to the age of 16 years of age. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

The service is close to local schools, parks, the coast and other amenities. The children are cared for in a family home and have access to a dining kitchen, lounge, spare bedroom, bathroom, and an enclosed outdoor area.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 13 February, 12:00 to 15:45. 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 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:

- Observed interactions between the children and the childminder
- Spoke with the childminder
- Looked around the childminder's home and garden
- Reviewed documents and records.

## Key messages

- The childminder provided a warm, nurturing care experience where children and their families were valued and respected.
- Children benefited from play experiences indoors and outside in the local community, that met their needs and interests.
- Daily communication with families supported the childminder to meet the needs of all children in the service.
- The childminder should engage with current best practice guidance, to ensure that their service continues to meet the individual needs of children and families.

## 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 outweighed areas for improvement.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were cared for in a homely, comfortable and clean environment. They were happy and settled, and benefited from positive, caring interactions with the childminder. One parent told us, "The childminder gives the children lots of time and attention and provides lots of opportunities to learn and gain life skills." As a result, children were supported to feel confident and secure.

The childminder had gathered information about children's preferences and interests from parents and as a result, knew the children well. They used this information to plan daily activities and to ensure that children were happy and having fun. They shared detailed written accounts of younger children's days in their daily diaries and exchanged information at pick up and drop off times for all children. This supported children's overall wellbeing.

Children experienced mealtimes that were relaxed and unhurried, around a table in the kitchen. All meals were provided by the childminder and parents told us that they valued this service. Children would benefit from more opportunities to help select, prepare and tidy away snack, to further build confidence and a shared sense of responsibility. We suggested that the childminder refer to best practice guidance documents for mealtimes to help with this. Water was available throughout the day to ensure children remained hydrated.

Children's individual sleep routines were supported by the childminder in agreement with families. We advised the childminder to review the spaces used for rest and sleep in line with best practice guidance, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children using the service.

Personal plans were in place to ensure that children's wellbeing was supported, and these were regularly reviewed. We suggested that additional emergency contact information be added to these plans, to ensure continuity of care should the need arise. Systems for storage of medications and for recording information about allergies were in place and this further supported children's health needs. We advised that templates for the administration of medication be reviewed to meet current best practice guidance.

The childminder had a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities for keeping children safe and protected. There was a written procedure for protecting children which was available for parents.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children were supported to learn and develop through play. On the day of inspection the children spent time on craft activities and played freely with cars and lorries. After lunch, books were shared and children enjoyed eating fairy cakes they had decorated earlier in the day. This offered the children a balance of planned and unstructured play and learning opportunities. The childminder rotated the toys and activities that were made available on a regular basis, and we discussed ways in which children could be more involved in these decisions. This would further help to ensure that children's interests and needs were at the centre of their play and learning.

The childminder made good use of the local community for further play and learning opportunities. For example, the children regularly visited local parks, and used the service bus to visit nearby towns and visitor attractions. Photos and mementos from these outings were displayed in the kitchen and children enjoyed sharing information about where they had been. Parents and children told us that they valued these opportunities to play outside. One of the children said, "I like walking and being outside," and a parent commented, "The children have fun and they get out a lot, I think all children benefit from outdoor time." As a result of these opportunities, children were encouraged to build strong connections with their community.

Children were supported by the childminder to share and take turns, which helped them to develop social skills and build friendships. Their development of language and numeracy skills was supported by the childminder through talking and role modelling, particularly at the craft table and when reading aloud to the younger children.

### How good is our setting?

### 4 - Good

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

Children were cared for in a home that was well furnished and had ample room for them to play in. The kitchen table was used for a craft and drawing activities while free play took place in the lounge area and hallway. A play kitchen was located in the utility room for further free play opportunities. A secure garden to the rear of the house provided opportunities for energetic play, including climbing frames and cars; however, the childminder shared that it was used less in the winter months due to ground conditions.

Indoors, toys and other play resources were well maintained and stored away when not in use. This meant that children were not always aware of the resources available to them. We discussed with the childminder the benefits of introducing a wider range of natural, open-ended resources, to replace toys as they come to the end of their useful lives. These resources, referred to as loose parts, would help to develop children's creativity and imagination, and support child-led learning.

Children were supported in a safe environment, as the childminder had appropriate infection prevention and control procedures in place. Parents told us that they strongly agreed with the statement, "My child is safe whilst in this setting." Nappy changing facilities were in place and gloves and aprons were available. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times. This helped to prevent the spread of infection. The childminder was registered with the local environmental health team as a food business. There was a cleaning procedure in place, however we discussed some amendments that required to be made to this. For example, the childminder should review how fabric surfaces were cleaned, particularly where children were using these for rest.

Risk assessments had been undertaken; however, they were not regularly reviewed. We suggested the childminder date and sign the risk assessments when she reviews and updates them. Furthermore, we suggested that children could be involved in creating and reviewing the risk assessments for the activities and outings they experience. This would support them to develop their awareness of managing risk, to keep themselves and others safe.

Children's information was securely stored and managed. Although the childminder was not routinely sharing information about children electronically, she was registered to do so with the appropriate body should the need arise.

## How good is our leadership?

### 3 - Adequate

We made an evaluation of adequate for this key question, where strengths just outweighed weaknesses.

The childminder had established trusting relationships with children's families, which allowed for open communication. Parents told us that the childminder provided a flexible service for the families they worked with. This demonstrated that they were responsive to the needs of the families they were providing a service to.

However, parents were not yet meaningfully involved in the development of the childminder's service. The childminder had asked parents for feedback on their service informally and through an annual questionnaire. However, the questions did not enable families to share specifically what they thought worked well and what needed to be improved. We recommended that the childminder should continue to develop ways of gathering children's and families' views (see area for improvement 1). For example, focusing on specific aspects of the service, for example mealtimes, or personal plans, or policies, would enable them to identify priorities for improving their service. This would also involve children and parents in making changes which lead to improved outcomes for children. The childminder shared with us that she was committed to improving her service and wanted the best outcomes for children. We signposted the childminder to the Care Inspectorate Quality Framework, which has a strong focus on self-evaluation and can support continuous improvement.

The childminder had a range of policies and procedures in place. Whilst these had been reviewed annually, they had not been reviewed against current best practice guidance. This meant that some of the information or approaches within them were outdated. We signposted the childminder to a number of publications which would support them to bring key policies into line with best practice. We suggested that reviews of these documents should be done in consultation with parents, and children where appropriate. This would offer another way to help parents understand the work and ethos of the childminding service.

#### Areas for improvement

1. To support the wellbeing and development of children, the childminder should ensure they access guidance and documents that support them in implementing best practice approaches. This should include, but is not limited to, developing systems for self-evaluation and quality assurance.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

## 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 outweighed areas for improvement.

The childminder had many years of childcare experience, and children in their care benefitted from a kind, caring and consistent approach. The childminder was responsive to the different stages of development of children and adapted their interactions to support children on an individual basis. For example, during a craft activity she adapted the level of support needed for three children of different ages. This meant that children were receiving nurturing and individualised support when it was needed, which helped them to

build their confidence.

The childminder was a member of a childminding support organisation which sent out regular updates on good practice and changes to legislation. We discussed ways in which she could use her membership along with the Care Inspectorate Hub and online resources such as 'Realising the Ambition, Being Me', as a way of continuing to improve her skills and knowledge and support the ongoing development of their service.

The childminder had completed a wide variety of training and development courses, including courses on child protection, additional support needs and food allergens. We encouraged the childminder to reflect on how the training she attended had impacted on her practice. We discussed how this could help identify future training needs, support improvement and provide positive outcomes for children.

## What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

### Areas for improvement

#### Previous area for improvement 1

To ensure a continuity of care, help meet children's needs and help keep children safe, the childminder must ensure children's records are complete, reviewed and updated with parents every six months or earlier if necessary.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.  
Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing and  
Standard 13: Improving the Service.

**This area for improvement was made on 16 February 2017.**

#### Action taken since then

Personal plans were in place for each child and these were regularly reviewed. We suggested adding additional emergency contact details to each plan.

This recommendation has been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

To help keep children safe, the childminder must complete a risk assessment for all children walking independently to and from school.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.  
Standard 2: A Safe Environment.

**This area for improvement was made on 16 February 2017.**

#### Action taken since then

Risk assessments for outings, travel by car and walking home from school unaccompanied were in place. These now need to be regularly reviewed and updated, involving children and families where appropriate.

This recommendation has been met.

## Previous area for improvement 3

To help keep children safe and well, the childminder should:

- (a) Update her infection and control policy in-line with current guidance
- (b) Purchase disposable aprons to deal with any bodily fluids or spillages.

The document Infection, Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings September 2015 should be used to review policies and procedures. This is found at: <http://www.documents.hps.scot.nhs.uk/hai/infection-control/guidelines/infection-prevention-controlchildcare-2015-v2.pdf> National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 2: A Safe Environment.

**This area for improvement was made on 16 February 2017.**

### Action taken since then

The infection prevention and control policy had been updated; however we recommended some additions to procedures, for example cleaning for fabric surfaces used by children for rest.

Aprons and gloves were in place alongside other items for nappy changing.

This recommendation has been met.

## 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).



## 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
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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