

# Smith, Helen Child Minding

Dunblane

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

**Completed on:**  
28 February 2024

**Service provided by:**

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003903156

**Service no:**  
CS2003005352

## About the service

Helen Smith is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six 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. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family.

The service is provided within a residential area of Dunblane. Local amenities include the local school, nursery, shops and parks. The service is delivered from the childminder's home with children accessing the lounge, kitchen and toilet. Children have access to the enclosed garden but tended to spend time in the local community after school.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection that took place on 28 February 2024 from 15:30 to 17:00. 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, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with two children using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice
- reviewed documents
- spoke with a parent when they collected a child.

## Key messages

- Children experienced warm and nurturing interactions with the childminder who provided kind and compassionate care and support.
- Children said they enjoyed being outdoors after school.
- Children and families felt included in the service as a result of the positive relationships that had been developed, and effective communication.
- The childminder should develop their self-evaluation and quality assurance procedures to highlight what they do well, how they know and what they have identified as areas for 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?	4 - 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 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 were treated with kindness and compassion. The childminder was calm and relaxed as they supported the children present. They knew children well and were able to tell us about the routines that supported their interests and preferences. This meant that care was tailored to meet children's needs and delivered in a respectful way. Chats with children about their feelings and their school day supported children's emotional wellbeing.

Children's overall health and wellbeing was supported by consistent routines that met their individual needs. Personal plans were in place for each child developed in consultation with families. Children received the right care and support at the right times. We could see that information was updated showing that the childminder responded quickly, sensitively and compassionately to the changing needs in each child's life. We would encourage the childminder to formally record each review of the personal plan to show this is carried out for every child at least once in each six month period. We suggested that the childminder include detail of what school aged children's next steps might be, and how they can be supported to achieve their goals. For example, recording their goal to learn a Burn's poem to recite at school.

Mealtimes were relaxed, unhurried and a sociable experience for children. The childminder chatted with children about their day at school during snack time. Children said they enjoyed having a snack outdoors when at the park after school. Children were respected and included through meaningful interactions.

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The childminder knew children well and was attuned to their individual needs. They planned experiences responding to children's interests and choices. School age children enjoyed a variety of age appropriate activities. The children chatted about the school trip one child had attended. They enjoyed drawing and playing games. All children enjoyed outdoor play and learning opportunities, spending time in the garden and in the local community.

The childminder had a good understanding of how children learn through play. They recognised their critical role in supporting children's current interests and choices. Using effective questioning and tuning into the needs of individual children supported inclusion, friendships and positive interactions. The childminder understood that children's health and wellbeing was supported by being outdoors after school.

The childminder had built trusting relationships with children and families. Engaging families in the service through effective communication ensured they felt included in their children's childminding experience. Daily chats and the use of social media provided opportunities for sharing information about children's experiences and their progress. Children's learning was valued and their achievements celebrated.

**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 a homely, comfortable environment that was clean and well maintained. The children were confident in the childminder's home. They relaxed in the lounge and played games on their chrome book. Children felt safe and secure in the setting.

Spending time in the local community supported children to be active. Being outdoors supported children's health and wellbeing. Children told us about the parks and walks they enjoyed. Children were able to take part in risky play experiences and explore the natural environment. They talked about taking part in an egg hunt locally as part of the Easter celebrations.

The childminder had an understanding of how to reduce and manage risk both indoors, in the garden, and in the local community. They had developed general risk assessments and were responsive to newly identified risks. The childminder spoke with children about keeping themselves safe. They talked about being safe outdoors. This ensured children were supported to enjoy challenging, fun play experiences whilst being kept safe and learning to be responsible.

We were satisfied that the service had appropriate infection prevention and control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children and families. The children present were familiar with the routine of washing hands at appropriate times. They said they used wipes at the park to wash their hands before having a snack. This kept children safe and healthy.

Children and family's personal information was securely stored. This showed the childminder understood their responsibilities regarding storing and processing children's personal information.

**How good is our leadership?****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 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are well led**

The childminder was committed to meeting the needs of children and families. Trusting relationships had been developed supporting children and families to be included in the service. Effective communication ensured the childminder gathered the information required to meet the needs of children. The childminder had created a happy and welcoming ethos promoting a positive atmosphere for children.

The childminder had kept the required records including accident and incident records, medication records and risk assessments. This supported them to meet the legislative and regulatory requirements of operating a registered childminding service, and to keep children safe.

The childminder reflected on practice to improve the experiences for children and families. We suggested that they begin to use 'A Quality Framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school aged childcare' to formalise self-evaluation in the service. This will lead to a culture of continuous improvement.

## 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 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder's compassionate and responsive approach supported children's wellbeing. Children responded positively to the childminder's nurturing and positive interactions. Warm attachments helped children to feel safe and secure. The childminder demonstrated a rights based approach when caring for children.

The childminder had completed some training in child protection and had planned refresher first aid training. They demonstrated their knowledge and skills were up-to-date to offer good experiences for children. Access to useful websites including the Care Inspectorate Hub, the Scottish Childminding Association and other forums supported the childminder to reflect on practice. Reflecting on and implementing learning in practice will continue to support and enhance children's care, learning and development.

## 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?	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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