

Henderson, Emma Child Minding

Inverurie

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 March 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2009975071

Service no:
CS2009231084

About the service

Emma Handerson operates a service from their home in Kemnay. They are registered to provide a childminding service to care for a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than five are under 12 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 parks, green spaces, local nursery and school. The service is delivered from the family home with children accessing the living room, kitchen/dining space, an upstairs toilet and enclosed front garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 March 2024 between 09:15 and 12:00. 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, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- gathered feedback about the service from seven families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were busy and having fun as they enjoyed leading their play and learning.
- Children were cared for in a homely environment.
- The outdoor area at the rear of the property was fully enclosed, secure and offered children a safe space to play.
- The childminder should develop formal ways to evaluate the service.
- The childminder should ensure they engage in mandatory and relevant training opportunities to keep their knowledge and understanding current.
- Children's personal plans should be reviewed with families and updated at least once every six months.

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?	3 - Adequate

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 happy and relaxed as they experienced a warm approach to their care, which supported their wellbeing. Children appeared to be confident in the childminders presence and actively looked for them to be included in their care and learning. For example, children were seen to approach the childminder for comfort and stories. Warm and loving interactions ensured children felt safe and settled. Parents told us, "Emma is great with all the children and has taken the time to get to know each of them individually so she can support their time in her care in the best suited way for each child. She offers a home from home environment where all the children look forward to seeing her and each other and can learn and play together as an additional family unit," and "My child does not settle well with others and is very clingy to mum, so leaving them with a stranger was very daunting for us all. Emma was great at making them feel welcome and comfortable and it didn't take long for them to become completely settled. They even wave me off and shuts the door in the mornings now! Emma helped make this transition as easy and stress free as possible. Their contentment is a testament to how great Emma is with them, and I fully trust her with their care."

The childminder knew children well and had developed personal plans using information provided by parents. All parents strongly agreed with the statement, 'The childminder knows my child well, including what they like and what is important for their care.' Although recently reviewed, plans did not always reflect the current needs of children. Plans should be further developed to include more detailed information on how individual children's needs are being managed, further supporting children to receive care that is right for them at all times. The childminder agreed to review plans and update them every six months with parents. This area for improvement was made at the last inspection (**see 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection'**). This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

The snack time experience was relaxed with children having time to enjoy their food. Children were offered choice and healthy snack options. The childminder sat and chatted with children as they ate, providing a social and well supervised mealtime. We suggested the childminder could consider more opportunities for children to be included in the preparation of snack, supporting children's independence. The lunchtime routine was described as a positive experience which promoted some opportunities for children to be independent and develop life skills.

Although we did not see a nappy change, the childminder talked through a procedure that ensured children were safe from risk of infection. The childminder was aware of safe sleeping guidance and had parental permission for one child to sleep in a flat-based buggy. A travel cot was available for children. We advised the childminder to implement a safe sleep policy and review sleeping arrangements where possible, further supporting children to be safe.

Children benefitted from a childminder who had a good knowledge of child protection. They were confident in explaining what they would do if they had concerns about a child. There was a child protection policy in place, and we recommended that this be updated to reflect current guidance. We suggested the

childminder should record significant events and incidents in children's lives and chronologies should be used to keep records. This would continue to ensure children were supported through life changes and transitions. We signposted the childminder to 'Practice guide to Chronologies', on the Care Inspectorate Hub.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and Learning

Children's experiences were led by their interest and curiosities as they chose from a selection of toys. They engaged in play throughout the inspection, having fun and including the childminder in their play. The childminder followed the child's preference by staying close and using the opportunity to promote language. For example, the childminder used encouraging interactions when children were playing with playdough. They kept language simple and appropriate for the age of the children. As a result, the child experienced positive interactions with the childminder.

A range of games and resources supported some opportunities to develop language, literacy and numeracy skills. For example, puzzles, mark making materials, games and books. Children could access most age-appropriate resources freely. It was clear some children had their favourite stories and the childminder read these with them. We suggested more open-ended, natural materials and loose parts could be introduced, extending opportunities for children to be creative and explore innovative ideas. We sign posted the childminder to 'Loose Parts toolkit', on the Care Inspectorate Hub.

Children benefitted from a childminder who was responsive to their interests. They shared videos and pictures of children's experiences and achievements. The childminder should now adopt a more formal approach to recording planning. Observations of children's learning should be documented and shared with families, along with their proposed next steps in learning. This will ensure children's individual needs are fully met and their progress is identified as they are encouraged to reach their full potential. **(See area for improvement 1.)**

The local community was used to extend children's experiences. Children accessed local parks and green spaces which supported them to be active and healthy. Opportunities to meet up with other adults and children were provided and they attended group sessions in the local village hall. As a result, children's opportunities for play and learning were improved as they developed connections to their community.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children are making good progress the childminder should develop ways to record and share observations of children's learning. These should highlight children's achievements and their proposed next steps.

This is to ensure I experience high quality care and support that is right for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I am supported to achieve my potential' (HSCS 1.27).

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

The environment was clean, bright and mostly tidy. The layout offered children spaces to play, rest and relax. The environment was homely and supported children in feeling they belong, for example, children's photos in the hallway gave the message that they mattered and were valued. A secure garden at the front of the house provided opportunities for outdoor play, including a mud kitchen and ride on toys; however, the childminder shared that it was used less in the winter months due to weather. All parents strongly agreed that the setting is well furnished, comfortable and homely. A parent commented, "The children are cared for in a homely environment, they are given choice around activities and snacks they have, they love being with Emma."

Children benefitted from a range of age-appropriate resources. On our visit, children accessed Play-Doh, cars, musical instruments and books. They were able to access most of these independently. The childminder shared that resources are rotated to ensure children are not bored. When replacing resources and equipment, the childminder should consider more natural, open-ended resources to support children's imagination and curiosity.

To support children's safety and wellbeing, the childminder had carried out risk assessments. However, these did not contain enough detail about the potential risks and mitigations in place. The childminder had a large puppy in the home and had a pet policy in place. The dog did not cause issue on the inspection; however, we discussed risk assessing to ensure all current and potential future risks had been considered and mitigations were in place. For example, the childminder should consider how the dog is managed at pick up and drop off times as they shared that the dog can be boisterous around adults. All risk assessments should be reflective of potential risks and how these would be minimised. This would further support children's safety and wellbeing when accessing areas of the home and garden. This was a previous area for improvement from the last inspection (**see 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection'**).

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." Children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times and appropriate cleaning practices were observed, helping prevent the spread of infection. Children and their family's privacy was protected by the safe storage of personal information.

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 assurances and Improvements are well led

The childminder's aims and objectives detailed the service provided with a view to providing children with a

warm, safe stimulating environment that ensures an ethos of trust and respect. The childminder told us they share their vision, values and aims with families when children start using the service. We suggested when reviewing these in future, the childminder consults with the children and families using the service, supporting them to feel valued and included.

The childminder was approachable and had established relationships with children and their families. Information was shared with parents through daily conversations at drop off/pick up times and digital technology was used to share photos and key information. This provided opportunities for parents to be included and involved in the service. There was scope to build further opportunities for children and parents to give their views to support improvements. The childminder should now consider ways they could gather parents' views to support them in assessing the service and make improvements to meet children's and family's needs.

There were no systems in place to evaluate the quality of the service, support the childminder to identify potential areas for improvement. The childminder reflected informally on some aspects of practice and service delivery. They talked through upcoming ideas for improvement in the garden area. We suggested developments/changes could be recorded to support the childminder to reflect and evaluate the impact of improvements. Developing a quality assurance system would enable planning for continuous improvement and support positive outcomes for children. We signposted the childminder to 'Quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' available on the Care Inspectorate Hub. This was a previous area for improvement at the last inspection (**see 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection'**).

Policies and procedures were in place which underpinned the service. However, some of these required updating to reflect current legislation and best practice guidance. Regular reviews and updates of policy and procedure would help ensure children access a quality service and experience care that is right for them.

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

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

Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills and knowledge

Children benefitted from kind and nurturing interactions, allowing them to feel loved and supported by the childminder. The childminder had been providing a service for some time and had developed good relationships with families. One parent commented, "We think Emma is an excellent childminder and our children have a very close relationship with her."

The childminder had no recent training in place and should now access first aid, child protection and food hygiene training to ensure their knowledge is in line with current best practice. We signposted the childminder to the Care Inspectorate bitesize videos and best practice documents on the HUB. This would support the childminder to update their knowledge and skills of current best practice. The childminder had kept a record of training that they had accessed over the years. As the childminder attends training, it would be beneficial to record any evaluations of their learning. This would ensure training was embedded within practice. (**See area for improvement 1.**)

Children were always well supervised, including mealtimes. The childminder communicated with children

when they were leaving the room. This ensured they were aware of where the childminder was going, and supervision ensured children's safety.

Areas for improvement

1. The childminder should access mandatory training and current best practice guidance, to develop their professional skills and knowledge and to promote the improvement of the service. This should include, but is not limited to;

- child protection, first aid and food hygiene training
- reviewing best practice documentation and accessing the bitesize videos on the Care Inspectorate HUB
- evaluating the impact of training on their practice, children and families.

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

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

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

Children's health, wellbeing and safety needs should be effectively recorded in their individual personal plan and regularly reviewed with parents to plan appropriate support and track when changes to their needs are identified.

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

This area for improvement was made on 19 February 2019.

Action taken since then

Although the childminder knew children well, all plans did not contain up to date information that had been reviewed with parents.

This area for improvement has not been met and will remain in place.

Previous area for improvement 2

In order to support the childminder to ensure the safety of children detailed risk assessments should be in place for outdoors, outings and travelling by car.

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 19 February 2019.

Action taken since then

The childminder had a good understanding of potential risks, but risk assessments did not reflect this.

This area for improvement has not been met and will remain in place.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure the safety of children, the childminder should ensure she is familiar with current guidance on child protection issues and make reference to this document in her child protection policy.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 14: Well-Managed Service.

This area for improvement was made on 19 February 2019.

Action taken since then

The childminder had a good knowledge of what to look out for and how to manage a concern. Policy detailed what needs to be done if a concern arose.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

The childminder should review and improve the way in which she evaluates what she does. This should include formally gathering the views of parents and children. Where areas for improvement are identified, including any arising from inspection, the childminder should ensure that these are addressed, in order to improve the overall quality of the service.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 13: Improving the Service and Standard 14: Well-Managed Service

This area for improvement was made on 19 February 2019.

Action taken since then

The childminder is not currently undertaking any formal self-evaluation processes.

This area for improvement has not been met and will remain in place.

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?	3 - Adequate
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	3 - Adequate

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