

# Garden, Catherine Child Minding

Leven

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

**Completed on:**  
27 March 2024

**Service provided by:**

**Service provider number:**  
SP2004936069

**Service no:**  
CS2003049073

## About the service

Catherine Garden provides a childminding service from their family home in Kennoway, Fife. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children up to 16 years of age. The service is registered to provide funded places in partnership with the local authority.

The service is close to the local primary school and nursery, shops, parks and green spaces. Children have access to their own playroom, living room, kitchen, toilet and a secure garden to the rear of the property. In addition, children have access to a garden room.

## About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place on 26 March 2024 between 14:15 and 17:00. We provided feedback by telephone the following day. One inspector carried out the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration and any complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children and families using the service
- reviewed feedback from one family using MS forms
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

Children were very happy and relaxed in the childminder's care.

Children benefitted from lots of fresh air and exercise whilst walking from school to the service.

Children felt valued and respected as their voices were heard within the service.

The childminder was keen to develop their own knowledge and had taken part in a range of training.

Families were very happy with the care their children received and praised the childminder's loving approach.

Effective communication with the parents meant that children's needs were met, and families felt included in their child's care.

## 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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children were loved, nurtured, and supported by the kind and caring childminder. Children's best interests were at the heart of the service. The childminder knew the children very well and had cared for them and their families for several years. As a result, children were settled, confident and happy in the childminder's home.

The childminder interacted with children in a warm and nurturing way. Children were listened to and given time to respond. This encouraged children to feel included and valued. The childminder laughed and had fun with children, this approach helped to create a relaxed and loving atmosphere.

Personal plans were in place for all children. This information supported the childminder to meet children's individual needs. All about me forms had been completed by all children using the service and contained information about the things that were important to them. This approach showed children they were valued respected and included. Communication was also a strength of the service, daily chats and updates on digital platforms kept families informed of their child's day and overall progress. This further supported continuity of care and partnership working. The childminder spoke confidently about children's individual care needs and how children were supported. The childminder valued each child's unique preferences and personalities. As a result, children were respected, and their needs and choices were met.

On the day of the inspection visit all children using the service were of school age and attended before or after school. Snack times were enjoyed in a relaxed and unhurried way. Children sat together in the kitchen, this was a very sociable experience as the children laughed and chatted with the childminder and told each other about their day at school. Snack choices were nutritious and considered dietary needs and children's preferences. This approach supported children to develop a positive relationship with food and eating.

No children were receiving medication at the time of inspection; however, the childminder spoke confidently about how to store and administer medication. A medication policy and related paperwork was in place and in line with best practice guidance.

Children were protected from harm by the childminder who had a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children. The childminder had accessed refresher child protection training and was confident in recognising and responding appropriately to any concerns.

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children benefitted from regular outdoor play opportunities. The childminder had a very good understanding about the importance of outdoor play, fresh air and exercise. The childminder felt confident in allowing children to take 'healthy risks' through their play. This meant children explored their own capabilities with appropriate support from the childminder. The garden was safe, secure and inviting. Space was used well to allow children to plant, explore and to be physically active.

The indoor areas provided children with space to explore a variety of resources. This supported children to follow their own interests and lead their own play.

Children attended the service for a short time each day. The childminder worked with children and families to ensure this time was relaxing and fun. Through discussions with children and their families the childminder provided a range of activities and resources to support individual interests.

Children's language development was supported by the childminder through conversations and discussions. The childminder listened and responded with interest to children, showing they were valued. Children also engaged in fun activities to support literacy and numeracy such as drawing, and stories. The childminder interacted with children in a responsive and nurturing way. The childminder used open-ended questioning, which supported the children to develop skills in understanding, thinking and problem solving. This approach encouraged children to feel valued and included. For example, encouragement and praise were given to children regularly. This supported children to develop their confidence and feel secure in the service.

The childminder used photographs to record children's experiences and their individual achievements. One child proudly showed us the floor book and talked to us about their past experiences. These were shared with families, and this supported children to feel valued and families to be included in their child's day.

## How good is our setting?

## 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

The childminder's home was welcoming, safe and clean. Children had access to a playroom which encouraged children to feel valued within their own space. Children were confident in moving around the areas of the home and could access the secure garden area. The garden was safe, secure and inviting. Space was used well to allow children to plant, explore and to be physically active.

The environment enabled children to make choices in where they wanted to play. A variety of toys and resources such as art and craft, play kitchen and imaginative toys supported children's choice and curiosity. This reflected the interests, development and learning stages of children using the service.

Children attending the service were kept safe through the various systems the childminder had in place. The childminder explained that they used a dynamic approach to risk assessment and completed daily visual checks before children arrived as well as at the end of the day. The childminder talked confidently of continually assessing risks while on outings and encouraged the older children to assess their own risk, using open-ended questions. We suggested that recording more formal risk assessments would further support a safe environment for children. The childminder had already actioned this and had developed formal risk assessments for the service.

Effective infection prevention and control practices were embedded into daily life. We saw children confidently washing their hands before snack. This meant that children were safe from the potential spread of infection.

## 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 led well.**

The childminder had developed trusting relationships with families, this supported open communication. Families told us that the childminder provided a flexible service and was always there to help and care for their children. This demonstrated that the childminder was responsive to the changing needs of the families and children they cared for.

Children benefitted from the childminder's positive and nurturing ethos. The childminder's caring approach supported children to make choices and be independent. This reflected the aims of the service which put children at the heart. This helped children feel valued, respected and loved.

The childminder had developed a range of policies and procedures. This helped families understand what to expect from the service provided. We asked the service to regularly review and update policies to ensure they were in line with current best practice guidance.

The childminder had developed an improvement plan and had reflected on their service, identifying key strengths and areas for improvement. Identified areas for improvement were being prioritised and were contributing to improved outcomes for children and families.

Families had opportunities to give feedback or any suggestions for the service, this was done informally through daily conversations in person or through text messages. We suggested that the childminder could consider a variety of methods to gather this feedback in a more formal way. This would further support families to feel included and valued in the life of the service. Children were regularly consulted, and all children had recently completed some written feedback. This was used in a meaningful way to further develop the experiences on offer. This approach empowered children and showed them that their opinions mattered.

## How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### **Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values.**

The childminder strived to provide a fun, safe and caring service for children in their care. High importance was placed on attachments and as such the childminder had developed nurturing, warm and positive relationships with children and their families. The childminder knew children very well. This meant the childminder could identify where children may need extra support or encouragement and worked in partnership with families to provide this in ways that suited the child. This resulted in children feeling safe, secure, and loved.

The experienced childminder had a very good understanding of child development and used this knowledge to be responsive to children's changing interests. As a result, children received the support that was right for them. Children were recognised as being unique and the childminder carefully considered their likes and dislikes. For example, snacks were prepared to suit the individual tastes and preferences of children. Children felt very comfortable in the childminder's care. Interactions were responsive and nurturing, which promoted confidence and trust. The children we spoke with during the inspection told us that Cath was the 'best childminder' and that they rated her to infinity.

The childminder was an experienced carer, they demonstrated their commitment to professional development, and had completed a variety of training sessions. The childminder had undertaken a formal childcare qualification to support outcomes for children. We signposted the childminder to the range of best practice documents available on the Care Inspectorate 'Hub' to further support this.

The childminder had been providing a care service within the local community for over 20 years and was committed to providing children high quality care. They were receptive to the advice given during the inspection and were keen to make the suggested improvements. This will support children and families to receive the best possible care and 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](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good



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