

# Emma Ross Child Minding

Inverness

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
27 March 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Emma Ross

**Service provider number:**  
SP2022000243

**Service no:**  
CS2022000362

## About the service

Emma Ross Childminding provides her childminding service from her family home in a quiet, residential area of Croy. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 4 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than four 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 include the children of the childminder's family/household.

The service is located close to a local primary school and nursery, parks, and other amenities. The children have access to the ground floor only, making full use of the lodge, kitchen, hallway and toilet. A door from the playroom opens directly onto a large secure garden

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 March 2024 between 09:45 and 11.15am. We provided feedback on 27 March 2024 via telephone. One inspector carried out the inspection.

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:

- analysed the responses to our MS Forms survey from three family members of people using the service;
- spoke to the childminder;
- reviewed documents;
- observed practice and daily life.

## Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing approaches and care from a childminder that knew their individual needs, helping children to feel safe and loved.
- The children were happy and relaxed in the childminder's care.
- Children's health and wellbeing were supported through opportunities to be active and engage in outdoor play.
- Children led their own play and made choices from a range of quality play resources.
- Families commented positively on care and support their children received from the service.
- The childminder should further develop her knowledge and skills, and use these to improve the quality of experiences for children.
- The childminder should consider introducing a self-evaluation approach to support the journey of improvement to enhance children's care, learning and development needs.

## 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 experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches from the childminder which supported their overall wellbeing. Strong attachments were evident between the children and the childminder and they were comfortable, confident and happy in their care. The childminder offered physical comfort to children when needed which nurtured children's security and confidence.

Children were valued and respected as individuals, for example, they were listened to and appreciated. The childminder responded well to the children's needs and interests. Interactions were lovely, caring and supported good communication with the children. This supported the children to feel valued, safe and cared for in the service.

Personal plans were in place and these detailed the information required to meet children's needs and routines. Personal plans were developed in partnership with families and the information clearly identified what support individual children needed to help them achieve positive outcomes. This enabled effective transitions and ensured consistency and continuity of care. As a result, individual children received care and support that was right for them.

The childminder knew the children and families very well. It was clear that she had developed close bonds with the children and was very fond of them. The child attending during our inspection was happy and relaxed in the childminder's care. The childminder's nurturing approach contributed to children feeling loved, safe and secure. Parents who provided electronic feedback confirmed the childminder's nurturing approach to care. One parent commented "Emma is absolutely amazing at her job, she is incredibly caring with my daughter, she really has brought out the best in her".

During the inspection we did not observe any mealtime experiences. However, the childminder spoke to us about how the children gave a lot of ownership and developed the mealtime experience while letting the children have more independence. Children enjoyed sitting together at the dinner table and the childminder said they had lots of conversations which supported their developing language and communication skills. The childminder also supported children with healthy eating habits, working with families to ensure children's individual needs were met.

Administration of medication procedures linked with current guidance and are in line with current guidance. Accident and incident records were completed fully by the childminder and shared with parents in a timely manner.

The childminder was very aware of her responsibility to safeguard children. We were confident that the childminder was committed to her role and responsibilities in keeping children safe from harm.

### **Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning**

Play and learning opportunities promoted children's skills in language, literacy, and numeracy and these were naturally woven into experiences provided. There was a good selection of books and mark making activities. Children participated in making an Easter bonnet which provided them with opportunities to be

creative and use their imaginations. This highlighted that parents were very happy with the resources provided. One parent commented "Emma is very passionate about keeping the children engaged. My child is always coming home with pictures and paintings that she has made whilst there". Another parent commented "Always lots of activities taken place, but choice is always given. Emma's setting has something for every child". The childminder told us, children attending the service also enjoyed baking and lots of messy and sensory play. These opportunities contributed to children gaining confidence and develop children's fine motor skills.

The childminder had an understanding of child development and rotated toys and resources to ensure they were appropriate for the ages and stages of children in attendance. Play and learning opportunities were built upon what children knew and extended children's thinking, which supported their natural curiosity to play and learn. High quality observations and interactions enabled the childminder to plan and provide materials and opportunities for children to consolidate their learning through play.

Children had access to a large natural outdoor environment. The area provided opportunities for risky play and for children to explore and be physically active. It supported children to develop their fine and gross motor skills, coordination, balance and to understand their physical limits, for example, playing on the trikes, swings and use of the trampoline.

The childminder made very good use of the local area. This promoted children's wellbeing and sense of self in their community. For example, they visited the local park, woods and toddler groups in their area. These rich and varied play experiences supported children to develop skills for life.

## 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 welcoming, homely and comfortable environment, which was clean and contributed to them feeling safe and secure. One parent told us "Emma ensures that she has a homely setting for the children, with lots of toys and activities set out each day". Children appeared confident and at ease having had freedom to explore their surroundings. Ample ventilation and natural light contributed to children's health and wellbeing. Resources were offered in such a manner that supported children to access them independently, enabling them to lead their own play and have choice.

Furnishings supported a variety of play types and experiences. A comfy sofa and rocking chair with cushions were available in the lounge which enabled children to rest and relax and enjoy quieter times. The childminder had given consideration to the different age and stage of children who attended the service. There were activities and resources which younger children could independently access throughout the day in the living room.

The service was well maintained indoors and outdoors. Appropriate infection control measures were in place and the childminder followed best practice guidance. This supported a safe and healthy environment for the children in her service. Daily risk assessments of outings were undertaken which documented measures in place to reduce risk. We suggested ways of involving children in creating some benefit/risk style assessments. This would promote opportunities for them to assess risk and develop important life skills.

Children's and family's personal information was securely stored. This showed the childminder understood their responsibilities regarding the storage and processing children's 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 assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder informed us that they sought the views of children and families using informal methods such as verbal communication. We encouraged the childminder to continue to consult with parents/ children and to ensure where verbal or written feedback has led to the development of the service this is shared with children and families, supporting a culture of ongoing improvement.

There were no systems in place to evaluate the quality of the service and identify areas for improvement. The childminder was unable to give us an example of improvements made which had brought about improved outcomes for the children. We discussed the benefits of using quality audit tools, such as: 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare', in order to support this and reflect on her service. There was little evidence of effective systems in place to improve areas of service delivery and outcomes for children. Parents and carers should be offered more formal opportunities to provide feedback to the service, for example, by using questionnaires. We suggested that the childminder gave questionnaires to parents/carers and children to identify what's working well, to support improvement in the service and the outcomes for children. **(See area for improvement 1).**

The childminder was not operating within their conditions of registration. This compromised children's safety, and it may have invalidated their insurance. The childminder addressed this immediately. However, the childminder must now ensure that they work within and always maintain their conditions of registration to ensure children are kept safe. The childminder has now completed a variation to maintain their conditions of registration, even when some children are at school or nursery, to ensure children's safety and wellbeing at all times.

The childminder had policies and procedures in place. We suggested a few changes to policies which would reflect best practice guidance and relevance to her service. This helped parents to understand the work and ethos of the childminding service.

### Areas for improvement

1. To ensure continuous improvement the provider should further develop quality assurance and self evaluation processes to identify service developments.

This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) actively seeking the views from families and children to inform improvement;
- b) implement a quality assurance process to identify what is working well and what could be improved.

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

'I am actively encouraged to be involved in improving the service I use, in a spirit of genuine partnership' (HSCS 4.7) and  
 '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?

## 3 - Adequate

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

### Quality indicator 4.1: Staff knowledge, skills and values

Children benefitted from being cared for by a childminder who clearly enjoyed providing a nurturing environment and fun experiences. Children were listened and responded to with care, nurture, and compassion. As a result, children had developed strong relationships and attachments with the childminder. They were supported through responsive care where warm, kind interactions helped them to feel valued and secure.

The childminder was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association and valued her supportive relationship with another childminder. This provided good opportunities for sharing ideas, reflecting on practice together and contributed to the childminder providing positive outcomes for children.

The childminder had participated in training and made use of some professional development opportunities. For example, they had undertaken training in child protection and first aid. We discussed the importance of updating and recording post training evaluations to include a detailed reflection of learning. Reflections of learning would enable the childminder to revisit and reflect on how learning opportunities developed their practice and support future practice. **(See area for improvement 1).**

The childminder engaged well with the inspection process and demonstrated an open and honest approach about their service. We found them to be responsive to our suggestions, for example, before the inspection had been concluded they had spoken with families and started to review their policies and procedures. This told us the childminder was committed to improving their service and we were confident they would continue to improve to provide positive outcomes for children and their families.

### Areas for improvement

1. The childminder should further develop her knowledge and skills, and use these to improve the quality of experiences for children. This should include, but is not limited to, accessing best practice guidance, training and information to support the development of her service. She should use her learning from these to evaluate her service, identifying areas for development which will have a positive impact for the children

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (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); and

'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.' (HSCS 3.20).

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

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