

Boyd – Thorpe, Donna Child Minding

Cupar

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 February 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2003904348

Service no:
CS2003007366

About the service

Donna Boyd-Thorpe provides a child-minding service from their home in Pitlessie, Cupar, Fife. They are registered to provide care to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 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 childminder works in partnership with the local authority to provide funded places.

The service is close to the school, green spaces, local amenities and can be reached by transport links. Children have access to a living room, kitchen-diner, hall and a playroom and toilet facilities on the first floor.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 28 February 2024 between 14:45 and 17:15. 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:

- spoke with four children using the service and received feedback from six families via an electronic link
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children were happy, settled and having fun as they played.
- The childminder valued the importance of learning outdoors and the benefits of connecting with nature.
- Children benefitted from high-quality resources that promoted curiosity and imagination.
- Positive, nurturing relationships had been made between the childminder, children, and families.
- The childminder knew every child's likes, preferences and interests.
- Personal plans detailed important information and were reviewed in line with guidance.
- The childminder engaged in self-evaluation for continuous improvements.
- The childminder was committed to ongoing professional development to support positive outcomes for children.

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?	5 - Very 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 experienced caring and meaningful interactions from the childminder who knew their needs and preferences. Trusting relationships had been formed that supported children's emotional wellbeing. Children described the childminder as 'very kind and wears lovely earrings and rings'. The childminder spoke to children, explaining the routine so they knew what was happening in their day and listened to their suggestions. Children were relaxed and settled in the childminders home and were confident to explore areas independently and engage with the provision. Families told us "My daughter is very happy there. She tells me that Donna loves her and is the "best childminder ever" and "Donna is brilliant, and both our children absolutely love(d) going to her house." As a result, children felt safe and secure.

The childminder worked in partnership with the local authority. This meant some children attended their local early learning provider and the childminder. The childminder was proactive in making positive links with nurseries, spending time building positive relationships with settings. This promoted consistency in care, play and learning.

Personal plans were in place. The childminder used a variety of ways to record important information that included using personal learning journals and books with a focus on the wellbeing indicators. Plans were reviewed regularly with children and families in line with guidance. As a result, children's right to be listened to and consulted were promoted.

Mealtime was relaxed, unhurried and sociable. Children had opportunities to develop independence and have some ownership of the snack routine. They helped set the table, choose their foods, and were provided with utensils to support spreading. Children told us how they liked to help make foods and drinks. Younger children were included as part of this routine as safe seating was provided at the table that meant they were able to fully engage with other children and the childminder.

The childminder had a system in place for the safe recording and administration of medication. At the time of our visit, no children required medication. We were confident children's healthcare needs would be met if this was requested.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children benefitted from a wide selection of toys and resources. There was a very good range of natural, open ended resources and age-appropriate toys to meet children's needs and preferences. The childminder spoke about what was important to each child and their preferred play type. For example, one child enjoyed the small world house. The childminder was mindful they needed this time at the end of the day to help them relax. Other children spent time exploring the many treasure baskets that were filled with interesting objects. Children told us how they liked that they were able to make friends and play with them in the service. One family commented "Donna is a fantastic childminder. She is so creative and inventive with the activities she provides. She provides such a good balance of indoor and outdoor activities." As a result, children were happy and leading their play.

The childminder promoted health and wellbeing by ensuring children had daily opportunities to spend time outdoors and benefit from regular fresh air and exercise. This included forest and beach trips, parks, and outdoor centres. One child told us "I like that Donna takes us places to explore". The childminder made links with local companies to support children's connections with the community. For example, children benefitted from a visit to learn about healthy eating. Children commented on how they enjoyed trips out and walks with the dogs. This meant that they experienced a breath of high-quality play and learning opportunities through fun and meaningful ways.

Children had opportunities to revisit their play and learning as this was documented in floor books and journals. They enjoyed telling us about outings they had been on and the fun activities they had taken part in. Learning was shared with families through an online platform. This gave them opportunities to talk with their child about how they had spent their day and they were able to see the progress children had made.

The childminder promoted language and numeracy through fun and engaging activities, and high-quality interactions. Children explored resources that linked to favourite stories. For example, the childminder had made wooden props that engaged children's imagination. They used these to retell the story of the three pigs. The childminder fostered children's love of books as they spent time reading to children and ensured they had access to a wide selection of stories and song props. As a result, children were developing skills from meaningful and fun routines.

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

Children experienced a homely, warm, and comfortable environment. The childminder had dedicated areas of the home for children to play, explore and relax. Children had access to the living room, kitchen-diner, hall, and playroom on the first floor. The childminder had made very good use of spaces that offered children opportunities to lead their play.

The setting was furnished to a high standard and benefitted from natural light from large windows in the play spaces. Families told us "The childminder's home is always perfectly clean and tidy. There are a lot of activities, toys, and games available to the children", "The children know where everything is and the setting is perfectly safe" and "Beautiful, homely setting where our daughter feels so comfortable and really thrives".

The childminder had policies in place to support the delivery of the service. These were reviewed regularly to ensure they were reflective of best practice. Daily risk assessments of areas were carried out to ensure any potential risks to children were minimised. The childminder was mindful of the differing ages of children in their care and their stage of development. To ensure their safety and wellbeing, safety gates were used, and resources were carefully selected. This meant children's safety was a priority.

The childminder promoted effective infection, prevention, and control practice throughout the setting. Resources were clean and well maintained. Each child had their own coat peg in the corridor of the house where they took off their shoes and coats. This reduced the risk of cross contamination to children as they played. Effective hand hygiene routines were embedded at key times. For example, children were confident in hand washing before meals. Safety steps at sinks ensured all children could engage in this routine safely and developed an understanding of the importance of good hand hygiene.

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are led well

Children and families experienced a warm, homely, and welcoming ethos. The vision for the service reflected the care of children. The childminder provided a nurturing, safe and stimulating environment. They valued the importance of partnership working. Families described the childminder as "always friendly and approachable to both children and parents, and always happy to discuss any issues and provide advice and help find solutions when needed."

The childminder demonstrated a very good understanding of their role as a registered service. They were organised and professional in their approach. They complied with the conditions of registration and had relevant insurance in place. This information was displayed. Families told us "Donna is extremely competent, experienced, and knowledgeable. I trust her completely." As a result, families were confident and assured the service met their child's needs.

The childminder had engaged in a continuous cycle of improvement through self-evaluation. They used best practice guidance to identify their strengths and areas they would like to develop further. This supported them to create their improvement plan to ensure children and families continued to experience a very good service.

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

Children experienced warm, kind, and compassionate care. This meant that they felt valued, loved, and secure in the service. We could see attachments had been formed as children received cuddles and reassurance as they played. Families told us "Donna is extremely competent, experienced, and knowledgeable. I trust her completely and "The childminder is absolutely amazing with my child and goes above and beyond when it comes to childcare."

The childminder valued the importance of building strong, trusting relationships that promoted continuity of care for children through partnership working with families. As a result, children experienced a consistent approach through kind and caring interactions which helped them feel safe and secure. Families described the childminder as "Very caring and helpful and commented "There is nothing we could fault about Donna's childminding service. She is a wonderful and enriching presence in our child's life."

The childminder was experienced, dedicated and confident in their practice. They were professional and committed to providing a quality service for children and families. As a result, children experienced high quality care that supported them to thrive and flourish.

Children benefitted from the childminder's commitment to continuous professional learning. They had a clear understanding of how children develop and learn, and they made very good use of development and training opportunities. This included child protection, first aid, baby mental health and Science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM.) Their engagement with professional learning meant that children experienced a breadth of play and fun opportunities that supported them to reach their full potential.

The childminder had supportive connections with other childminders near the service. They used this network of support to engage in reflective discussions and share best practice.

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?	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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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