

Cathro, Caroline Child Minding

Arbroath

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 May 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2010977157

Service no:
CS2010237701

About the service

Cathro, Caroline is registered to care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age: of whom no more than 6 are under 12 years; of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and; of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

Minded children can only be cared for by persons named on the certificate.

No overnight care will be provided.

This childminding service is provided from a property situated in a residential area of Arbroath. Internally, children have access to a living room, kitchen and downstairs toilet. Externally is a large, fully enclosed garden used for outdoor play.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 9 May 2024. 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:

- observed the children at play and their interactions with the childminder
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily routines
- received feedback from four families
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder is kind, caring and nurturing.
- The childminder has developed good relationships with children and families.
- The childminder should continue to develop the self-evaluation of her service, identifying areas for development and 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 there were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy and relaxed in the childminders company and benefitted from warm and caring interactions. They confidently approached her for support and attention and enjoyed cuddles with the childminder during the inspection. Children were praised and encouraged which supported their confidence and self-esteem. Parents shared they were very happy with the care and support their child received. "Our childminder is very friendly and you can see the care our child is getting from her, it's great to see how much our child has come on since starting and it's great seeing our child building connections with other people and children".

A very flexible approach was taken to children settling in. The childminder spoke about the benefits of knowing children and families well, and worked collaboratively with parents to support this process. For example, she offered to visit families in their own homes which supported individual children's needs.

Information was gathered for all the children through personal plans, daily diaries and 'My World' documents, which were reviewed every six months with parents. This information helped the childminder care for and support the children. We were unable to see all paperwork in place for some children and reminded the childminder that these should be available at all times. We also suggested the childminder review her paperwork to ensure the younger children's stage of development, needs and strategies were clearly identified to fully support all children.

The childminder collaborated well with other early years providers including the local nursery and professionals which provided a consistency and continuity of care. Parents shared that Caroline had supported their children with their development, "If I have any issues then we work with Caroline to resolve this. My child sees speech and language and Caroline helps to support their learning with us".

The childminder was clear on her role in protecting and safeguarding children. We suggested the use of chronologies to record significant events in a child's life that may impact on their health and wellbeing would also further strengthen children's paperwork. This would provide a more holistic approach to fully meet children's needs.

Improvements had been made to paperwork required to support the safe administration of medication. These were now in line with best practice to support the children's safety and wellbeing.

Families provided snacks and packed lunches for their children. These were stored safely to ensure food was kept fresh. The childminder shared that she offered a range of fruit for children who were minded after school. Lunch was a nice, social experience where the childminder and her husband sat with children round the table. Allergies were managed well and one parent shared, "My child has allergies and Caroline understands their needs and ensures no cross contamination happens even when they eat their pack lunch away from other foods".

The childminder had reviewed the children's sleeping arrangements since the last inspection. Children now

had access to sleep mats and safe sleep guidance was shared with families during the settling in process. This reflected best practice and enabled children to move comfortably and not be restricted by straps in a limited space.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The childminder discussed the children's interests and preferences and how she supported the children in their play. The living room was laid out with a range of toys which the children were interested in, and included wooden puzzles, vehicles, dolls and building blocks. The two young children played happily during our visit with one child caring for the doll as they put her in a car seat, strapped her in and then fed her a bottle. The childminder supported the children where necessary letting them lead their own play. She spoke warmly with the children and listened to them, encouraging and supporting the children's literacy and numeracy through discussions and songs. Children shared with us what they liked about the childminder, "I like playing with the other children" and "Seeing Caroline, playing games, doing learning".

The childminder had made improvements to her garden since the last inspection and shared that children played outside most days. There were some resources available to support children's gross motor skills which included a chute and ride on toys. A small fairy garden supported children to be imaginative and creative and a mud kitchen provided opportunities for the children to explore and be curious. Additional resources had been added to the mud kitchen, which gave the children more opportunities to investigate and problem solve. The children present decided they would like to wash the ride on toys and the childminder supported them to do this which ensured the children felt respected and listened to.

A planning book was in place which identified some planned and responsive learning opportunities. A floorbook with photos and observations of play demonstrated children had opportunities to experiment with art and craft materials, sensory and creative play. Some children also had their own learning journal which recorded observations of their progress, achievements and next steps. The childminder should continue to develop these for all ages of children and ensure children's observations are meaningful with next steps relevant to each child to support them to progress. We also suggested the childminder could further support children to develop their problem solving and critical thinking skills through their use of ponderings and effective questioning. For example, the use of 'I wonder' and 'What would happen if?'

Good use was made of the local community. The childminder told us that they regularly went to the forest and parks. Children also regularly attended the library for book bug sessions to support their social development.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder's home offered a warm, homely and comfortable environment for children. There was ample space for children and they moved freely around the childminder's home accessing the living/dining room, downstairs toilet and kitchen.

The indoor and outdoor environments were safe and secure. Doors and gates were locked where children played. Some improvements had been made to risk assessments which covered aspects of the home,

outdoor play and outings. We suggested these could be developed further to ensure they cover all areas of risks and how to minimise these. Where possible children should also be included in the review of risk assessments to support their understanding of danger and ways to keep safe.

Suitable infection prevention and control measures were in place, which included handwashing by the children and childminder, and cleaning of the dining table before lunch to minimise the spread of infection. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was stored safely and within easy reach of the childminder and nappy changing procedures reflected best practice. Nappy changing also considered children's privacy and dignity throughout.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The vision, values and aims of the service were care and nurture based, which reflected the service provided. The childminder shared these with families when they visited the service.

The childminder was committed to developing her service and had made suggested improvements since the last inspection. The childminder also regularly engaged in professional discussions with other childminders in the area who they met regularly for shared activities with children and training events.

An improvement plan was in place which identified learning and development in the outdoor area, could be improved. The childminder should continue to identify areas for development which will support further improvements of her service.

Feedback was gathered about her service through informal methods which included asking children for suggestions and using observations to see how children were enjoying their play opportunities. Parents had been asked to complete a parental satisfaction questionnaire. The childminder should continue to use this approach and collate feedback from parents. Any suggestions should be used to inform improvements to the service.

There was some self-evaluation in place using best practice documents. To help identify improvement priorities, we discussed how using the Care Inspectorate guidance 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged children' as a self-evaluation tool would support her to evaluate their service. This would support her in delivering high quality care and learning for children.

Policies and procedures were in place which underpinned the service. We suggested amendments to some policies to reflect the Care Inspectorate notification guidance. The childminder should continue to ensure that all policies and procedures are reviewed and updated regularly.

How good is our staff team?**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder was warm and approachable and had established very good relationships with children and their families. She shared information with parents through daily conversations at drop off/pick up times, a private social media page and text, as needed. These were good opportunities to ensure parents were included and involved in what their children were doing when attending the service. All parents strongly agreed that they had a strong connection with their childminder. Parents shared, "I have built a really strong connection with her and I am very confident when I am with her" and "She's very supportive and always there when we need her. Goes above and beyond with her support if needed".

The childminder had many years of experience and had undertaken a formal childcare qualification which supported her to provide a good service to children and families. In addition to core training which included first aid, food hygiene and child protection, the childminder had also attended a number of additional courses to support her practice. We suggested the childminder access training or research on Schematic play which would enable her to fully support and extend children's play and learning.

A reflective journal supported the childminder to identify the benefit and impact of training which fed into her personal development plan. This could be developed further to support the childminder to identify any gaps in knowledge and identify further training or reading of best practice documents to support outcomes for children.

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**

To support children to lead and extend their play through a wide range of quality experiences, the provider should ensure that:

- a) resources are reviewed and updated to offer more choice and challenge including using open-ended and natural materials
- b) the provider should provide more challenging activities to promote children's problem solving, thinking and investigation.

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

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way I choose and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

This area for improvement was made on 12 July 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had reviewed and developed her outdoor environment. There were several more resources outdoors that the children enjoyed playing with, including loose parts and open-ended resources.

There were also a variety of different activities in the planning and floorbooks to support challenge.

We suggested there could still be more choice for children indoors as resources are set out based on children's interests, however, we were satisfied that overall children had access to a variety of different resources and activities to support them to lead their own play.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children are safe and healthy when medication is required, an accurate and up-to-date record should be kept in line with the 'management of medication in day care of children and childminding services' document. Current records, procedures and policies should be reviewed to ensure they meet the recommendations of this good practice document.

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 22 November 2016.

Action taken since then

All paperwork has been reviewed and is in line with Care Inspectorate guidance.

This area for improvement has been met.

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? | 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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