

# Chloe Pilkington Child Minding

ABERDEEN

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

**Completed on:**  
30 May 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Chloe Pilkington

**Service provider number:**  
SP2022000217

**Service no:**  
CS2022000326

## About the service

Chloe Pilkington provides a childminding service from their property in a quiet residential area of Kingswells. The childminder may care for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age: of whom no more than six 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 close to a local primary school, shops, parks and other amenities. The children are cared for in a large playroom/living room, dining kitchen and downstairs toilet. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden.

## About the inspection

This was an announced (short notice) inspection which took place on 30 May 2024 between 09:00 and 14:00. One inspector carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Made contact with three parents of children who attended.
- Spoke with the childminder and children.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.

**Key messages**

- Children were at the heart of the service and were cared for by a childminder who knew them and their families well.
- Children experienced warm and caring interactions from the childminder.
- The setting made good use of the outdoors, at their home and in the wider community.
- The childminder had a very good understanding of how children develop and learn. We saw this in the environment and experiences offered to the children.
- Risk assessments could be updated to reflect benefits and support risky play in line with the experiences offered to children.
- Some policies required updating and we directed the childminder to best practice guidance to support with this and ensure they related to current documentation.

**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 quality indicator as very good.

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were very well nurtured and supported with the childminder showing a genuine interest in their overall wellbeing and joining in their play. They were very respectful, giving children choice which allowed them to lead their own play. The childminder was caring in their interactions with the children, down at their level, offering lots of closeness and hugs. There was an ethos within the setting of recognising and talking about feelings and emotions, with the childminder asking how children were feeling and offering cuddles. This supported the children to feel nurtured, safe and secure. Parents told us they had a strong connection with the childminder. One parent said; "We have a really good relationship with the childminder and we feel very lucky to have them as our childminder, they are very friendly and warm".

Personal plans were in place for all the children. Their wellbeing and progress was being well supported through effective personal planning. These were completed with parents, which supported effective information sharing and promoted a continuity of care for children. Personal planning documents were individualised for each child and highlighted their development with next steps. We discussed including the wellbeing indicators within personal planning. This would support a holistic approach to care and support for children and allow the childminder to effectively track progress in health and wellbeing. Chronologies captured significant events in children's lives. These highlighted that the childminder was aware of potential safeguarding and wellbeing issues arising in children's lives and that appropriate action had been carried out. Parents told us that they were fully involved in their child's care, including developing and reviewing their personal plan.

There were no children within the service requiring medication at the time of our inspection. We noted that the childminder had produced a clear medication policy which highlighted how they would effectively manage the administration of medication to ensure children's health and wellbeing.

Mealtimes were a very positive experience for the children. These were unhurried and relaxed which allowed children to eat at a pace which suited them. The childminder provided nutritious foods for the children and were also given a choice of fruits. The childminder sat with children, encouraging and supporting them to eat independently. We saw independence being encouraged through children helping to prepare snack, chopping fruit, pouring drinks and scraping plates. These opportunities promoted life skills helping children develop confidence and problem solving skills. Parents told us that their children could choose from a healthy range of snack and meals.

We saw children being settled to sleep in the living room after lunch. Blinds were drawn and soft music was played to settle children. Through discussions with the childminder, it was clear they were aware of best practice guidance and were working with parents to ensure the comfort and safety of their children was taken account of while taking a nap.

The childminder took a respectful approach to nappy changing, which was carried out in the toilet. This was observed to be a relaxed, nurturing experience with the childminder chatting to the child. Appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) was used and good hand washing practices were in place. This helped minimise the risk of infection and keep children safe.

We evaluated this quality indicator as excellent, where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were fully engaged in their play and learning. We saw that the play was child led and children were able to choose from a wide range of quality resources and activities. Children experienced high quality play and learning opportunities, with the childminder supporting this extremely well. This contributed to the children being happy and settled, enjoying play and learning tailored to their individual needs.

Skilled interactions with the childminder allowed the children to benefit from both spontaneous and planned experiences. Looking at floor books we were able to see the vast range of quality learning opportunities children had experienced. We saw that children had been exploring babies in the role play area and had shown an interest in body parts. Following this interest the childminder created a doctors' surgery which we saw children explore as they dressed up, gave babies injections and took appointments on clipboards. This rich learning opportunity extended the children's knowledge and encouraged them to use their imagination and be creative during play.

The childminder used open-ended questions during their interactions with the children, promoting their curiosity and extending their thinking skills. We observed the childminder and children doing puzzles together. This generated conversations about farmers and animals. The child minder asked questions like "who looks after the animals?" and "what comes out of udders?". The children were then keen to move on and explore animals in the trough tray, talking about the different kinds of animals, what they looked like and what they liked to eat. This extended their learning and was a very good opportunity for developing language skills.

Choice and independence were extremely well supported throughout the day with the childminder asking the children what they would like to do. We observed children easily accessing resources to support their chosen play and learning across the environment. The childminder carefully observed the children and intervened when appropriate, which supported their growing independence. This also promoted a culture of choice and independence within the setting as it was encouraged naturally through the children's daily experiences.

The childminder had an excellent knowledge of child development and was using tracking sheets for each child to support their development in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing. This gave the childminder an overview of the children's achievements and highlighted where they required additional support. Parents told us that their child's development was supported through interesting and fun play experiences. One parent told us about the type of play experiences their child was involved in; "Music class, trips to the library, trips to the local care home. The childminder regularly creates 'farm scenes' for them to play with on the tuft tray - it includes a lot of sensory items as well as elements to encourage fine motor skills".

Literacy, language and numeracy was richly embedded across the environment and during children's play. Books considered age ranges and were stored invitingly around the environment. A range of mark making materials were readily available both inside and outdoors.

We saw children using clipboards, paper and pencils to mark make in doctors' surgery and use chinks, paint brushes and water on the fence outside. Children enjoyed looking at books as they played in the role play area. We saw the childminder support numeracy naturally during play, using questions like; 'how old are you, can you find a number 2 and if I put this one and this one together, what number does it make?'. Play experiences such as these, supported the children's skills in language, literacy and numeracy in a fun, creative way.

The children's play and learning was enhanced by the childminder's effective planning system which took into consideration their interests. Floor books were exceptionally well used to support planning and experiences for children, taking account of the wellbeing indicators, Curriculum for Excellence, and Realising the Ambition. It was clear, from looking at the floor books and speaking to the children, planning was based on the children's ideas and interests. It did, however, also consider intentional planning. Children's voice and their contributions were evident in the floor books which were used to stimulate discussions with the children, thus involving them in the planning process. We saw that parents were encouraged to contribute to floor books, sharing their thoughts and ideas on their children's experiences. This allowed the childminder to evaluate experiences and learning and identify possible new opportunities.

We saw that the childminder had an effective means of sharing children's experiences with their parents. They shared a daily diary, significant observations of children, including photos and regular child development reviews. These captured individual learning for children and contained an overview of child development, highlighting next steps which were carried into future planning. One parent told us; "The childminder regularly provides updates on my child's next steps and always ensures they are focusing on developing specific skills. They regularly show us our child's book and how they have come on and achieved 'next steps'. Equally they often encourage us to develop specific skills at home etc."

The childminder made excellent use of their local community and further afield. Children enjoy attending toddler groups, music classes, playing at parks and forest walks. We saw that they worked closely with other local childminders and often enjoyed experiences together. They visited a local care home regularly. This intergenerational connection allowed the children and older people to come together to share activities such as singing, games and having snack which everyone enjoyed. One staff member said; "Being around the children and other families gives a community feeling in Tor-Na-Dee". The childminder had created a 'community' floor book to involve the children, families and the community in planning, documenting and evaluating experiences. Within the floor book one parent had commented; "it's so nice to think of our child going to the care home and brightening someone's day". This supported the children to get involved within the community and feel a sense of belonging.

**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 environment was very well maintained and secure with plenty of natural light. There was a welcoming, homely feel and children were observed to move freely around the house. Children were seen to comfortably move resources around to support their play. It felt like the children had ownership of their space, even though it was the childminder's home.

The environment was very well thought out. The playroom/living room was inviting with some provocations to play and other resources accessible on shelves. Comfy sofas offered the children a cosy space to rest and relax. Resources were offered in such a manner that supported children to access them independently, enabling them to lead their own play and have choice. A variety of resources to support different play experiences and age ranges were on offer such as construction, small world, loose parts, role play, games, books and mark making.

Although the children didn't have free flow access to the outdoors during our visit, children still had the choice of where they wanted to play and spent time outdoors in the enclosed garden. We saw children having fun with chalks and using paint brushes and water to decorate the fence. Fresh air and exercise contributed to children being fit and healthy. Parents told us their children had the opportunity to play outdoors and gave examples of experiences their children had been involved in. One parent said; "Trips to the local park, water tray and sand tray play. Growing plants outside, playing with balancing items outside. Outdoor kitchen and mud kitchen play".

The childminder implemented various systems which supported the children to stay safe and well. The home and garden were secure and equipment was well maintained. The childminder had risk assessments in place which were updated regularly. We discussed updating these further to reflect benefits and support risky play in line with the experiences offered to children. We saw that children were involved in assessing risks for activities which would supported their awareness of managing risk, being responsible and keeping themselves safe.

Effective infection control measures provided a very safe, hygienic environment for children. We observed the childminder and children practice good, effective hand washing routines at appropriate times. Cleaning was carried out effectively which ensured the risk of infection was minimised.

## 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 improvement are led well

The childminder had produced a set of values and aims which were a true reflection of the service they offered. At the next review the childminder should consider creating in consultation with the parents and children, around the experiences they enjoy and what the service means to them. This would ensure that parents and children continued to feel valued and included within the service.

The childminder recognised the importance of actively seeking the views of children and families to inform the development of their setting. They used informal approaches such as inviting comments in the floor books and more formal approaches such as questionnaires to gain information from families and children using the service. It was noted that the feedback was extremely positive and reassured the childminder that they were providing a quality service for children and families. We noted children's views and ideas had been considered through questionnaires and floor books. This ensured that children's contributions were valued and helped shape the service. Parents told us they were involved in a meaningful way to develop the service.

Self evaluation enabled the childminder to deliver very good care and support tailored to individual children and families. They took time to reflect on their service using recognised quality assurance tools such as 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' to identify improvements. These informed improvement plans which had brought about positive changes to outcomes for children in the service. For example, in the childminder's self evaluation floor book we could see they aimed to promote independence around mealtimes. During our visit we could see the benefits of this as children were meaningfully involved in preparing snack and were becoming confident chopping, pouring and spreading. This demonstrated that improvement plans were relevant and having an impact on outcomes for children.

The childminder had a range of policies and procedures in place supporting them to provide a quality service. Some of policies required minimal updates and we directed them to best practice guidance to support with this and ensure they related to current documentation. We saw that the childminder was auditing accident and incidents highlighting patterns and trends, enabling the childminder to prevent these, keeping children safe and well.



**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 had the children and families at the heart of the service, demonstrating warmth, kindness and compassion in their interactions with children. This enabled children to feel valued, loved and secure. We found the childminder to be very enthusiastic and motivated and our discussions highlighted that they were extremely passionate about their role. One parent told us; "It's clear that the childminder is passionate about her job and the children they look after". Another said; "We have a really good relationship with the childminder and we feel very lucky to have them as our childminder. They are very friendly and warm and they always take time to tell us about our child's day and will regularly send updates during their session".

The childminder held a recognised childcare qualification and had a very good understanding of how children develop and learn. The childminder confidently discussed how they were supporting the children's development to ensure they reached their potential and this was evident in children's personal plans. The childminder made very good use of professional development opportunities and had undertaken a range of relevant training for example, safeguarding, speech and language and parental involvement. The childminder used a log to effectively document training undertaken and their reflections. We discussed the value of evaluating and reviewing this after three to six months which would highlight what had improved their practice and outcomes for children and families using the service.

The childminder referred to and used a wide range of best practice guidance to shape and inform their practice. We noted that the childminder's self-evaluation records documented that time had been taken to reflect on: "Bringing generations together" to support with their involvement with a local care home. This gave the childminder ideas of types of experiences the children and residents could share together. This opportunity had impacted positively on children and residents. One resident said; "It's really nice to see the children and people interacting with each other. We love playing with them, talking to them, giving us cuddles".

**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	6 - Excellent
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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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

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