

# Little Grasshoppers Child Minding

Aberdeen

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

**Completed on:**  
28 June 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Leanna Whitley

**Service provider number:**  
SP2021000190

**Service no:**  
CS2021000310

## About the service

Little Grasshoppers provides a childminding service from their property in a residential area of Newmachar, Aberdeenshire.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, 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 children of the childminder's family.

The service is close to a local primary school, shop, parks, and other amenities. The children are cared for in the living room and kitchen. There is a garden to the rear of the property for outdoor play.

## About the inspection

This was an announced short notice inspection which took place on 28 June 2024 between 09:30 and 13:00. 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, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with two children using the service
- received one response to our request for feedback from parents via MS Forms
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children were supported with kind and nurturing interactions.
- Children's overall wellbeing was supported through the effective use of personal planning.
- Children's learning and development was supported through stimulating and fun play experiences.
- Children were able to play and rest in a homely environment.
- The garden was safe and promoted interesting play experiences.
- Self evaluation and quality assurance processes were effective to support continuous improvement of the service.
- The childminder demonstrated a commitment to their professional development and had accessed training and research to develop their knowledge and skills.

## 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 several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were supported with kind and nurturing interactions. The childminder spoke in a warm and soothing voice and children received lots of cuddles. This contributed to a relaxed ethos where children were settled and happy. Parents commented, "My child absolutely adores their childminder and I feel they have benefited hugely with being in their home environment".

Children were well supported in their personal care. The childminder was kind in their interactions and children's dignity and privacy was respected.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through the effective use of personal planning. Children and their families were central to this process and were involved in reviewing and updating information. This meant the childminder was well informed about children's care needs, likes, dislikes, and interests. Parents commented, "We are always asked our thoughts and our hopes for our child's development and asked if we have any ideas how we would like her to proceed with them". Medical care plans were detailed and contained information to ensure children's safety in the event of an emergency.

Children enjoyed snacks and meals provided by parents. Children ate at a table in the kitchen, helping to reduce the risk of choking and promoting learning opportunities in language and communication.

Children's safety and emotional security and wellbeing were supported through sensitive arrangements for sleep. Children slept in a pram or travel cot for their safety and comfort.

Procedures to support the administration of short-term medication could be improved. Information to ensure children were given the correct dose at the correct time had been recorded and signed by parents. However, other information, such as the expiry date and storage details for the medication, was not available. We signposted the Care Inspectorate guidance 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services' and suggested the childminder use the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) administration of medication forms.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children were able to choose independently from a selection of age-appropriate toys and books. The introduction of loose parts and sensory materials promoted opportunities for creative and imaginative play. Experiences included playing with sand and using stepping stones to invent their own game. Parents felt their child's development was always supported through interesting and fun play experiences.

Children benefitted from warm and kind interactions as they played. The childminder modelled good listening and talking skills by getting down to the children's level. They read stories with the children, helping to promote learning in language and literacy, as well as introducing colours, shapes, and numbers. They played games, such as Peek-a-Boo, which led to lots of giggles from happy children.

Planning approaches were child-centred and responsive to children's interests and life experiences. This included asking older children about activities they enjoyed and what they wanted to do. Some observations

of progress and achievements had been completed for younger children. These were used to plan experiences to support their development. This was in the early stages of implementation and should be continued.

Children enjoyed playing outside in the garden. The introduction of a mud kitchen with real life pots and pans helped children learn through familiar situations. Children had planted seeds and watched them grow, helping to develop their understanding of the natural world.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through connections to their own and wider communities. Visits to soft play, toddler groups, and music groups introduced children to new experiences and promoted opportunities for building friendships. Children enjoyed going for walks and visiting the park.

### 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.

Children were able to play and rest in a homely environment. Children had ample space for their needs and were able to play games and relax in the cosy living area. New storage units meant children could independently choose the toys and games they played with. Children ate snack and meals in the kitchen. A new, smaller table meant there was more room in the kitchen to play safely.

Children were kept safe in a secure environment. The front door was locked to ensure children could not leave the house unsupervised. Risk assessments for outings, indoors and outdoors, had been completed. These helped identify any potential hazards to help prevent any potential accidents. The childminder advised the outdoor risk assessment was under review as resources had been added to the garden.

The childminder was proud of their garden and the changes made to promote safe and interesting play experiences. These included the introduction of a mud kitchen and a helping tong area for children. Weather permitting, children were able to free-flow from the kitchen to outside. This helped their emotional and physical wellbeing by accessing fresh air with opportunities to run around. The childminder advised improvements such, as building dens with the children, were ongoing.

Children played in a clean and pleasant environment. Disposable aprons and gloves were available when supporting children in their personal care or when dealing with bodily fluids, such as blood. Children washed their hands before eating and were provided with a wipe to clean their hands after lunch. We suggested handwashing to promote sustainability and to ensure hands were fully cleaned to help prevent illness.

Children's personal information was stored confidentially in a safe location.

### 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.

The aims of the service included providing children with a stable, loving, and safe environment to play in, have fun, and learn and develop to their full potential. This was reflected in their practice and shared with families, helping them understand what to expect from the service.

The childminder was committed to providing a good service which fully met the needs of the children and families in their care. They had grown in confidence and were more self assured. They were supported in their practice by a range of policies and procedures, However, a few policies were not in line with guidance and current thinking. The behaviour management policy was not reflective of the positive strategies used by the childminder; the child protection policy did not reference the guidance 'National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - Updated 2023'; and the complaints policy did not specify a 20 day timescale for resolution. The childminder agreed to review and make changes where needed.

There was some potential for children and families to become involved in the service and influence change. Pictures and messages were sent using What's App to reassure parents their child was safe and happy. Parents told us, "Lea is always open to suggestions" and "Lea's door is always open for discussion". Older children completed questionnaires and were asked what they wanted to do and where they wanted to play. Younger children were at ease in the childminder's company, contributing to them making independent choices which supported their play experiences.

The childminder was beginning to use self evaluation and quality assurance processes to evaluate and develop the service. For example, changes to the garden meant it was safe for play with interesting and stimulating play experiences. They recognised further developments to the outdoor space would be beneficial and discussed introducing more loose parts to support den making. To support further improvement, we signposted the document 'A Quality Framework for Daycare of Children, Childminding, and School-aged Childcare'.

## 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.

Children's wellbeing was supported through respectful and compassionate interactions. The childminder had a good relationship with the children and chatted and talked to them in a kind and friendly manner. They often checked to ensure they were happy and that their needs were met. This approach supported children to feel valued and secure and contributed to a positive ethos where children enjoyed attending the service.

The childminder was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and spoke positively about the support provided by the organisation. As a result, they used SCMA forms within their practice, including personal planning to support children's care needs.

The childminder had accessed core training, such as child protection, first aid, and food hygiene. Their clean and welcoming home was reflective of their knowledge and understanding of infection prevention and control. They were confident when discussing their processes to protect children and knew who to go to if concerned. This contributed to happy children who were safe and well cared for.

The childminder demonstrated a commitment to their professional development. They discussed research and reading they had undertaken to develop their knowledge and understanding of loose parts play. This was evident in the improved range and quality of play experiences offered to the children. As a result, children were supported to reach their full potential and were progressing well.

## 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 achieve their full potential, the childminder must ensure children's interests and preferences are used to plan activities and resources suitable for their age, stage, and development. Observations of children should be used to record and plan their progress and achievements.

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 have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation, and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling' (HSCS 1.30).

**This area for improvement was made on 19 June 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

Planning approaches were child-centred and responsive to children's interests and life experiences. This included asking older children about activities they enjoyed and what they wanted to do.

Some observations of progress and achievements had been completed for younger children. These were used to plan experiences to support their development. For example, they played with sand to help develop their fine motor skills and read stories to help develop early learning in literacy.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

#### Previous area for improvement 2

In order to improve outcomes for children, the childminder should ensure children are kept safe and well cared for in a service reflective of their aims.

To do this, the childminder should, at a minimum:

- a) Ensure policies and procedures, including service aims, are updated and reflected in practice.
- b) Ensure a quality assurance programme is put in place and any identified improvements actioned.
- c) Embed the practice of self evaluation to support the quality assurance programme.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

Supporting guidance includes:

- 'A Quality Framework for Daycare of Children, Childminding, and School-aged Childcare'
- 'Your Childminding Journey'
- 'My Childminding Experience'

- 'Self evaluation for improvement'.

These can be found at: <https://www.careinspectorate.com/>.

**This area for improvement was made on 19 June 2023.**

## Action taken since then

The aims of the service included providing children with a stable, loving, and safe environment to play in, have fun, and learn and develop to their full potential. This was reflected in their practice and shared with families.

They were supported in their practice by a range of policies and procedures. A few policies would benefit from review to ensure they are current and up-to-date. The childminder agreed to action this.

The childminder was beginning to use self evaluation and quality assurance procedures to evaluate and develop the service. For example, changes to the garden meant it was safe with interesting and stimulating play experiences. They recognised further developments to the outdoor space would be beneficial and discussed introducing more loose parts to support den making.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

## Previous area for improvement 3

In order to improve outcomes for children, the childminder should ensure they complete training and learning specific to their role and are competent in the application of, including but not limited to, infection prevention and control.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance, and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

**This area for improvement was made on 19 June 2023.**

## Action taken since then

The childminder had accessed core training, such as child protection, first aid, and food hygiene.

Their clean and welcoming home was reflective of their knowledge and understanding of infection prevention and control. They were confident when discussing their processes to protect children and knew who to go to if concerned.

**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](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?	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

## To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

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

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

## Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.