

Smith, Kym Child Minding

Lanark

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 July 2024

Service provided by:
Kym Smith

Service provider number:
SP2011981624

Service no:
CS2011281408

About the service

Kym Smith provides a childminding service from the family home in Lanark, South Lanarkshire. The childminder is registered to provide a service to a maximum of six children up to the age of 16. Numbers are inclusive of members of the childminder's family. There are currently 16 children registered with the service who have varied and flexible attendance patterns.

The children have access to the downstairs of the property which includes a playroom, dining area, kitchen and bathroom. There is direct access to a large, enclosed rear garden. The service is close to schools, nurseries, parks and public transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 31 July 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:

- spoke with five children using the service, one of their parents and received five questionnaires from families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder had established strong relationships with children and their families and offered a welcoming, homely environment.
- Children benefitted from good play and learning opportunities, both indoors and outdoors.
- The childminder should ensure they prioritise and address outstanding areas for improvement. This included painting, repairing and maintaining some areas indoors and submitting notifications when requested by the Care Inspectorate. This would improve the overall service provision and outcomes for children.
- Plans to start a formal childcare training course would extend the childminder's skills and knowledge and contribute to ensuring good 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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
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.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

The childminder knew children and their families well. Trusting relationships had been developed and maintained which supported good communication between the childminder, children and their parents. Parents told us, "I always chat with Kym when dropping off or picking up the kids. We talk about what they've done during the day and any little achievements they have made," and "They run and cuddle Kym anytime they see her. The kids always ask for them and are happy to be left with Kym."

The childminder had a kind, nurturing and caring approach with children and they were relaxed in their care. They sat on the sofas and told us what they had been doing that morning. "We walked to the park and I climbed up the high poles" and "It was a big walk. We went up a big hill. I'm tired."

Where children required support with personal care, this was done warmly and respectfully. Children proudly told us of their achievements which were praised by the childminder and the other children. This built children's confidence and created a positive, inclusive environment for children.

Parents provided their children's meals and the childminder provided snacks. We observed children having snacks of fruit, crackers and drinks of water at different times over the afternoon. This promoted healthy options and was responsive to individual children's needs and requests. To ensure children's safety, the childminder reminded children to sit nearby them and to take their time while eating to prevent choking.

The childminder understood the importance of sleep and rest for children's overall development. Routines took account of individual children's needs as well as families wishes to develop good sleeping routines. Medication was stored safely and associated paperwork was completed and in line with current guidance. This met children's health and wellbeing needs.

Although the childminder knew children's needs and interests well and personal plans were in place for all children, they agreed some plans had not been maintained or regularly reviewed to ensure these were a current reflection of the child's care and support needs, interests or next steps in play, learning and development. We discussed ways to manage these more effectively. (See Area for Improvement 1).

The childminder was clear about her role and responsibilities in keeping children safe. They planned to source child protection training to refresh their knowledge and skills in this area. This would contribute to children's health, safety and wellbeing.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy, having fun and could make choices of where to play and what to play with. They could choose books, toys and resources from low level storage and bookshelves and one older child had brought a tablet computer from home. This was carefully monitored to ensure there was a balance of activities throughout the day. The childminder promoted active, outdoor play in the fresh air.

Children told us of their visit to the park that morning where they had fun running, climbing, playing on swings and climbing frames.

One child told us, "I like arts and crafts best. Do you want to see what I made this morning?" They showed us an area where their artwork was drying and their folder where previous drawings and pictures were stored. This gave a strong message to children that they mattered and their creations were valued.

The patio doors led to an enclosed rear garden which meant children could independently access indoors or outdoors. Children had been investigating soil, worms and insects and told us, "This is the worm we found. We found a snail too." A digging area with spades and a ride-on digger meant children could freely explore and investigate a large, natural area. Wheeled toys and fixed swings and slide offered different opportunities for physical play.

The childminder's family had been growing fruit and vegetables. As children had shown an interest in this, they visited the greenhouse and planned to grow some different vegetables. Effective use of questioning had extended children's thinking and skills. Children told us, "There are cucumbers growing, but they are still tiny. Cucumber is my favourite and Kym told me I have to get the first one when it is ready. We have to keep watching them to see if they grow bigger" and "Tomatoes were green and then they turn red. Red means they are ready and you can eat them."

The five parents who responded to our questionnaire stated their child's development was always supported through interesting and fun play experiences and children always had the opportunity to play outdoors. They added, "The kids have a great time and always look forward to their days there" and "Kym supports the children playing outdoors as much as possible. They are often in the garden playing when I collect them. When doing the school run she always lets the kids run about at the park after school."

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's care, wellbeing, learning and development, the childminder should ensure personal plans contain all required information and are reviewed at least once every six months, or more often if requested or required.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

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

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Care was provided from part of the downstairs of the childminder's home. This included a playroom, bathroom, dining area and kitchen with patio doors which led to an enclosed rear garden. This indoor area and garden was solely for minded children to use during childminding hours. It provided ample space for children to play, indoors and outdoors with ventilation and fresh air. The playroom had soft furnishings, such as sofas, rugs and cushions for children to relax and play.

A variety of books, toys and resources were stored at the children's level. This meant they were easily accessible to children which enabled them to make choices independently. One child said, "I got the cars over there." (pointing to a storage box)

The garden was safe and secure. One section had been fenced off to ensure the childminder could see and supervise children at all times. This large area offered a variety of toys, resources and natural areas outdoors for the children to dig, plant and investigate. Having sole use of this area contributed to children's safety and offered opportunities for children to return and extend their own play. Examples included finding a snail earlier in the week, which resulted in children digging and looking for other insects and minibeasts to investigate.

Parents told us, "Weather permitting Kym supports the children playing outdoors as much as possible. They are often in the garden playing when I collect them" and "When Kym does the school run, she always lets the kids run about at the park after school."

At previous inspections there were maintenance issues within the childminder's home which needed to be repaired, refurbished and further risk assessed to ensure children's health and safety. These were also potential infection control issues. This included cleaning and painting some walls and skirting boards, replacing flooring which were potential trip hazards, repairing a kitchen cupboard door, removing a ripped sofa from the playroom and removing children's buggy accessories from the bathroom. As these issues had not been addressed, the areas for improvement remain in place and are noted under the section 'what the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection' at the end of this report.

To further support maintaining a safe environment for children at all times, we shared the Care Inspectorate's safety campaign information - Keeping Children Safe - Look, Think, Act. This highlighted the importance of keeping children safe when indoors, outdoors or on outings and would assist the childminder when risk assessing their home or planned trips.

Although the childminder was vigilant in promoting handwashing after children used the toilet and followed correct hand hygiene and infection control procedures for nappy changing, children did not wash their hands before eating snacks. To ensure children's health and safety, this should be addressed.

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 aims of the service were to ensure "all children were happy, felt safe, loved and had fun." This was evident over the course of the inspection. Consultations with children and families were mainly verbal through daily conversations and text messages. Examples included making plans for the summer holidays and activities they would like to do, ensuring all children had a voice. The children had visited parks and events in the local area, for example, the dinosaur trail and exhibition.

We discussed the areas for improvement we made over the last two inspections. The childminder had not submitted an annual return or an action plan after the last inspection to address these issues. All four areas for improvement had not been actioned.

The childminder acknowledged an action plan with timescales would have assisted them with ongoing developments. They assured us the required and requested information will be submitted going forward. Additional information is noted under the section 'what the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection' at the end of this report.

The childminder had support from local childminders where they could share and discuss their knowledge, ideas and good practice. We signposted the childminder to 'The Hub' section of the Care Inspectorate website to access current guidance, good practice, self-evaluation and improvement information. This would inform the childminder, develop their skills and knowledge and assist with the development and the quality assurance of the service.

How good is our staff team?

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 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder was kind, caring and knew individual children and families well. They listened to children and responded appropriately and sensitively to children. They were aware of each child's current stage of development, recent changes and conditions which may have an impact. They reacted positively and supportively to children's requests, preferences and achievements throughout the day. Strategies were in place to support children with additional support needs and training was planned for later in the year to increase their knowledge and understanding of particular conditions. These skills, knowledge and values resulted in children feeling safe, secure and loved. One child had written a poem listing the childminder's positive qualities which was displayed within the service.

The five parents who completed our questionnaire all strongly agreed they had a strong connection with the childminder. They added, "We get on very well. She understands our needs and is flexible to them. She is interested in our children, their progress and general wellbeing" and "I have an open, honest and respectful relationship with Kym. She takes a general concern in the kids, even on the days they are not there."

Although there was not a written training plan in place, the childminder had applied to undertake a childcare course starting in September 2024. This Scottish Vocational Qualification in Childcare (SVQ 3) course would assist the childminder in keeping up-to-date with current good practice and guidance, improve their knowledge and skills, leading to improved outcomes for children and the service as a whole. Becoming more familiar with current national practice and guidance had been an area for improvement at the last inspection. Additional information is noted under the section 'what the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection' at the end of this report.

Overall parents were happy with the service their child received at the service. They told us, "The children are happy. They have a great experience at Kym's. They have made good friends and the environment supports this. They are like a little family."

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 ensure children's safety and to maintain a safe environment, the childminder should review and update her risk assessments to note any changes, repairs needed or safety issues identified within her home or garden.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.' (HSCS 5.24).

This area for improvement was first made on 3 October 2022 and repeated at the last inspection.

This area for improvement was made on 30 May 2023.

Action taken since then

There had been no review or update of risk assessments for the indoor or outdoor environments.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children's health and safety and to maintain a safe environment, the childminder should clean, paint and repair areas of her home as discussed.

This includes but is not limited to:

- repairing or replacing the flooring in the kitchen and playroom to ensure there are no potential trip hazards between both areas and particularly at the patio doors
- repairing a kitchen cupboard door below the sink to ensure this can close safely and securely
- cleaning and painting skirting boards and door frames throughout the downstairs areas
- removing children's buggies and large equipment from the bathroom to a more hygienic area
- ensuring the sofa is clean and comfortable for children to rest and relax.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.' (HSCS 5.24)

This area for improvement was made on 30 May 2023.

Action taken since then

There had been no repairs or refurbishment of the premises to address the areas for improvement listed.

A new sofa was in place alongside the original sofa, which was not in an acceptable condition. We were assured the old sofa would be disposed of as soon as possible after the inspection.

Children's buggies were no longer stored in the bathroom, but the buggy rain cover was. This should also be removed to a more hygienic space outwith the bathroom.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Previous area for improvement 3

To provide a well managed service, the childminder should ensure they keep all required records and submit required notifications and requested information to the Care Inspectorate.

This includes, but is not limited to: - submitting the error response form and action plan after inspection.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed.' (HSCS 4.23).

This area for improvement was first made on 3 October 2022 and repeated at the last inspection.

This area for improvement was made on 30 May 2023.

Action taken since then

The error response form was submitted after the last inspection, but the action plan was not. The 2024 annual return was not submitted and no other notifications submitted.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Previous area for improvement 4

To improve the childminder's skills and knowledge and to further enhance children's play, development and learning, the childminder should access up-to-date good practice guidance and training.

This should include, but is not limited to:

- become familiar with the documents 'Your childminding journey' and 'My childminding experience'
- become familiar with the document, 'Realising the ambition: Being Me - national practice guidance for early years in Scotland'

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

This area for improvement was made on 3 October 2022 and repeated at the last inspection.

This area for improvement was made on 30 May 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had not accessed these documents, but had applied for a formal childcare qualification starting in September 2024. This would assist them in improving their skills and knowledge going forward.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

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?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
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

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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 iarrtas.

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.