

# Smith, Dionne Child Minding

Aberdeen

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
7 August 2024

**Service provided by:**

**Service provider number:**  
SP2009975260

**Service no:**  
CS2009231713

## About the service

Dionne Smith provides a childminding service from their property located near the village of Potterton, Aberdeenshire.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children at any one time under 16 years, of whom no more than three are not yet of an age to attend primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

Overnight care will not be provided and minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate.

The children are mainly cared for in the kitchen and adjacent playroom. There is a garden to the rear of the property for outdoor play.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 August 2024 between 09:45 and 13:15. 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, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with three children using the service
- received five completed questionnaires
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children had fun interacting and playing with the childminder.
- Children enjoyed a variety of nutritious snacks and home-cooked meals.
- Children explored a variety of resources to support their learning and development.
- Children were cared for in a welcoming, clean, and inviting environment.
- Positive relationships with children and families helped to influence change and support the development of the service.
- The childminder was experienced and confident in 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. Children were given cuddles and were soothed to sleep when tired. They were well supported in their personal care and their dignity and privacy was respected. This contributed to happy and settled children. They commented, "I like going to Dionne's, she's really nice".

Children's overall wellbeing was well supported through the childminder's knowledge and understanding of the children. Children's personal plans recorded key information to support a continuity of care from home. A development plan for children who required additional support led to quality care tailored to their specific needs. However, some personal plans had not been recently updated to reflect children's current needs. This raised the potential for information to be missed. The childminder agreed to review children's information as a priority.

Children enjoyed a variety of nutritious snacks and home-cooked meals. Children sat at the table or in highchairs to keep them safe and reduce the risk of choking when eating. Older children were encouraged to be independent and help wash and prepare fruit for snack. Children were offered water and milk to drink, supporting good dental health. Parents were happy with the snacks and meals and 'strongly agreed' that their children were offered healthy options.

Children were able to sleep and rest. A travel cot was available for use. However, children often slept in a buggy or in a car seat. This restricted their movement and did not support their comfort and safety. In order to promote good habits around sleep, we directed the childminder to guidance from Sleep Safe Scotland.

Children who required short-term medication were kept safe and well by a knowledgeable childminder and effective systems and procedures.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children had fun and explored a variety of resources to support their learning and development. Children had fun making puzzles and creating shapes in playdough. Older children provided support to the younger children as they played. This promoted their independence and responsibility through helping others. Parents commented, "Dionne makes a big effort to give the kids as wide a range of experiences as possible". However, there were limited loose parts and natural materials for imaginative and creative play. We directed the childminder to the guidance 'Loose Parts Play - A Toolkit 2019'.

Children had fun interacting and playing with the childminder. The childminder modelled good listening and talking skills by getting down to the children's level. They read stories with the children, encouraging them to join in and look at the pictures.

There were some opportunities to support early language, literacy, and numeracy development. Children had fun listening and dancing to songs and nursery rhymes. Children played with shape puzzles and jigsaws, promoting early maths and problem-solving skills.

Planning approaches were child-centred and responsive to children's interests. Photographs recording children's achievements were sent to parents, providing them with an insight into their child's learning. Parents felt their child's development was always supported through interesting and fun play experiences.

Older children were asked for their suggestions for activities and outings. They commented, "I like going to Dionne's. She always takes us to fun places. We went to the Harbour Centre yesterday".

The childminder made good use of the local environment and amenities. This meant the children were getting to know their local environment, helping them grow into responsible, confident individuals. Parents commented, "Dionne makes a big effort to give the kids as wide a range of experiences as possible. She takes my child to a toddler's group once a week where they can get used to a setting with lots of other children as well as sometimes going to the local soft play which my child really loves".

## How good is our setting?

### 4 - Good

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

Children were cared for in a welcoming and inviting environment. Photographs of the children were displayed, giving them a sense of worth and belonging.

Children played mainly in the kitchen/dining area with an adjacent playroom. Play areas were clean and tidy with enough room to relax on the sofas, play on the floor, or be creative at the table. Children played with a range of toys and games relevant to their interests and age and stage of development. These were attractively stored and could be easily accessed by the children, supporting their independence and responsibility. Children commented, "I like that we do lots of good crafts".

Children had fun playing on the trampoline and on the swings in the garden. However, there were less opportunities for learning about the natural world through growing and planting. The document 'My World Outdoors' provides inexpensive ideas to support this. Parents comments included, "My children love that Dionne gives them plenty of opportunities to be outdoors. She has a very good outdoor space in her setting".

Children played in a clean and well maintained environment. Outdoor toys and resources were stored safely in the garden to help keep them in good order and safe for play. Whilst the indoor and outdoor environments had been risk assessed to help identify any potential hazards and prevent any accidents, they had not been recently updated. We highlighted this to the childminder who agreed to review and update risk assessments. This should include a robust risk assessment for the swing.

The childminder followed appropriate infection prevention and control procedures. Children were encouraged to wash their hands before eating and after playing. Disposable gloves and an apron were worn when supporting children with their personal care to help prevent cross-contamination and keep everyone safe and well.

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 play and developmental opportunities in a safe and supervised environment, together with personal care and feeding. This was reflected in practice and shared with families, helping them understand what to expect from the service.

There were some opportunities for children and families to influence change and support the development of the service. Parents were welcomed into the childminder's home and encouraged to chat and share information. Pictures and messages were sent using What's App to keep parents well informed. Parents 'agreed' they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service and felt confident any suggestions would be listened to and actioned. Overall, they were very happy with the service provision.

Older children were asked what they wanted to do and where they wanted to play. As a result, they took part in experiences and outings they enjoyed. Younger children were at ease in the childminder's company, contributing to them making independent choices which supported their play experiences.

The childminder was very experienced and felt they offered a good service which met the needs of the children and families in their care. Through discussion they identified areas for development, including reviewing children's personal plans and updating risk assessments. In order to further support self evaluation and quality assurance of the service, we directed the childminder to '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 and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children's wellbeing was supported through compassionate interactions. The childminder had a good relationship with the children and chatted and talked to them in a kind and friendly manner. This approach supported children to feel valued and secure and contributed to a respectful and friendly ethos. Parents commented, "Our child loves going to Dionne's and we have full trust in Dionne to look after them. She always puts the children first which is most important for us".

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. They were friendly with other childminders and together they shared ideas and discussed guidance and new initiatives.

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.

Children and their families benefitted from a childminder who was committed to providing quality care. The childminder had undertaken some professional development, such as developing their understanding of

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). To support the childminder further with their professional development, we signposted them to a range of resources on the Care Inspectorate Hub. Regularly accessing resources and best practice documents will help ensure good outcomes for children and support improvement of the service.

## 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.