

Home from Home with Emma Child Minding

Dumfries

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 July 2024

Service provided by:
Emma Harkness

Service provider number:
SP2023000011

Service no:
CS2023000015

About the service

Home from Home with Emma is registered to provide a care service for six children under the age of 16 years, of whom no more than three will be under primary school age and no more than one will be under 12 months.

This service is provided from a semi-detached home in a residential area of Dumfries. The service is close to public transport links, local amenities and parks. Children are cared for in the living room and kitchen/diner with the use of an upstairs bathroom. Outdoors, children have access to a fully enclosed garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 July 2024 between the hours of 13:30 and 16:30. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Observed and spoke with six children using the service
- Received electronic questionnaires from five families
- Spoke with the childminder
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing and respectful care. The childminder's interactions were kind, compassionate and responsive to children's individual care and support needs.
- Children were engaged in quality play and learning experiences throughout their day. We observed children laughing, having fun and leading their own play.
- Children were cared for in a bright, warm and homely environment. It was clear during our visit that children felt at ease in the childminder's home.
- The childminder had a positive outlook on change and improvement. They had children and families at the heart of their service.
- Children experienced compassionate and responsive care. The childminder was passionate about providing a home-from-home for children and families and valued the strong relationships they had developed.

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?	4 - 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 key question as very good.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced nurturing and respectful care. The childminder's interactions were kind, compassionate and responsive to children's individual needs. All parents strongly agreed they were happy with the care and support their child received. One parent told us, "My child asks to go to Emma's every day. She loves going there has the best time. She feels safe and happy there." Another parent complimented, "Emma's kind caring nature with the children, always listening and supporting them." As a result children had formed strong attachments and felt safe and secure.

Children's care and wellbeing needs were met through an effective use of personal plans. All children had a personal plan that had been developed with them and their families. These clearly detailed children's needs, routines, preferences and next steps. Children's progress and achievements were monitored through detailed observations. These were shared regularly with families in review meetings. One parent told us, "We review plans frequently and any changes in the care my child required are discussed and we find the best options." This ensured that all children were well supported to reach their full potential.

Children's privacy and dignity was respected during personal care. Children were asked if they would like their nappy changed and experienced warm and caring interactions. This meant that children felt comfortable and relaxed. The childminder had considered children's individual needs when making adaptations to their bathroom. They had added a paper towel dispenser, step and tap adapter to support younger children to wash their hands and faces. This promoted children's independence and reduced any potential spread of infection.

Children experienced a relaxed and sociable snack time. They sat together at the dining table enjoying snacks they had brought from home. The childminder provided fresh fruit and vegetables, and chatted meaningfully with children about their day. The childminder encouraged independence and provided support where required. They were immediately available should an emergency such as choking occur. This ensured that mealtimes impacted positively on children's health and wellbeing.

The childminder had developed genuine partnerships with families. They communicated regularly, sharing pictures and information daily through text messages and face to face at pick up times. One parent told us, "She communicates really well with me every time I pick my child up and sends messages throughout the day." Another parent stated, "Emma is great at keeping in touch. We always get highlights of our child's day when they are there, and a brief description of the day when we collect them." This promoted open communication and helped parents to feel valued and included in their child's day.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children were engaged in quality play and learning experiences throughout their day. We observed children laughing, having fun and leading their own play. One parent told us, "Emma does a wide range of activities with the children. They are child led doing what the children like to do. Crafts, exploring the outdoors, role play and much more."

During our visit, children enjoyed playing with magnets. This captured children's interests and led to children using magnets, coins and paint to create artwork. We also observed children using foam outdoors at the mud kitchen with cooking utensils. The foam then sparked their imagination and was used as snow, then as soap for a carwash. This promoted children's creativity and imagination. The childminder followed children's lead and skilfully used open ended questions to extend their learning and enrich their play.

Children were meaningfully included in planning their play and learning experiences. The childminder created a weekly calendar using children's ideas and requests. This ensured that experiences were child-centred and responsive to children's individual interests. Children were excited to show us floor books they had created with the childminder. These included photographs, children's comments and linked their play and learning to guidance documents such as, 'Realising the ambition: Being Me.' This meant children had ownership of their play and learning and their achievements were celebrated.

The childminder monitored and shared children's individual learning and development with families. All children had next steps and regular observations that clearly detailed their progress. These were agreed and reviewed with families regularly. One parent told us, "My child's development has sky rocketed since being with Emma." As a result, children were well supported to reach their full potential.

Children's experiences were enhanced through regular opportunities to play and learn in the community. One parent told us their child enjoyed, "Lets get sporty, walking through the woods to find items to later create pictures and writing shopping lists then going to the shop to find the groceries." Children also regularly visited the beach, forest, local parks and had recently been to the fire station . This supported children to build meaningful connections with their community.

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a bright, warm and homely environment. Children confidently moved around a spacious living room, kitchen and dining area. There were comfortable sofas for children to rest and relax when required, and plenty of space to meet their needs. It was clear during our visit that children felt at ease in the childminders home. One parent told us, "Emma is a fantastic childminder, she truly cares for each and every child that walks through her door. She is always wanting to know my child's interests so she can cater the days activities to things that she knows my child will enjoy, but also get an educational experience out of. My child is happy, relaxed and comfortable in her care and looks forward to going there every week. The environment is 100% a home away from home setting and I'm so glad I chose Emma to look after my child." As a result, children were happy, settled and there was a strong sense that they mattered.

Children had independent access to a large variety of resources suited to their individual interests and stages of development. Play experiences had been set up for children to explore, in addition to easily accessible toy boxes in a large storage unit. These had been labelled with photographs to remind children what else was on offer. This supported children to self-select additional resources to enrich their play.

Children benefitted from daily access to outdoors. They enjoyed free flow access to the childminder's fully enclosed back garden throughout most of the inspection.

Children also enjoyed a walk to the park, confidently selecting resources to take with them such as a kite, balls and a plane. This supported children to be active and had a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

The childminder had a good understanding of their responsibility to keep children safe. Their home was clean, tidy and well-maintained. Risk assessments had given consideration to all aspects of the service and included risk benefit assessments to prevent risk aversion. The childminder assessed potential hazards responsively in practice, and supported children to manage their own risk. The childminder asked children if they felt safe when engaging in risky play, and observed children closely without limiting their experiences. As a result, children were supported to assess their own limits and were protected from harm.

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.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder was motivated to provide a quality service for children and families. They had a positive outlook on change and improvement and had children and families at the heart of their service. This created a positive, supportive ethos.

As a newly registered childminder, they were in the early stages of their self-evaluation and improvement journey. They had started to involve families in service development through issuing questionnaires to seek general feedback. One parent told us, "Emma welcomes open and honest feedback and takes steps to make changes if required." We suggested developing their questionnaires to focus in on specific aspects of their service. This would help the childminder to gather meaningful feedback to inform service development. The childminder regularly chatted with children about their day to day experiences, and was responsive to their ideas. We advised the childminder to consider ways to gather children's views around wider service development. This would ensure children's voices are included and can influence wider change.

We discussed the benefits of using an evaluative guidance framework such as the Care Inspectorate document, 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' to focus the evaluation of their service. We also suggested using best practice guidance to enhance their self-evaluation processes. This would help the childminder to develop a robust cycle of continuous improvement that promotes positive outcomes for children and families.

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.

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children experienced compassionate and responsive care. The childminder was passionate about providing a home-from-home for children and families, and valued the strong relationships they had developed. One parent told us, "Emma is a fantastic childminder, she truly cares for each and every child that walks through her door. She is always wanting to know my child's interests so she can cater the days activities to things that she knows my child will enjoy but also get an educational experience out of. My child is happy, relaxed and comfortable in her care and looks forward to going there every week. The environment is 100% a home away from home setting and I'm so glad I chose Emma to look after my child." As a result, children felt valued and loved.

The childminder was confident in their role, and families spoke highly of the childminder's skills and knowledge. One parent told us, "Emma is a fantastic child care provider and both myself and my child couldn't be any happier" another stated, "Emma is an outstanding childminder." The childminder had previous childcare experience and qualifications. We could see the positive impact of this knowledge and their skills in practice. This meant that children were well supported to reach their full potential.

The childminder was committed to developing their knowledge and skills. They had recently completed training in providing a childminding service, child protection and paediatric first aid. The childminder demonstrated a good understanding of these during our visit. This helped keep children safe. They used the Scottish Childminding Association learning log to keep a record of their training, and evaluated what they had learned. This reflective practice helped the childminder to consider the impact of their new knowledge and skills in practice. It also supported them to identify further training and learning opportunities that would be beneficial, creating a meaningful cycle of continuous professional development.

The childminder used the Scottish Childminding Association and Care Inspectorate websites and provider emails to keep up to date with changes in best practice. They also regularly engaged in professional discussions with local childminders to share knowledge and ideas. It was clear during our visit that the childminder was passionate about providing a high quality service to meet children's needs. As a result, children and families were very well supported to achieve positive outcomes.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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