

McCardle, Margaret Child Minding

Shotts

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 July 2024

Service provided by:
Margaret McCardle

Service provider number:
SP2006962092

Service no:
CS2006138239

About the service

Margaret McCardle's Childminding Service is provided from the childminder's home within a quiet residential area of Salsburgh, in North Lanarkshire.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of six will be under 12, 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.

Children received care in a purpose built summer house, located in the childminder's garden. They had access to a secure landscaped garden. The service is close to natural woodland space, local parks, shops and other local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 29 July 2024 between 12:30 and 15:00. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. A team manager was also present as part of the Care Inspectorate's quality assurance process.

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:

- observed children's play experiences
- observed interactions between children and the childminder
- spoke with the childminder
- looked around the purpose built summer house and garden
- reviewed service documents and records
- reviewed feedback from three parents.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing interactions with a childminder who was responsive to their individual needs and knew them well.
- Effective communication with the parents meant that children's needs were supported and parents felt included in their child's care.
- Children's play, learning and development were supported by activities appropriate to their age and developmental stage.
- Children had opportunities to learn within their local and wider community and played outdoors everyday.
- The childminder attended training and participated in learning that helped improve the quality of children's experience.
- The childminder was using people's views and best practice guidance to self-evaluate the service and plan improvements.

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 key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy and settled in the service. They were relaxed and confident around the childminder and within the child minding environment. One child told us "its good fun here."

The childminder was very attentive to the children's needs and interactions were warm, nurturing and respectful. It was clear the childminder knew minded children very well and they shared with us how their care and development needs were being supported. The childminder knew children's personalities and routines and listened to children to ensure they felt valued and secure in their care. One parent told us "[my child] gets great care, I can't fault it at all."

Personal plans were in place for all children. Individual plans were detailed and captured each child's key information, including specific health and wellbeing requirements, family preferences and children's wishes and choices. This contributed to care and support between the child's home and the childminding service. As a result, children were receiving the care they needed.

Communication was a key strength of the service, daily chats and updates on digital platforms kept families informed of their child's day and overall progress. This further supported continuity of care and partnership working. Parents told us they received "constant communication and daily updates about [their] child" and "[the childminder] keeps me in the loop with everything going on with my [child] and helps me to help my [child] with [their] learning, some things I would not have thought of before."

Children were offered regular drinks and provided with nutritious home cooked meals that included fruit and vegetables. This supported children's health and development.

Children's emotional wellbeing and security was supported through safe and sensitive sleep routines. The childminder recognised when children appeared to be tired and offered them space to sleep and rest when needed, which also reflected families' wishes and children's routines.

Nappy changing routines were carried out in response to children's needs. Children were changed in a private area to ensure their privacy and dignity was respected. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was used effectively and good hand washing practices were in place. This helped minimise the risk of infection.

No children required medication at the time of the inspection. The childminder had shared their medication policy with parents and had Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) templates for recording children's medication, should this be required. The templates were in keeping with good practice guidance to help ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing needs would be met.

Clear policies and procedures were in place to protect children from harm. The childminder understood the role they played in keeping children safe. The childminder had undertaken child protection training and was confident in the procedures they would follow should they have any concerns about a child.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The childminder had a good understanding of child development, which meant experiences and play were based on children's development and individual needs. The pace of the day was relaxed and unhurried and led by children's interests. Children could lead their own play and were able to choose what they played with and where they spent their time in the childminder's home. One parent told us "my child is happy going there and is always full of exciting stories when [they] get home." Children told us "I like the bikes, painting and I like the big busy book" and "I like playing in the garden."

The childminder carefully observed children's play to enable them to provide responsive approaches to further extend children's imagination and learning. Regular observations of children were shared and recorded within personal plans, in daily WhatsApp messages and photographs to parents. This helped track children's progress and celebrate their achievements. One parent told us the childminder "keeps me updated on my child's development and activities."

We observed sensitive and supportive interactions, which were appropriate to the children's age and stage of development and supported their play and learning. Children were supported to engage in a variety of play experiences that developed their skills in language, literacy and numeracy. For example, children were counting, sorting and matching coloured resources. Effective use of questioning from the childminder also encouraged children's thinking and understanding. The childminder also used their interactions to introduce new words, encouraging children's language and vocabulary to develop.

The childminder understood the importance of children having opportunities to play outdoors and promoted this very well in their service. In addition to playing in the garden, children had opportunities to visit interesting and fun places in the local and wider community. This helped enrich children's learning and form strong links with their community. Parents told us "[my child] love the adventures they go on with Margaret, [my child] always talks about what [they] done for ages and tells me all about how fun their day was" and "the [children] are always out, whether it be at play parks, out walks to see horses and other animals, or out in the garden playing etc. They love it."

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

A warm, welcoming and homely environment was provided for children, to take part in a wide range of play experiences. The childminder's home was relaxed and safe for the children to explore and play, helping them feel secure and comfortable.

The childminder had thought carefully about where furniture was placed so children could have spaces to relax, play with friends and for messy play. The space enabled children to make independent choices and supported their play. Children could select toys and resources from boxes and open shelves at their height. The environment gave children the message that they mattered and their needs and interests were respected. We discussed with the childminder how this could be further enhanced to create an enabling environment. For example, further considering how resources are displayed to promote choice.

There was a good balance between resources for older children and younger children, while also considering their individual needs and interests. Resources were rotated and changed to support differing interests of children. Toys and materials such as books, construction toys, sensory objects and arts and craft materials supported children's choice and interests.

The childminder had started to introduce loose parts. These are natural materials that do not have a specific function or goal. They can be moved, taken apart and arranged, providing endless opportunities for children to develop their curiosity, imagination and problem solving abilities. We suggested they should continue to develop opportunities for loose parts play, both indoors and outdoors, to further enhance opportunities for children to explore their natural creativity. We signposted the childminder to the 'Loose Parts Toolkit.'

Children benefitted from an enclosed, well resourced garden. The childminder told us that children enjoyed being outdoors in all weathers, thus supporting them to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The garden was directly accessed from the playroom and offered free flow access throughout the day. This meant children could lead their own play and make choices of where they wanted to play. The outdoor space contained, areas to be together or to be alone. We observed children confidently move between the indoors and outdoor play spaces. Children told us they liked to "play with the mud kitchen. We make cakes with the sand and water."

Children's safety and wellbeing was promoted through effective infection prevention and control practice. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at key times, this helped them to develop good hygiene routines and helped limit the spread of infection.

The childminder's home was clean. Detailed risk assessments were in place to help ensure high quality facilities and safety of all children.

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 a clear vision for their service and was motivated to ensure continuous improvement to support positive outcomes for children and families. The childminder engaged well with the inspection process and was responsive to our suggestions for development.

Parents who provided feedback told us they were meaningfully involved in the life of the setting. The childminder consulted with families both informally and formally to gather people's views. The childminder also shared the successes and achievements of the service with parents. People's views and the achievements were used to show how the service was meeting children and families needs and to inform future improvements. For example, after consultation with families, the childminder was in the process of introducing an online platform to further support communication. One parent told us the childminder was "open to any feedback and involvement from our side." The childminder should continue to develop their approaches to ensure children's thoughts, feelings and ideas contributed towards the delivery of the service.

The childminder had developed a meaningful improvement plan for their service and this supported their continued self-evaluation. Using the 'Quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare', the childminder had identified what they were doing well and some areas they would like to develop within their service. For example, further developing the garden to enhance sensory experiences and introducing visuals to support children's choice. Their professional approach and commitment to improvement ensured children experienced consistently high quality care, play and learning.

Policies and procedures were in place to support practice within the service. These were shared with parents, so they knew what to expect from the service. The childminder should continue to review these regularly to ensure they remain in line with current legislation and practice.

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

Children benefitted from the childminder's warmth, kindness and compassion. The childminder knew the minded children well and was intuitive to their individual needs, providing personalised care. They supported children by playing with them, chatting and building strong attachments. One parent told us the childminder "is honestly fantastic and is so caring and nurturing."

The childminder was experienced and confident in their role. Over the years as a childminder they had developed a wide range of skills and knowledge that enabled them to respond and support the individual needs of children. This demonstrated a very good understanding of children's development and the importance of providing nurture and positive attachments.

The childminder used skilled questioning to stimulate children's independence, problem solving and curiosity. They had fun as they played together which supported children's learning, confidence and wellbeing. One child told us the childminder gave them cuddles, that made them feel happy and safe.

Children were supported in their play and development of social skills and showed enthusiasm when the childminder joined in with their play. The childminder recognised and valued the importance of play and this was evident through their active play opportunities. Recognising the importance of fun in children's play enables their learning to be taken forward in a way that is meaningful to them. One parent told us "my kids have come on leaps and bounds and [childminder] has played a huge part in that."

Children benefitted from the childminder's commitment to ensuring their knowledge was up-to-date. They were a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and were aware of the Care Inspectorate's Hub to access learning documents. This ensured they were well informed of updated guidance to support their practice.

The childminder had developed positive links with other childminders and this encouraged the sharing of good practice and ideas. This also provided the childminder with a network of support, which further enhanced high quality practice and experiences for children.

The childminder demonstrated a commitment to their own learning and development. Recent training included, Infant mental health, understanding child development 0-3 years and Autism and neurodiversity. We suggested that the childminder should now record post training evaluations, to include a reflection of learning. Reflections of learning would enable the childminder to revisit and reflect on how learning opportunities have supported them to develop their practice, support children's wellbeing or further outcomes for children.

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?	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

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