

Mrs Robertson's Childminding Service

Child Minding

Aberdeen

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 August 2024

Service provided by:
Lynn Robertson

Service provider number:
SP2022000194

Service no:
CS2022000289

About the service

Mrs Robertson's Childminding Service provides a childminding service from their property in the residential area of Sheddocksly. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age; of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. From 23 September 2022 to 24 September 2026, the childminder may care for a maximum of seven children at any one time up to 16 years of age; of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household. Minded children can only be cared for by persons named on the registration certificate. No overnight care will be provided.

The semi-detached home provides a welcoming place for children to play and rest. Access to a large, well-resourced garden allows children to have regular outside play. The service is close to local schools, parks, walks and green spaces. Access to the service is by foot, car, or local bus route.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 08 August 2024 between the times of 09:30 and 14:30. 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 previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

To inform our evaluation we:

- Spoke with children
- Received eight completed questionnaires
- Spoke with the childminder
- Observed practice and children's experiences
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- All parents strongly agreed they were happy with the support their child received.
- The childminder knew children very well and understood their individual personalities and unique ways of communicating their needs.
- Children's emotional wellbeing was supported by the childminder who used a calm, warm and nurturing approach.
- The quality and innovative use of toys and materials meant that children were participating in outstanding play experiences.
- Children and families benefitted from robust quality assurance processes and the childminder's commitment and dedication to service improvement.

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?	6 - Excellent
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 evaluated this key question as very good. We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

1.1 Nurture care and support

Children attending the service were settled, happy and relaxed in the care of the childminder. The childminder provided lots of reassurance to children which helped children feel loved, safe, and secure. All parents had very positive feedback about the care they, and their child received. One parent went on to say, 'She's now like family. I trust my children with only her.'

The childminder had formed close relationships with children and families and knew them very well. They worked in close partnership with parents to ensure each child's individual needs were met. This promoted positive outcomes for children as care and support was individualised.

The childminder spoke to us about children in their care in a loving, caring way. They knew each child as individuals, describing their interests, personalities and preferences and discussed how they supported these. For example, how they provided support in building confidence to speak with others, manage their passion for risky play or provided tailored spaces to meet individual needs. The childminder worked in partnership with parents and children to review personal information and plans. This helped to support children's overall wellbeing. We highlighted where there may be areas to improve on to ensure all information was recorded and available for review.

Parents were all very happy with the support provided. Comments included, 'She understands my child. She takes an interest in my child's interests and tailors activities to my child's needs', 'Lynn is a fantastic support for us, she is open with communication, Lynn will go through everything thoroughly and make sure everything is covered, which gives me such security and confidence with my child being looked after.'

Children experienced a sociable, unhurried lunch experience. Parents provided children with their own packed lunch. The childminder worked with parents to ensure lunches were nutritious. The childminder had lunch sitting with the children encouraging lots of discussion and interactions and positive role modelling. They used this time to provide lots of praise and encouragement and to keep children safe from any choking hazards.

The childminder supported children to take part in regular self-care. Children brushed their teeth each day and could talk about how this helped their teeth grow. Children were knowledgeable in how to keep themselves safe in the sun. Children wore sunscreen as required and sun hats on a warm and sunny day. Children had access to water and were encouraged to stay hydrated throughout the day. This helps keep children safe and build good habits.

1.3 Play and learning

The childminder had a sound understanding of child development and used this to skilfully support high quality play and learning for children of all ages. They supported the emotional resilience of children and families through holistic and nurturing approaches to secure children's wellbeing, including their right to

play. Children had lots of fun and experienced very high-quality play, learning and development opportunities.

Resources were developmentally appropriate and easily accessible, which supported children to be actively involved in their play and gave children choice of where and what they played with. For example, children could choose to play outside or inside. The childminder's very supportive interactions with children during their play supported them to be challenged and explore learning opportunities. This helped children to develop confidence and feel secure.

The childminder used creative ways to inspire children's play and curiosity of their world. For example, books and stories were used to extend children's interests such as making props connected to the book, 'Room on a broom'; the children were taken to the forest for role play and enactment. Children took part in how to care for wildlife by building small ponds, extending, and building bug hotels and regularly feeding and welcoming birds into the garden. A vegetable patch gave children experiences in growing, harvesting, and preparing their own foods and discussing healthy eating habits. These approaches successfully engaged children and enriched their play and learning.

The childminder's interactions consistently supported early numerical skills and language development. Children enjoyed using a very good selection of resources such as books, mark making materials, clocks, games and a very good selection of loose parts and treasures to explore. Younger children enjoyed experimenting with cars and various pipes and ramps to see how fast they would go. Children enjoyed reading stories on the sofa offering a quiet time experience to enjoy literature. Older children provided posters and drawings to create information boards indoors using their own voice to decorate their play space. A lending library was created which supported all children to have story books at home.

The childminder used highly skilled interactions and effective questions through conversation to extend children's learning through their play. The childminder used these approaches and their sound knowledge of children's development to consistently extend and create next steps to promote children's learning and development. As a result, children progressed very well. We highlighted a few examples where more detailed records would further support the review and assessment of children's progress.

How good is our setting?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent. We found performance was sector leading with outstanding quality outcomes for children.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder's home was very comfortable and provided children with an exceptionally high standard of play space. Children and families were greeted fondly and welcomed into the home. This helped support children and families to feel secure and nurtured.

The hallway provided a cosy, well utilised space for children's pegs to store their belongings. This helped to create a sense of belonging for children. Displays for parents promoted local amenities and support organisations which may be helpful for parents and families. Information about what to expect from the service was clear to view and kept parents informed. Children used drawings and posters to show how they liked to spend their time and how they felt about the childminder. This created a clear sense that this space belonged to the children, and they had a voice in how it was created.

The childminder was creative and made best use of available space and resources to create, sustain and enhance a motivating environment for effective learning. A wide range of resources were readily available which supported and challenged children. This consistently enhanced children's play, supporting meaningful engagement in learning across all aspects of their development. For example, a mud kitchen had been developed over the seasons and provided a hub of activity where children were immersed in their curiosity and imagination. Gymnastic style apparatus provided risky play and challenge which extended on children's personal interests and style of learning. Children enjoyed the sense of achievement when they could jump and balance learning new skills.

The quality and innovative use of toys and materials meant that children were participating in outstanding play experiences which extended their interest and provided appropriate challenge. For example, tinker trays and fidget baskets were included to help children focus on small scale calming activities. Parents told us, 'She has created a fantastic environment inside and out.'

There were well-appointed areas for children to engage in energetic activities and for them to safely rest or sleep. For example, a sensory area had been developed indoors which supported individual children. This was developed with the children's individual needs in mind and had been successful in providing a supportive, calming space. This meant that children of all ages were very well supported with their wellbeing in a space they could feel safe and nurtured.

Children were cared for in a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment that was of a very high standard of cleanliness. Resources were well maintained, organised and easily accessible to children. This supported children's choice and promoted them to lead their learning and explore through their own interests. Children were effectively supervised by the childminder and encouraged to understand potential risks to keep themselves safe. This meant that that children were building resilience and developing as confident individuals.

Children's play and learning was enhanced through strong connection to the community. Regular visits to the forest provided children with experiences of exploring natural and changing spaces and using this to influence their play. After children commented on how much litter they could see at the playpark the childminder supported children to collect litter in a safe way with litter pickers, gloves and hi visibility vests. This supported children to have pride in their community and develop future social responsibilities.

Well considered infection prevention and control procedures were embedded in practice. For example, children were well supported with handwashing at key times, such as before lunch and after visiting the toilet. This meant children were safe from the potential spread of infection.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good. We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder had a friendly, nurturing, and welcoming approach with children and families which supported the development of trusting relationships. The childminder spoke daily with parents during arrival and departure to exchange important information about each child. Photos and messages were shared regularly through social media apps which supported parents to be involved in their children's experiences.

Parents commented, 'She keeps me updated with everything', 'Lynn will discuss different things to help support each child individually.'

The childminder aimed to provide a place where children and parents feel welcomed, where children of all ages can have fun and learn in an educational environment and where care meets their individual needs. This was reflected in the childminder's practice and the close relationships that had been formed with families. For example, the childminder planned daily activities taking into consideration children's emotions and parents' requests. One parent reflected this by commenting they liked, 'The love and kindness that's given every day my child attends', and another parent said their child is, 'Very happy and comfortable with the childminder.'

Parents and families had opportunities to regularly discuss the service and make suggestions for improvements. The vision, values and aims were shared with parents when they began attending the service or through annual reviews and updates. Group and individual chats on media apps gave a simple but very effective way to ask parents for their thoughts or suggestions on any new developments. This had been used successfully to engage families in areas of development, such as the lending library and the introduction of a newsletter.

Children were positively involved in developing the service using a variety of age-appropriate methods. For example, children could talk about what they liked or didn't like about attending the childminder's service and created posters. Simple questions were asked of children, such as do they feel safe, nurtured and cared for. This supported children to feel a part of the setting and have their voice heard in a meaningful way.

These approaches, together with the childminder's use of the self-evaluation document 'A Quality Framework for day-care of children and childminding and school-age childcare', supported the ongoing development of the service.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good. We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder was aspirational for their service and for the achievements of children. They showed a strong commitment to developing their own practice and a high-quality service for children and families.

The childminder knew the children very well and provided compassionate and responsive care. We observed loving interactions between the childminder and the children. This supported children to feel valued and respected. Parents told us, 'I think she is a great childminder who goes above and beyond for the children and the parents' and 'We think Mrs Robertson is a fantastic childminder.'

The childminder had a childcare qualification and was actively taking part in continuous professional development. They had recently completed training courses such as 'Realising the ambition, Think STEM and introduction to infant mental health. They reflected on learning from these and had identified ways in which this would further help support children in their care. The childminder also continued to ensure core training such as first aid, child protection and infection control was up to date. This helped to support children's wellbeing and promote the consistency of high-quality care and learning.

The childminder was knowledgeable and experienced in their role of supporting children and used this to provide a very high standard of service. The childminder's ethos was centred around the children and families attending and their individual needs. Performance was constructively reviewed using feedback and self-evaluation. This led to consistently positive outcomes for children attending.

The childminder had a clear understanding of how children develop and learn and used this to enhance experiences for children. Best practice, such as the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) and United Nations Convention of Rights of the Child (UNCRC), was interwoven throughout procedures, policies, and the work of the childminder. This supported children's voice and the right to be heard.

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?	6 - Excellent
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	6 - Excellent
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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