

Brown, Judith Child Minding

Ayr

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 July 2024

Service provided by:
Judith Brown

Service provider number:
SP2003909718

Service no:
CS2003037974

About the service

Judith Brown provides a childminding service from her home in Doonfoot, a residential area of area of Ayr, in South Ayrshire. The service is close to local schools, nurseries, shops, parks, woodland, the beach, the library and other amenities. Children are cared for in the kitchen/dining room, the allocated playroom and have access to the downstairs WC and a secure back garden.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family/household.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 9 July 2024. We gave feedback to the service on Wednesday 10 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed and spoke with three children using the service
- sent out a family questionnaire and received five responses
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, content and having fun, in a service that focused on outstandingly high quality experiences and outcomes for children.
- The service was extremely well-established and very carefully planned to ensure children and their families were at the heart of all that was delivered.
- A demonstrable record of high quality, embedded performance was evidenced.
- Quality assurance and improvement methods reflected the sector leading service the childminder was delivering.
- The childminder had established excellent commitment to keeping well-informed and up-to-date in order to enhance their practice.

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?	6 - Excellent
How good is our setting?	6 - Excellent
How good is our leadership?	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

During the inspection there were three minded children present. It was clear they had a high quality, positive relationship with the childminder who was kind, caring, inviting and compassionate in their interactions. This helped the children feel welcomed and loved. Children experienced a warm, nurturing response from the childminder who provided lots of praise, attention and reassurance which helped the children feel safe and secure.

We observed children having lots of fun, with plenty of laughter and engagement with their peers and the childminder, throughout our inspection. Children were confident expressing their wishes in relation to their care such as where they wanted to play and what toys they wanted to play with. This enabled children to lead their play and showed us that they felt comfortable their voice would be listened to by the childminder. One parent told us, "Judith will often ask the kids what they would like to do, go or play with. Often when I arrive to pick up I can hear the kids and Judith laughing and playing through the door."

Children experienced an extremely positive mealtime experience that was sociable, unhurried and relaxed. Children were prompted and praised appropriately and were confident in the process. We particularly liked the manner that the childminder used with the children. The childminder was down at children's level and joined in with their discussions, or read their body language, which further enhanced the experience for the children. Children were actively encouraged to show us around the childminder's house, which they were very keen to do. This promoted their independence and life skills.

Children were cared for by a childminder who knew them, and their families, extremely well. Children attending the service had exceptionally detailed personal plans in place that were up-to-date, reviewed regularly with families and clearly identified next steps. This ensured children's current health, wellbeing and developmental needs were supported effectively by the childminder. The childminder used a range of communication methods to efficiently share information about children with their parents. This supported valuable and meaningful involvement from children and parents in planning for children's individual care and helped overcome barriers to children's learning and development. One parent told us "Judith provides plans and updates at regular intervals. At the time of setting these plans Judith asks for my input and asks if there is anything I want her to work on with the children."

We sampled accident and incident records and found these were completed appropriately. We also sampled the medication policy and found this was in line with current good practice guidance. Appropriate consent forms were available if children attending required medicines administered. This helped keep children safe.

The service had an appropriate infection prevention and control policy and procedures in place to support a safe environment for children and the childminder. The childminder prompted children to wash their hands at appropriate times.

The childminder actively engaged with other local childminders and support groups. The childminder had actively sought opportunities within the local community to increase their childminding skills and knowledge.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning through a balance of spontaneous and planned high quality experiences that promoted choice and independence. Free flow access to activities indoors and outdoors supported children to explore their ideas, build on their interests and stimulated their creativity. Children independently accessed a wide variety of toys and open-ended materials. On the day of inspection, we observed children playing inside with the dolls; they were encouraged to play together and imitate the childminder's own actions with a very young, minded baby. Children were confident collecting the toys or materials they wanted to play with, further supporting their independence. We saw the childminder was constantly providing innovative and creative ways to build on children's interests to scaffold and further extend their play opportunities. One parent told us, "Judith is fastidious in bringing to attention anything she thinks we can work together on to help with our child's development and growth."

Children's needs were supported by a childminder who understood their preferences and enjoyed playing and exploring the outdoors. Children were supported daily to go on walks in the local area, play at the local park, access forest sessions and the beach when they chose to do so. Opportunities to play outdoors daily enhanced children's play and supported their health and wellbeing.

Children's views were listened to which ensured they felt valued and respected. The childminder had introduced a photograph diary to record children's voices, views and comments in a meaningful way and to ensure they could take ownership of their play and learning when accessing the setting. These photographs were shared with parents to ensure they were involved and could chat with their child about their experiences. One parent told us "Judith is excellent at communicating and keeping us up-to-date. We get a daily update and photos."

Play experiences developed children's skills in language, literacy and numeracy. The childminder, through observations and assessment, identified and suggested activities to engage in with the children that supported their individual needs. The childminder added daily observations and regular updates to individual children's files which ensured information was up-to-date with next steps and plans to support development were being done actively and in collaboration with parents.

How good is our setting?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

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

Children were cared for in a safe, secure and stimulating play space 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 children were building resilience and developing as confident individuals.

The cosy, bright playroom layout and 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, when the children were playing with the dolls, there were doll size nappies available, changing mats and bottles that were filled with water. Buttons, zippers and hook and eye clothes help children on small scale activities. The children were keen to emulate the care the childminder was giving to a younger child. Prams and loose parts play resources were also used to create beds and blankets. The children spent a long time swaddling the dolls with wraps, singing songs to them and copying the nurture they were seeing. This play and learning was supported by the childminder with language to extend the play through high quality interaction. This consistently enhanced children's play, supporting meaningful engagement in learning across all aspects of their development.

There were well-appointed areas for children to engage in energetic activities and for them to safely rest or sleep. For example, a heuristic area had been developed indoors which supported individual younger 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's play and learning was enhanced through a strong connection to the community. On the day of the inspection visit the weather was extremely rainy, so the children did not access the outdoor environment. However, they had been out in the local wood earlier in the day, when the weather was brighter. The children were able to talk about what they had found and were very excited that a beetle had crawled on to their finder. They had further studied beetles when they got home and were excited to speak about them. This showed children were listened to and allowed the childminder to support children's learning based on their interests.

Displays for parents promoted information about what to expect from the service. This ensured parents were kept further 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. Parents told us they were kept very well informed.

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?**6 - Excellent**

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are led well

A clear vision, values and aims had been created for the service which reflected the aspirations of the childminder, the children and their families. The ethos of children was at the centre of all play, learning and developments. This was evident in discussions with the childminder, when reviewing their processes and procedures and confirmed in feedback received from all families accessing the service.

Children and their families' views were actively sought through a variety of means such as face- to-face discussions, questionnaires and messenger feedback which ensured a holistic approach to quality assurance and personal planning was in place. For example, six monthly one-to-one review meetings with families ensured children's successes, achievements, next steps and strategies were agreed through reciprocal discussions which enabled children to reach their full potential. All parents told us they had confidence in the childminder in helping their child grow and develop.

The childminder was driven and motivated to continue to develop and improve her service. The childminder engaged in self-reflection, self-evaluations and had created an improvement plan to continue to develop her setting in connection to the new quality frameworks. Adaptations had already been made in line with good practice guidance, feedback from children and their families as well as implementing learning from training. For example, families completed annual feedback questionnaires for the service, suggestions were then actioned by the childminder and reviewed. This told us the childminder had the capacity to support continuous improvement and ensure positive outcomes for the children in her care.

Documents, assessments and observations introduced by the childminder were linked to current legislation, frameworks and best practice guidance. For example, the Health and Social Care Standards and the SHANARRI (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included) wellbeing indicators. Processes established ensured policies, procedures and risk assessments were reviewed regularly which further supported quality assurances within the setting.

A complaints procedure was available to families providing accurate information about who to contact if they had concerns about the service provided. Families told us they would be confident raising any concerns with the childminder.

How good is our staff team?**6 - Excellent**

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder engaged positively and professionally in the inspection process and was responsive during any discussions. It was evident the childminder was highly committed to their role, and they talked passionately about supporting children to reach their full potential by listening and respecting their views, wishes and wants.

The childminder had undertaken recent training in self-reflective practice with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) which we could see was clearly embedded in their practice. They had also engaged in several courses to develop their skills and knowledge. For example, first aid and safeguarding children. The childminder advised us they kept up-to-date with best practice and legislation through their registration with SCMA, the Care Inspectorate provider updates and linking with their local childminding network. The childminder engaged with self-reflection after training, which was recorded and reviewed the impact of training on children's experiences and outcomes. For example, after self-study on loose parts play, the childminder reviewed and developed her resources to support children in extending their play and learning opportunities. The childminder then observed and evaluated the impact on children's play to ensure positive outcomes had been achieved.

The childminder proactively engaged in professional discussions, online and face-to-face with other local childminders to discuss new guidance, documents and good practice ideas. They accessed a local community support hub to increase their knowledge, skills and understanding of childminding to ensure they continued to deliver a high-quality service to the children in their care.

The childminder was skilled, knowledgeable and experienced. They placed children and their families at the heart of their work and were committed to continual improvement of the service. The childminder engaged with children in a warm, responsive and respectful manner that supported their self-esteem and confidence. The childminder engaged in skilled questioning with children to support their curiosity and learning. They promoted positive behaviour by role modelling soft tones, kind words and friendly engagement with the children. We saw some lovely examples of this during our inspection visit. One parent told us, "My child has been allowed to create some lovely friendships with the other children being looked after which is so nice to see. I can go to work safe in the knowledge my child is in excellent hands."

The childminder was aware of their responsibility in safeguarding children in their care and had an appropriate child protection policy in place with relevant contact details. This helped keep children safe.

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?	6 - Excellent
1.1 Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent
1.3 Play and learning	6 - Excellent
How good is our setting?	6 - Excellent
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	6 - Excellent
How good is our leadership?	6 - Excellent
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	6 - Excellent

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