

Murphie, Amy Child Minding

Grantown-on-Spey

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 September 2024

Service provided by:
Amy Murphie

Service provider number:
SP2011982564

Service no:
CS2011298062

About the service

Amy Murphie provides a childminding service to a maximum of maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age: of whom no more than six are under 12 years; 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.

The childminder operates her service from her detached, family home, located in the centre of Grantown on Spey, situated in the Cairngorms. Children have access to a number of living spaces, in addition to the large garden at the rear of the property, which is situated within walking distance from the local school, shops, parks and woodlands.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 3 September 2024, between 9.45 am and 12.45pm. 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.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service;
- reviewed feedback received from seven families;
- spoke with the childminder;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder supported children with warm and compassionate approaches to their overall wellbeing, which contributed to them feeling safe and secure.
- Children received the care and support that was right for them as the childminder knew them well, and was able to anticipate their needs.
- Play and learning opportunities supported children to learn a range of life long skills.
- The childminder valued the close relationships she had developed with children and their families. This contributed to them being meaningfully involved in the life of the service.
- Children benefited from care and support from a childminder who was committed to, and passionate about, providing high quality care.

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

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|--|---------------|
| 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

The childminder supported the children in her care with warm and caring approaches. Her interactions were kind, and children were happy to cuddle in. As a result, children felt safe and secure.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported as the childminder knew the children well. She had developed strong relationships with families who had been attending her service for some time. Some parents commented "I find her supportive. I value her service and her knowledge of child development. I trust her 100%." and "Excellent relationship with Amy, often talk in depth about how my child is progressing and any issues. Amy was really helpful listening and providing advice around my child's sleep and weaning." Parents who had recently started using the service valued the strong communication and sharing of information the childminder offered, saying "Amy communicates well on how our child gets on every day." The childminder told us she recognised the importance of following children's individual routines, demonstrating a very good understanding of the importance of working with families to provide the care and support that was right for each child. All of the parents who gave feedback agreed that they were always welcomed into the childminder's home to talk about their child's day and share information. These strong connections contributed to children receiving consistency of care when they were with the childminder.

Mealtimes were calm and relaxed. The childminder supported them to eat in a safe environment. She provided appropriate child seats for children to sit in securely as they ate in the family kitchen. Children who were having milk feeds were supported through nurturing approaches and a close relationship. This contributed to children having positive and sociable experiences.

Arrangements for sleep were well considered. The childminder understood the importance of following safe sleep practices, providing suitable sleep environments for the children in her care. Routines were reflective of families' wishes and children's needs which promoted good habits around sleep. As a result, children's emotional security and wellbeing was supported.

The childminder was very knowledgeable about the potential impact life experiences could have on children and their families. She was happy to support them through challenges, offering advice and support when she could. This supported families to build resilience, and supported children to reach their full potential.

Quality Indicator: 1.3 Play and learning

Children were happy and having fun in the childminder's care. She communicated with the young children in her care with a sense of fun. Children had access to a wide variety of age appropriate resources, both inside and outside. They were able to access different areas in the childminder's home and could access the enclosed garden with ease. The childminder recognised the value of outdoor play, encouraging children to play outside and supporting younger children to spend time outside. This meant that children's right to play was respected.

Resources on offer supported children to develop a range of life long skills. Play equipment in the garden supported them to develop gross motor skills, for example, through climbing and jumping. Children were able to grow and harvest vegetables, as well as help the childminder to collect eggs from her hens and help to feed them. Parents told us they valued the opportunities their children received at the childminder's home, with one parent saying her child "gets to help feed chickens which is extra exciting for him and is given information/ learning as he does this" while another said "Our son loves to be outdoors and Amy has an incredible space for this; there are some trees that facilitates some very exciting games of hide and seek and imaginative play, a slide and trampoline to encourage exercise."

The childminder followed children's interests, supporting them to extend these through responsive planning. Parents told us the childminder was happy for their children to bring in favourite toys from home, and added similar toys and resources to engage them. The childminder demonstrated a very good understanding of child development and relevant theory. She recognised the importance of play for learning, supporting children to develop at their own pace. She worked closely with families when children needed additional support, supporting children to develop a broad range of lifelong learning skills. One parent commented about the service, "A caring setting, Amy teaches and supports the children to interact positively and kindly, promoting sharing, listening. The large amount of outdoor time and play has been a huge benefit."

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through strong connections with the local community. The childminder regularly took children on walks to the local woods and parks, and to the local shops, school and playgroup, which supported them to learn about the world around them.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: 2.2 High quality facilities

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.

Children experienced care in a home from home environment, which reflected the childminder's aims and objectives. Her home was furnished to a high standard, with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Children had ample space to play, learn and relax in, which told them that they mattered.

Spaces reflected the children's interests, ages and stages of development, offering them a range of stimulating resources to support their learning. Such as a variety of books, games and toys inside that children could enjoy on their own, or with friends. The childminder recognised the value of loose parts and natural resources to support children's developing imagination and curiosity, ensuring they had access to these both inside and outside.

The childminder's home was secure and well maintained. Stair gates were in place to prevent children from accessing certain areas of the home, and a sturdy fire guard kept them safe from the stove. Fences and gates around the property were in good order, and any broken or damaged resources were removed or replaced, reducing any negative impact on children's play experiences. As a result, children felt safe and secure while they played and learned.

The childminder followed best practice guidance around infection prevention control, which protected children from the possible spread of infection. For example, ensuring worktops were cleaned before mealtimes and play. Handwashing was carried out at appropriate times and younger children were supported to do this effectively. The childminder had a number of family pets and was conscious of following good infection prevention control processes in relation to this. Such as, removing animal food from areas accessed by children, and encouraging hand washing after petting animals, in line with her policies, which contributed to keeping children safe.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led

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.

The aims and objectives shared with parents reflected the experiences and care received. They provided families with clear expectations about the service, and how their children's needs would be met. We could see that these were embedded into practice and, as a result, children experienced high quality care and support.

The childminder valued close relationships with the families of children in her care. Feedback received by us highlighted this as a strength, with all families commenting positively about communication and the quality of care received. They told us they were welcomed into the childminder's home to discuss any concerns they had. As a result, most families felt meaningfully involved in the development of the service.

Children were empowered and very much involved in the day to day running of the service and deciding what they would like to do while they were there. The childminder listened to any feedback the children made about the activities they took part in and took this into account when reviewing her service. The childminder had plans in place to replace some equipment in the garden, for example, renewing the sand pit, to ensure children could continue to enjoy these experiences safely.

Throughout the inspection visit, the childminder demonstrated a motivated, enthusiastic approach to continuous improvement. She reflected upon best practice guidance, such as "A quality framework for daycare of children, child minding and school aged children" as she evaluated her own practice. She was committed to providing both children and their families with the best care possible, based on relevant guidance and best practice.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

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.

The childminder supported children through compassionate and responsive care. Children who had recently started attending already seemed settled and secure. Children and families benefited from the childminder's skills, knowledge and experiences as she supported them through transitions, challenges and successes. It was evident from the feedback received that families thought highly of the childminder and recognised her professionalism, and valued her service. Some of the comments received included:

"He is so well looked after at Amy's it's such a relief to know that he is so that my husband and I can concentrate on our work. Our son is genuinely excited to go to Amy's and talks about her and all who go there non stop."

"I am very happy with the service, my child is always happy to go to Amy, she is very friendly and welcoming and I have no issues leaving my child in her care."

"Amy is like a second mummy to my child. My child is always happy to go to Amy's house - before or after school or for full days during school holidays. My child is welcomed into the house and treated as part of the family. It's exactly the kind of childminder I wanted to find and we're so happy that Amy has space!"

The childminder had made very good use of professional development opportunities that linked directly to enhanced outcomes for children, and her own individual learning needs. She had recently undertaken additional training to support a child and their family, increasing her own skills and knowledge to enable her support them to the best of her ability.

The childminder was also the chairperson of a local playgroup, telling us this kept her own knowledge up to date as she worked with other professionals regularly, sharing new guidance and discussing best practice. She also networked with other childminders, supporting each other through professional dialogue. This contributed to children receiving high quality care.

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

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| 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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