

Stephs Super Stars Child Minding

Stranraer

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 August 2024

Service provided by:
Stephanie Dunlop

Service provider number:
SP2023000059

Service no:
CS2023000080

About the service

Stephanie Dunlop (Stephs Super Stars) provides a childminding service from her home in Stranraer, Dumfries and Galloway. 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, living/dining room and have access to the upstairs bathroom 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 Wednesday 15 August 2024. We gave virtual feedback to the service on Thursday 15 August 2024.

This was the childminder's first inspection visit since registering. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

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

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, nurturing interactions to support their wellbeing.
- Children and families had settled in well and told us they were comfortable with the childminder.
- Infection prevention and control measures were not conducive to a safe and comfortable practice.
- There were limited opportunities for high quality play and learning experiences.
- There were systems in place to evaluate the quality of the service and identify areas for improvement.
- The childminder showed capacity to further develop her service to improve the quality of experiences and overall outcomes for children and their families.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

3 - Adequate

Overall, we evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

The minded children experienced kind, caring and nurturing interactions from the childminder. We saw children having fun. The children had developed a trusting relationship with the childminder and were confident to seek reassurance and cuddles when needed. We saw that comfort, warmth and nurture was offered. This contributed to the children's wellbeing and happiness and supported the children to feel nurtured, loved and secure. One parent told us: "She [childminder] is wonderful with my child, and they settled in with her so quickly. She provides fun activities including exciting walks and picnics and also drawing."

Informal communication systems were in place with families. This was done through daily discussions and text messages. This supported continuity of care and included parents in their child's day. A parent told us: "Steph provides daily updates with some lovely pictures. She genuinely cares for the children."

The childminder appeared to know children well which supported her to meet their care needs. Personal plans were in place, however, they should be regularly reviewed and updated with parents. Effective systems to ensure the childminder is kept up-to-date with children's changing needs should be reflected in the plans. As a result, the personal plans did not reflect individual children's health, safety and welfare needs. We signposted the childminder to Guide for Providers on Personal Planning: Early Learning and Childcare.

Children were safe and protected as a result of the childminder's understanding of what to do if they had concerns about a child's health, safety or wellbeing. This contributed to keeping children safe and healthy.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were observed to be happy and enjoying their time with the childminder. They had some opportunities which met their developmental needs and curiosities. These experiences offered children play and learning which included being creative and imaginative. As a result, children were engaged in their play for the some of their time. To further enhance children's play and learning, the childminder should develop play resources and experiences that reflect children's age and stage of development (see area for improvement 1).

The childminder had supported the children to build links in their local community through going for walks, accessing local playgroups and amenities, visiting the park, beach and local attractions. This provided opportunities for play and learning through connections to the children's own and wider communities. The childminder captured children's experiences using photographs and shared these in a personal learning journal, these would benefit from evaluation and next steps being identified. This will support children to progress and achieve their full potential. We discussed ways in which the childminder could develop this to effectively support and challenge children's play and learning.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children to reach their full potential, the childminder should continue to enhance and develop open ended and natural resources, to support breadth and balance in children's next steps and extend their experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials" (HSCS 1.31).

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

The childminder provided children with a bright, warm and welcoming environment. It was clear that children felt relaxed in the childminder's home. There were places where they could play together and also comfortable furniture where they could relax. Children had access to a limited selection of toys and resources. There were alternative resources in a large cupboard that allowed some self-selection. The childminder should continue to respond to any requests for other activities that will provide breadth and depth to play and learning opportunities. This will help children to develop confidence as they play.

The childminder's garden provided children with a large, enclosed space for outdoor play. We observed children accessing this and discussed measures the childminder could make to support children to independently access this area. The children enjoyed playing with the resources available to them. Children would benefit from more varied, open-ended and challenging play resources. This will help to provide children with more opportunities to extend and enhance their play and learning, as well as support their physical development and wellbeing.

Children were not supported to minimise infection risk during their time with the childminder. For example, there was limited hand washing experiences and the changing mat was not cleaned between children. We discussed the importance of the childminder developing their knowledge of infection prevention and control guidance. As a result, we have asked the childminder to review hygiene practices to make them easier to manage, more suitable for use and to promote good practice in infection prevention and control (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing and promote good practice in infection prevention and control, the provider should ensure that effective infection prevention and control measures are in place.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "I experience an environment which is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment" (HSCS 5.24).

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on children's outcomes and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

This was the childminder's first inspection since registering. Self-reflection from the registration process had helped the childminder to consider her service and identify areas to improve. Improvement planning was formally recorded, and with some tweaks will be an effective and robust document that will support future development and shape progress. We heard examples of training needs and skill updates being identified. The childminder should continue to develop and embed these approaches to quality assurance and improvement planning, to help to further enhance outcomes and experiences for children.

Policies, procedures and risk assessments supported children's wellbeing. The childminder had developed policies in line with best practice local and national guidelines, these policies should continue to be embedded in daily practice. The childminder had recently been procured by Dumfries and Galloway Council to provide funded early learning and childcare provision.

Children were encouraged to share their thoughts and views. Although still early days, the childminder had sought parents' views. Collecting the views of children and their families regularly will help to plan activities and continue to support parents to feel valued and included. A parent told us " Stephanie will send home questionnaires to ask our thoughts on what she could improve ... she is amazing with the kids. "

The childminder was aware that best practice guidelines could be used to develop the service and from her past experiences was familiar with these documents. We could see that the childminder had made use of the guidance documents - A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged children and Realising the ambition: Being Me.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

The childminder was kind and caring which ensured children felt valued and loved. She recognised the importance of strong attachments, was nurturing in her approach and understood children's needs. Children responded positively to the support provided by the childminder. She had formed strong and trusting relationships with children and their parents, giving them confidence and security in the care she provided. A parent told us, "Steph is very friendly, approachable and so good with children. She is always very calm, fair and they have the most fun."

The childminder was aware of the importance of ensuring that she had the appropriate knowledge and skills to offer high quality care and experiences for the children. The childminder was proactive in relation to keeping up-to-date with best practice and accessed useful websites such as the Care Inspectorate hub, the Scottish Childminding Association hub and other childminding forums and Facebook pages. We felt confident that the childminder would continue to use their knowledge and skills to fully embed this into the day-to-day operation of their childminding service. Ensuring children will benefit from an enhanced quality childminding experience.

The childminder was knowledgeable about children's development and aware of the individual needs of each child. She should continue to use this knowledge to respond to individual children's needs and interests. This will result in children continuing to receive care that is right for them.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the service registered. Details of any upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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