

Aitken, Dorothy

Child Minding

Dunfermline

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 September 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2010979391

Service no:
CS2010271372

About the service

Dorothy Aitken provides a childminding service from her home in the village of High Valleyfield in Fife. The service is close to a local school, nursery, shops, parks, woodland, public transport links and other amenities. The children are cared for in a lounge, kitchen with an area for dining and hallway which provides access to a downstairs toilet. Children have direct access to an enclosed garden.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of five minded children under the age of 16 years, of whom no more than three may be of an age yet to attend primary school and of whom no more than one may be under 12 months (except in the case of twins). These numbers are inclusive of the children of the childminder's own family.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 24 September 2024 between 09:00 and 11:30. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with one child using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced kind, caring and responsive interactions from a childminder who knew them well.
- Personal information and contact details for all children should be recorded.
- Personal plans must be reviewed and information in them updated at least six-monthly.
- Children experienced regular outings helping them to feel connected to the local community.
- Quality assurance systems needed to be developed.
- To improve outcomes for children, the childminder should identify training, professional learning, and best practice guidance that would support 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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

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

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where there are some strengths and these just outweigh weaknesses.

Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Information was gathered using registration and 'All About Me' forms. The childminder must ensure this is in place for childminded children. Regular discussions with parents enabled the childminder to support children's individual needs and interests. As a result, they talked confidently about children, their personalities and how they were supported. While we concluded children's needs were met, personal plans needed to be improved so they contained current information about children. Reviews with parents should happen at least once every six months. It would be beneficial to record information about children's achievements, progress and next steps. The requirement made at the last inspection has not been fully met so we will continue it at this inspection (**see requirement 1**).

We saw that children were responded to with kind and sensitive interactions. Children were included in making decisions about their day which enabled them to make decisions about what they wanted to do. They felt listened to as the childminder actioned their requests for activities they wanted to do. Regular information about their children helped parents feel included and involved in what they were doing. Verbal updates and photographs shared children's experiences with them.

At the time of inspection, no-one needed medication. However, we could see the childminder had an appropriate system in place to ensure any medication was safely administered.

A system was in place for recording accidents and incidents, but no completed records were available. We reminded the childminder that, to support children's wellbeing, records must be kept in addition to informing parents verbally. This has been highlighted at previous inspections and so we have restated this area for improvement (**see area for improvement 1**).

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children were supported in their choices by the childminder. Requests for activities were responded to which enabled children to lead their play. Children had developed confidence in their physical abilities as they regularly accessed physical play. They played on large equipment at the park, explored the woods and joined in group activities. These experiences supported children's health and well being as well as promoting their social skills as they played with others.

The childminder used some observation to capture children's achievements and progress. For example, we saw children had made progress in literacy and numeracy and physical abilities. The childminder should use this information to identify 'next steps' to support children's continued learning and development. We talked about how this information could help plan activities to promote positive outcomes for children.

The community was used to extend children's experiences. Children's health and well being was supported as they had freedom to explore the natural environment. For example, they explored the woods and used large equipment at parks.

Requirements

1. By 31 October 2024, the provider must ensure that children's information is recorded clearly and reviewed within personal plans.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum ensure:

a) detailed information is recorded to support and meet children's individual needs, health, wellbeing, interests, and progression.

b) personal plans are reviewed with parents, carers and children updating information at least every six months, and when necessary.

c) plans are signed and dated by parents and carers, upon review or update.

This is to comply with Regulation 5 (2)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) Personal Plans. The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for care services) Regulations 2011, (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing accidents and incidents must be consistently recorded.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19) and 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder provided a homely environment which was welcoming and friendly and promoted a sense of belonging for children. They mainly played in the lounge where they had space to develop their activities. They ate in the kitchen and had access to an enclosed garden area. As there was plenty of space, children could develop their games by themselves or play together.

Appropriate infection control procedures were in place to support a safe environment. The home and equipment were clean, tidy, and well maintained. Children's wellbeing was supported by a range of measures to limit the spread of infection such as cleaning routines, ventilation and hand washing routines.

The community was used to extend children's experiences. Daily opportunities to be outdoors in the garden, visiting parks, and walks in the local area meant children benefitted from exploring the natural environment and learn about risk. Children developed skill and confidence from their experiences and were developing a sense of belonging in their community.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where there are some strengths, and these just outweigh weaknesses.

Quality Indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvements are led well

The childminder still needs to develop the use of quality assurance to evaluate the service. For example, policies and risk assessments had not been reviewed and updated and there was no plan for improvement. We suggested again that the childminder used the Care Inspectorate guidance 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' to support evaluation of the service. The childminder should continue to become familiar with the document to improve outcomes for children and families.

We also showed the childminder information from the Care Inspectorate's improvement team they may find useful. This included signposting them to bitesize sessions and other relevant best practice guidance on the Care Inspectorate Hub. This will provide support with formalising the self-evaluation processes, to identify what is working well and what needs to be done next to improve outcomes for children and families. This was highlighted at the previous inspection and so we have restated this area for improvement (**see area for improvement 1**).

Areas for improvement

1. To further support quality assurance, evaluations and improvements in the service, the childminder should become familiar with best practice guidance including the Care Inspectorate guidance 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged children'.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where there are some strengths and these just outweigh weaknesses.

Quality Indicator 4.1 - Staff skills, knowledge and values

Regular communication with families meant positive relationships had been established. Children experienced a consistent approach as information was shared and resulted in children experiencing a consistent approach to their care.

The childminder had knowledge of roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection and a policy was in place. The childminder had identified that they needed to take part in update child protection training, but had not been able to complete it. They planned to rebook it to update their knowledge in respect of safeguarding.

At the last inspection, we made an area for improvement about professional development. The childminder had not completed any training or learning since the last inspection to help build on their knowledge and skills. We discussed this with the childminder, and they should identify further professional learning. They planned to secure training opportunities through their membership with Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). We agreed this would be beneficial, to support their learning and help them provide high quality care and positive outcomes for children. We discussed keeping a record of learning and evidencing its impact on children's experiences. We signposted the childminder to best practice guidance on the Care Inspectorate Hub to further support practice (**see area for improvement 1**).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, learning and development the childminder should identify training and professional reading to develop their skills and knowledge. This should include, but not be limited to, updating child protection training.

The childminder should record learning and demonstrate how it has improved experiences and outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14) and 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 26 May 2023, the provider must ensure that children's information is recorded clearly and reviewed within personal plans. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum ensure:

- a) detailed information is recorded to support and meet children's individual needs, health, wellbeing, interests, and progression
- b) personal plans are reviewed with parents, carers and children updating information at least every six months, and when necessary
- c) plans are signed and dated by parents and carers, upon review or update.

This is to comply with Regulation 5 (2)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) Personal Plans. The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for care services) Regulations 2011, (SSI 2011/210).

This requirement was made on 4 May 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Personal plans were not in place for the minded child being cared for. The childminder advised she had given out the forms, but had not received them back. We will continue this requirement.

Not met

Requirement 2

By 26 May 2023, the childminder must maintain a record of children's attendance to show the total number of children in the premises at any one time.

This is to ensure the childminder is working within terms of registration and can account for children in the event of an emergency. This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of Users) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011/210.

This requirement was made on 4 May 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

The childminder had started to record times when children were attending the service.

Met - within timescales

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To support children's wellbeing accidents and incidents must be consistently recorded.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19) and 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

This area for improvement was made on 4 May 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had a system in place to record any accidents and incidents, but advised there had not been any to record. **We will continue this area for improvement** as we were not able to confirm the system was used.

Previous area for improvement 2

To improve play and learning experiences for children the childminder should provide a wider variety of natural and open-ended resources. These should provide appropriate challenge and opportunities for creative play and support children's interests and stage of development.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 4 May 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had added some loose parts for children outdoors. They should continue to add resources challenge children and support children interests and enable them to use their imagination. **We will continue this area for improvement.**

Previous area for improvement 3

To further support quality assurance, evaluations and improvements in the service, the childminder should become familiar with best practice guidance including the Care Inspectorate guidance 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged children'.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 4 May 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had not developed quality assurance systems for the service. **We will continue this area for improvement.**

Previous area for improvement 4

To support children's wellbeing, learning and development the childminder should identify training and professional reading to develop their skills and knowledge. This should include, but not be limited to, updating child protection training. The childminder should record learning and demonstrate how it has improved experiences and outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14) and 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 4 May 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had not completed training or learning to develop their skills and knowledge. **We will continue this area for development.**

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

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