

Donaldson, Collette and John Child Minding

Prestonpans

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 September 2024

Service provided by:
Collette Donaldson

Service provider number:
SP2003906924

Service no:
CS2003013284

About the service

Collette and John Donaldson provide a childminding service and are registered to care for a maximum of eight children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of six will be under 12, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the children of the childminder's family. Megan Donaldson is employed as an assistant in the service. One additional child, not yet attending primary school, may be cared for between the hours of 11.45am and 12.45pm, provided both childminders or an assistant is present.

The service is situated in the childminders own home in the coastal town of Port Seton, East Lothian, near local schools, shops and other amenities. The children are cared for in the conservatory and have supervised access to the kitchen/dining area and down stairs toilet. A fully enclosed garden was accessed from the conservatory.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 July 2024 between 10:30 and 13:00. 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 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 the three children using the service;
- reviewed online questionnaire feedback from eight families;
- spoke with the childminder;
- observed practice and children's experiences; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children's needs were met through nurturing and responsive interactions, which helped children feel loved, safe and secure.
- Children had fun and could choose from a range of toys and resources, that were appropriate to their age and developmental stage.
- Children enjoyed playing outside in the garden and this supported them to be active and healthy .
- Further work could be carried out to ensure that paperwork and development of systems was having an impact on outcomes for children.
- The childminder and assistants should continue to access training opportunities to ensure their practice is in line with current legislation, frameworks and best practice guidance.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
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?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children were supported by the childminder who was warm, patient and nurturing in their interactions. One parent told us "The childminder is excellent at supporting and understanding my child's needs". One child was present on the morning of the inspection and two further children arrived after nursery. The children were settled, comfortable and had developed positive relationship with the childminder and their assistants. Children were provided with reassurance, praise and comfort at appropriate times. This helped the children feel loved, safe and secure in the setting.

Positive relationships with parents supported effective information sharing and promoted continuity of care. This allowed the childminder to reflect family's personal preferences in their child's routine. Parents commented "the childminders make a great team, they keep us parents informed and can offer advice and support with behavioural issues" and another stated "I think we have a comfortable relationship where I feel I can be open and honest about anything. The childminder is very friendly but remains professional".

There were documents which made up a personal plan and they could discuss with us some of the supports that children received. We have asked the childminder to develop a system to record important information about children. This would enable them to assess if the support being provided was impacting on children's development or progress. A parent commented "We make plans and focus on what my child is struggling with and we assess what works and what doesn't".

Arrangements for sleeping were discussed. The childminder informed us that some children were settled for sleep in a buggy. We advised that children should sleep on a flat, firm surface. We suggested the childminder discussed best practice in relation to safe sleep with parents and recorded sleep routines in personal plans. This would support children's health and wellbeing needs appropriately whilst reflecting parents' wishes for sleep routines.

Children enjoyed a relaxed and unhurried mealtime experience, and they choose to eat at the picnic table in the garden. This supported their choices and wishes. Some parents provided lunch and the childminder provided a variety of healthy snacks and offered tea to some children. The childminder discussed the menu for tea and understood it did not follow healthy guidelines. We have asked that the menu is reviewed to include healthier options and to share this with the parents. A parent commented that "more varied homemade food" would make the service better.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were involved in leading their play and learning through a balance of spontaneous and planned experiences that promoted choice and independence. Some activities took account of children's suggestions and the childminder was responsive to children's requests for resources and activities. This meant that children had fun and their choices respected. A parent commented that their child took part in a range of activities that included "baking, peeling fruit, planting flowers and veg, making gifts for special occasions, number games, games to develop motor skills, counting games and outdoor play".

The childminder was involved in children's play when appropriate. This helped to support children's language development through appropriate conversations and role modelling. The childminder engaged in fun activities to support literacy and numeracy such as singing, mark making and counting games.

The childminder recognised the importance of sharing information with families. Photographs of children's experiences, with appropriate permissions, were shared with parents through social media. This provided opportunities for families to be included in their child's day and insight into children's daily experiences.

Children were supported to have connections to their local community. The childminder regularly took children to local groups, parks and other amenities. These outings provided opportunities to mix with other children and develop their social skills and extended children's interests.

Parents commented positively about the play and learning that their child received at the service and included "There are lots of activities creative and educational" and "very varied experiences educational and fun". Another commented "My child often brings home creative play items from the childminder that she has made that day. They gets lots of outdoor play, water play, imaginative play and access to learning toys both indoors and outdoors. I believe my child thrives due to mixing with children of all different ages and abilities".

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a homely, comfortable environment. The conservatory was a dedicated play area and resources were organised that supported children's independence. There was space for children to play, relax and make independent choices which helped children to lead their play. Artwork was displayed and this provided children with ownership and a sense of belonging.

The childminder understood the benefits of outdoor play on children's health and wellbeing. Children had daily opportunities to participate in outdoor experiences within the garden or through walks and outings in the local environment. The outdoor area at the rear of the property was secure and offered children a large, safe space to play and explore. There were areas to climb, slide, jump and run which supported children's physical development and overall wellbeing. As a result, children enjoyed their time outside had ample space for their needs with resources which sustained their interests. The childminder spoke about future plans to re-develop the climbing and swinging area. Parents all strongly agreed that their children received fresh air and exercise. Comments included "Fun safe garden for play and exploration" and "My child can access the large garden with a huge range of outdoor play activities and toys". Another parent commented "Lots of play facilities in the garden".

There were some infection prevention and control measures in place to minimise the risk of infection spread. Regular cleaning of toys and resources meant the spread of infection was reduced and children washed their hands at key times of the day. This ensured children experienced care in an environment which was safe and clean.

The childminder had a good understanding of risk and encouraged children to take calculated risks during their play. For example, using the climbing frame in the garden or at the park. Some risk assessments were in place, however the childminder should re-visit these to ensure they are relevant and used as live documents.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder had developed positive relationships with parents and carers and worked in close partnership with them. The childminder used daily conversations and a communication app to build relationships and exchange information. This helped the childminder to get to know children well, providing care and support, whilst also ensuring parents were included. Comments were positive about the childminder and their assistants and included "I am happy with the experience and service that is provided" and "my childminder is always open to feedback". Another shared a comment that they felt the childminder listened to the children and told us "The childminder really listens to my child and what they want and need. My child has additional support needs so this is vital that they feel heard, and they really do when they are at the childminders".

The childminder informally gathered views from families and this provided opportunities to share important information to help meet children's needs. Families told us they were welcomed into the home and could ask questions, which supported them to build relationships. Comments included "my childminder informs us of what our kids have been up to and future plans and ask if we would like her to do anything in particular" and "I am welcomed with open arms at drop off and collection and my childminder is extremely approachable". Another told us "It's such a refreshing environment, you can always discuss any aspects of your child's care". We have asked the childminder to consider how to widen opportunities to involve families in developing the service and identifying areas for improvement.

The childminder informally evaluated the service and told us of the improvements they had planned for the garden. The childminder may wish to develop a more formal approach to self-evaluation which would allow them to assess and make improvements to the service. To guide the childminder in this, they could refer to the challenge questions in, 'Realising the Ambition' and watch the 'bitesize' improvement sessions which explain the 'Quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' (Care Inspectorate 2022). This would contribute to improved outcomes for all.

The childminder had developed a range of policies and procedures, these were shared with parents, so they knew what to expect from the service. The childminder should continue to review these regularly to ensure they remain in line with current legislation and guidance, including up to date contact telephone numbers. The childminder should display an up to date registration certificate. The childminder had valid public liability and car insurances in place for their service which supported a safe environment for the children.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff Deployment

Children experienced warmth, kindness and compassion in the responsive interactions we observed with the childminder. This supported the development of strong relationships with the children. The childminder understood what children needed to help them grow and develop, and responded to their needs in a caring manner. This helped children build secure attachments and positively supported their wellbeing. Families commented "We love the childminder and their family. My child finds it hard to settle most places without me but feels so at home and relaxed at the childminders, I feel happy leaving my child in their very safe hands" and "my child is always happy healthy and well cared for and does new activities every week so is well engaged". Another told us "It's just a joy to watch my child at the childminder's and is so happy to go there, my childminder is just such an amazing person".

To help with the running of the service the childminder had their husband and an assistant registered on their certificate. This meant, in the case of emergencies, they were able to provide care for the minded children. Families all commented positively about the assistants and were happy with the arrangements. One assistant was present during the inspection. They knew the children well and was warm and caring with them. They had some knowledge of protecting children.

The childminder and assistants had found it difficult to attend training. However, we have asked the childminder to review how they keep their professional development up to date. For example participating in e-learning courses and undertaking professional reading are all ways of updating knowledge and skills. We have asked the childminder to ensure that their assistants are also trained in these core subjects. This would ensure that children's health and wellbeing is fully supported.

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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
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
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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