

MacDonald, Emma Child Minding

Inverness

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 September 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2009975913

Service no:
CS2009233770

About the service

Emma MacDonald provides a childminding service from her home in a quiet rural area close to the city of Inverness. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, 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 children of the childminder's family.

The service is located close to a local primary school and nursery, parks, and other amenities. Childminding takes place on the ground floor of the home, with children having access to the main lounge and dining area, kitchen area, toilet and rear garden. The children have access to an enclosed garden at the rear of the property and make extensive use of the local woods, parks and walks.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25 September 2024 between 15:15 and 17:15. One inspector carried out the inspection.

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:

- Reviewed two online questionnaires we received from families;
- Spoke to the childminder;
- Reviewed documents;
- Observed practice and daily life.

Key messages

- The childminder was warm, kind and caring in her approach.
- The children were happy and relaxed in the childminder's care.
- Children were at the heart of the service and were cared for by a childminder who knew them and their families well.
- The childminder should continue to develop their self-evaluation and quality assurance procedures.
- The childminder should further develop her knowledge and skills, and use these to improve the quality of experiences for children.
- The childminder engaged well with the inspection process and demonstrated a keenness to develop and improve 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 strengths only just outweighed weaknesses

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

The minded child attending the service was happy, settled and relaxed in the care of the childminder. The childminder responded to the child's needs, which supported their emotional wellbeing. The minded child was nurtured and supported throughout their daily experience. Strong relationships had been formed between the minded child and the childminder. This resulted in children feeling safe, secure and comfortable in the setting.

The childminder knew the child well which supported her to meet their care needs. The childminder spoke knowledgeably about the child's individual care needs and what she did to support them. She confidently described children's preferences, routines, and personalities. The childminder also focused on each child's developmental overviews and shared these with parents. However, whilst she knew children well, some recorded information such as the 'all about me' was not in place. The childminder told us she plans to look at these forms in order to focus on next steps and targets for each child. **(See area for improvement 1).**

The minded child enjoyed a relaxed and unhurried mealtime experience. The childminder sat beside the child while they ate, which minimised the risk of choking and helped keep them safe. Parents and carers provided packed lunches/snacks for their children, and the childminder offered healthy drinks and additional snacks when required.

The childminder was very aware of her responsibility to safeguard children. We were confident that the childminder was committed to her role and responsibilities in keeping children safe from harm.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The child was able to lead their own play by choosing and exploring resources that they wanted to play with. They were enjoying the new resources that had also been purchased to take into account their interests, for example, some building magnets. The childminder supported children's play experiences through discussions, encouragement and guidance when needed, and as a result, children were engaged and confident during their play.

The childminder made good use of the local area. This promoted children's wellbeing and sense of self in their community. For example, they visited the local park and woods in their area. These rich and varied play experiences supported children to develop skills for life.

Planning was mainly child led and children were able to choose what they wanted to do. We discussed ways in which to further develop planning. For example, gathering and recording children's ideas would support them to feel respected and included.

The childminder was aware of the individual needs of each child and had some information that supported her to evaluate their progress and development. However, there was a system in place to effectively assess observations to support children's progression. We discussed how the childminder could improve upon meeting children's needs by some planning and recording next steps and targets. This would assist in

providing challenging and stimulating experiences to help children reach their potential. (See area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children to reach their full potential, the childminder should review how she observes and captures children's progress and development and use this knowledge to support 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:

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

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

The childminder's home was cosy, welcoming and provided a homely environment for the children. The childminder's home was relaxed and safe for the children to explore and play allowing them to feel safe and comfortable. The minded child made use of all the available space and confidently moved around each area of the house. A range of toys were available for the child to choose from inside as well as the outdoor area.

The minded child had regular access to outdoor play which encouraged them to be active and to develop their physical co-ordination. Children had access to fresh air and access to the local park/ woods in the area. The back garden had loose parts to enhance children's play and learning experiences. The mud kitchen, water areas and role play resources had created an exciting and intriguing outdoor area. This contributed to children having opportunities to be active and lead a healthy lifestyle.

Risk assessments were undertaken and we suggested that the children should be involved in reviewing the risk assessments for the range of activities and outings they experienced. This would develop their own awareness of managing risk, be responsible and learn about the safety of themselves and others. This would also help the children to feel responsible and respected.

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

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Families were kept up to date about their child's experiences and achievements through daily verbal feedback as well as sharing of information by text and photographs. The childminder informed us that they sought the views of children and families using informal methods such as verbal communication. We encouraged the childminder to continue to consult with parents/children and to ensure where verbal or written feedback has led to the development of the service this is shared with children and families, supporting a culture of ongoing improvement.

There were no systems in place to evaluate the quality of the service and identify areas for improvement. The childminder was unable to give us an example of improvements made which had brought about improved outcomes for the children. We discussed the benefits of using quality audit tools, such as: 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare', in order to support this and reflect on her service. There was little evidence of effective systems in place to improve areas of service delivery and outcomes for children. Parents and carers should be offered more formal opportunities to provide feedback to the service, for example, by using questionnaires. We suggested that the childminder gave questionnaires to parents/carers and children to identify what's working well, to support improvement in the service and the outcomes for children. **(See area for improvement 1).**

The childminder had policies and procedures in place. We suggested a few changes to policies which would reflect best practice guidance and relevance to her service. This helped parents to understand the work and ethos of the childminding service.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure continuous improvement the service should further develop quality assurance and self evaluation processes to identify service developments.

This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) actively seeking the views from families and children to inform improvement;
- b) implement a quality assurance process to identify what is working well and what could be improved.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I am actively encouraged to be involved in improving the service I use, in a spirit of genuine partnership' (HSCS 4.7); and

'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 strengths only just outweighed weaknesses

Quality indicator: 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children benefitted from being cared for by a childminder who clearly enjoyed providing a nurturing environment. Children were listened and responded to with care, nurture, and compassion. As a result, children had developed strong relationships and attachments with the childminder. They were supported through responsive care where warm, kind interactions helped them to feel valued and secure.

The childminder had participated in training, for example, they had undertaken training in child protection and first aid. However, the childminder had limited knowledge of best practice documents and up to date guidance which impacted on her professional knowledge and skills. This meant that there were some gaps in their professional knowledge and skills which could limit children's experiences. Children and their families would benefit from the childminder expanding on their skills and knowledge to further support their care and support needs.

We discussed ways in which she could use the online resources such as, 'Realising the Ambition, Being Me' and 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' as a way of accessing guidance and practice documents to support the ongoing development of the service. Reflections of learning would enable the childminder to revisit and reflect on how learning opportunities developed their practice and support future practice.

(See area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support a culture of continuous improvement and positive outcomes for children, the childminder should increase their knowledge and use of current best practice in Early learning and childcare. This should include using the Care Inspectorate's website and 'The Hub' to support self-evaluation as well as the use of best practice documents including but not limited to:-

- Realising the Ambition (Education Scotland 2020); and
- A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare (Care Inspectorate 2022).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice (HSCS 4.11).

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	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	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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