

Baxter, Diann Child Minding

Forfar

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 October 2024

Service provided by:
Diann Baxter

Service provider number:
SP2003901195

Service no:
CS2003002704

About the service

Diann Baxter is registered to provide a childminding service to a maximum of six children at one time, up to 16 years of age, 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 and no overnight care will be provided. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate.

The service is provided from the childminder's home within a quiet residential area of Forfar, close to local schools, parks and other amenities. Children have access to the living room and dining area, kitchen, bathroom and an enclosed rear garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 October 2024, between 11:30 and 14:30. 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 throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with the childminder
- Observed the minded child at play and their interactions with the childminder
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents
- Reviewed feedback received from two families.

Key messages

- Play and learning were supported by activities appropriate to children's age and developmental stage.
- Children experienced nurturing care which supported them to feel valued, loved, and secure.
- The childminder had developed and maintained strong relationships with families. They routinely shared information to ensure children's care and learning needs were met and reflected families preferences.
- The childminder had created a relaxed, homely and welcoming atmosphere.
- Regular outings within the local community extended children's experiences.
- The childminder should continue to develop their approach to self-evaluation and improvement. Approaches should include children and their families. This would support to embed a meaningful cycle of continuous improvement.

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

One minded child was present during the inspection. They were settled and happy. They approached the childminder with confidence to seek comfort and to initiate play, highlighting that they felt secure and comfortable. The childminder responded to the child's cues in a warm and nurturing manner. They joined in play and provided lots of cuddles. This helped to develop positive attachments and supported the child to feel safe.

The childminder knew the children they provided care for well and spoke confidently about their interests, needs and preferences. Routines and care provided were adapted to support the individual needs of children and their families, with time dedicated getting to know families and discuss children's experiences. This contributed to positive and trusting relationships.

Personal plans were used to record information about children's needs and updated regularly with families. Some plans included children's achievements and next steps. The childminder could further develop plans to reflect goals and support strategies. This would help to tailor plans and ensure they are meaningful working documents that inform children's care.

Children were kept safe by the procedures in place for medication and child protection. No children currently required medication, however the childminder had effective administration and storage systems in place. The childminder understood their role and responsibilities for safeguarding children. They had a good awareness of potential safeguarding concerns and could confidently discuss their procedures in recording and reporting.

A sleep policy and appropriate sleep resources, including a travel cot, were available to help children sleep safely. When children needed to sleep, routines followed their preferences. The minded child was asleep in a reclining buggy when we arrived to carry out the inspection. This did not follow current guidance and we signposted the childminder to 'Safer Sleep for Babies, A guide for professionals' on the Care Inspectorate Hub, to support review sleeping arrangements and help to ensure safe sleep practices are consistent.

Mealtimes were unhurried and a positive social experience. The childminder sat with the minded child during lunch, providing help with eating when needed and using the time to chat together. This promoted language development and ensured the child was appropriately supervised when eating. The childminder had a good understanding of current nutritional guidelines and used their knowledge to support to provide healthy food options for children and guidance for families.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children's interests and ideas were well supported in the experiences they had. The childminder offered a balance of planned and spontaneous play, based on children's preferences and current interests. This meant children were settled, engaged and having fun.

There were a variety of resources available to support children's play and learning which were age and stage appropriate. Regular consultation with children and through the childminder observations of children at play resulted in experiences that were informed by children's ideas. It would be beneficial to extend the range of open-ended resources and sensory play activities. This would further promote children's curiosity and creativity.

Resources were accessible to children, promoting their independence and allowing them to choose how they spent their time. The pace of the day was relaxed and unhurried, giving children time to play and explore.

To extend children's learning, a variety of links within the local and extended community had been established. As a result, children were developing skills, forming new relationships, and developing confidence.

Discussions with the childminder highlighted that they had a good understanding of child development and used their knowledge to recognise children's achievements and identify where children required support. The childminder had previously used tracking tools to document children's achievements and to help with planning activities. We discussed the benefits of reintroducing these to support to identify next steps in children's learning. This would allow the childminder to provide appropriate challenge and help children to progress.

Children had opportunities to develop their skills in language, literacy and numeracy through their daily experiences. The childminder played alongside children and chatted with them during their play. The childminder modelled language and introduced new words and the pace of interactions allowed children time to process and respond. This meant that children were being supported well to develop their language and communication skills.

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 setting was clean, bright and well-maintained. The layout of furniture and resources provided ample space for children to play and explore. The minded child moved around the home with confidence and appeared at ease. This highlighted that they felt comfortable. Spaces were available for children to rest and relax should they want to and took account of children's needs and interests. As a result, the setting provided a home from home environment for children, which helped them to feel safe and secure.

The childminder understood the positive impact outdoor play had on children's overall wellbeing. Direct access was supported to an enclosed garden at the back of the home. The garden space had been thoughtfully developed to account for children's ideas and development. Activities included, a sand pit, mud kitchen, ball games and ride on toys. Other resources were available to promote a variety of play experiences and stored accessibly so that children had choice in how they spent their time.

Effective infection prevention and control measures were in place. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at key times and the home was free from clutter, which made it easily cleaned. Nappy changing procedures took account of infection control guidance, with measures supporting to minimise the risk of infection spread. To ensure children's privacy and dignity are promoted, the childminder should close the

blinds located next to the nappy changing unit when children are being changed.

Risk assessments were in place and reviewed regularly to ensure they remained relevant. These identified potential hazards and highlighted mitigations in place to keep children safe. We suggested more detailed risk assessments for outings to ensure all hazards are considered and mitigations identified.

Information about children was kept securely. Sensitive information was only shared with those who needed it to meet children's needs. As a result, children's information was protected, and storage complied with relevant best practice.

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 improvements are led well

Children benefitted from the childminder's positive and nurturing ethos. Their caring approach supported children to make choices, be independent and feel included. This reflected the aims of the setting, which put children at the heart of the service. Children were encouraged to share their thoughts and views which supported them to influence their experiences and the care they received.

Before starting in the setting, the childminder provided families with verbal and written information about their family, home and childminding service. This included providing copies of the service policies. This supported transparency and helped families understand the service and set clear expectations from the start. As a result, families were well informed and could be confident about the care their children would receive. This helped to foster trusting relationships from the onset.

The positive relationships formed with families supported effective partnership working to meet children's individual needs. A range of communication supported information sharing, which included daily discussions, message updates and questionnaires. This enabled families to share their thoughts and suggestions, allowing them to influence the care and experiences their child received. One parent told us, "Diann checks in with me to check the information in my child's personal plan is up to date. I feel comfortable going to Diann to advise her of any changes." The childminder told us that they felt formal feedback methods were not always successful. They should continue to develop this approach to help families influence change.

Self-evaluation was mainly informal and helped the childminder to reflect on what was going well and changes that could be made. They used self-directed research to keep up to date with current early years themes and had some knowledge of current guidance and how this could be used to develop the service. We suggested using the Care Inspectorate guidance, 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged children' to support to carry out more effective assessment of the service.

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 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children felt valued and loved through the consistent nurturing approaches of the childminder. It was clear that strong attachments and positive relationships had been established with children and their families. The childminder spoke about the families who used the service with warmth and compassion. A parent who provided feedback told us, "Diann is practically one of our family. She's looked after my children for 10+ years. The bond she has with my kids is very important to us all." Another parent shared, "She is fantastic. I couldn't think of a more nurturing and caring person to look after my child."

Families were warmly welcomed into the service and given time to discuss their child's needs and to share experiences. There were good opportunities to ensure parents were included and involved in what their children were doing when attending the service. One parent shared, "Diann asks for feedback and I feel comfortable going to Diann with any questions/feedback/suggestions."

The childminder had established close working relationships with other childminding colleagues within the community and is a member of the Scottish Childminding Association. This supported to keep up to date with new developments and best practice guidance, and indicated a dedicated approach to their role. The childminder should make more frequent use of the Care Inspectorate bitesize videos and best practice documents on the Hub. This would support to further update their knowledge of current guidance.

A variety of training and professional development had been completed which promoted positive outcomes for children. The childminder was beginning to keep a record of training which helped them to identify future training needs and evaluate any learning undertaken. This could be further developed by reflecting on training completed and how it could be used to develop the service. This would contribute help reflection on practice and improvement planning.

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**

Children's personal care plans should be developed to take better account of children's care needs and to reflect their learning, achievements and progress. Plans should be reviewed with parents at least six monthly or as children's needs change.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 31 May 2023.

Action taken since then

Personal plans were more detailed since the previous inspection and included some information about children's learning and progress. The childminder should continue to develop these and use the recording tools they have available to document children's information more consistently.

Plans were reviewed and update with families to ensure they were up to date and relevant.

We were satisfied that this area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support minimise the risk of infection spread, handwashing practices need to be consistent and embedded into daily routines. The childminder should ensure personal protection equipment (PPE) is used in line with current best practice guidance.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 31 May 2023.

Action taken since then

Handwashing practices were observed within the daily routine, with both the minded child and childminder washing hands at key times of the day.

When required personal protective equipment was used in line with current guidance.

This area for improvement has been met.

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
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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