

Ashleigh Graham Childminding Services Child Minding

Elgin

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 November 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2023000065

Service no:
CS2023000090

About the service

Ashleigh Graham provides a childminding service from their property in a quiet residential area located on the edge of a town. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children at any 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 include the children of the childminder's family/household.

The service is close to local amenities such as play parks and woodland walks. Children are cared for in the lounge/diner and a toilet. A garden at the rear of the property is accessed from the dining area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 November 2024 between 11:45 and 14:45. The inspection was carried out by an inspector 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:

- communicated with two parents
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder had got to know the the children well so that they were responsive to their individual needs.
- They shared information with families on a daily basis both in person and used regular electronic communication that helped to promote consistency of care.
- Children benefitted from spontaneous and planned play experiences that enabled to have fun and supported their development and learning.
- Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through connections to their own and wider communities.
- The childminder recognised the value of working in partnership with parents in a meaningful and supportive way.
- Their warmth and kindness towards the children helped them to feel valued, loved and secure.

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/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children had built positive relationships with the childminder as they experienced caring and attentive approaches. Children were clearly comfortable, happy and relaxed in their surroundings. The childminder's warm and respectful interactions promoted children's confidence and enabled them to feel secure and cared for. Children's overall development, was also supported through sensitive arrangements that promoted good habits around sleep and rest. Children slept well, they were assured by their comforter and cuddles from the childminder on waking. Where children required personal care, it supported their confidence, dignity and safety.

Mealtime was a calm and positive experience. The child was able to get involved by carrying their own toast to the table and we discussed how they might be a little more involved such as spreading their own toast. The childminder sat beside the child and chatted with them which helped to promote close attachment, and also enabled them to be focused on the child's needs. Parents provided meals and the childminder provided snacks that supported children's dietary needs and food preferences. The child had fresh water with their meal and water bottles helped them to remain hydrated throughout the day.

The childminder had got to know the the children well so that they were responsive to their individual needs. They shared information with families on a daily basis both in person and used regular electronic communication that helped to promote consistency of care. Families had been involved in the creation of the personal plan, it contained key information such as health needs, care routines, interests, likes and dislikes. However, there was an inconsistent approach to the review of the personal plan that supported a holistic approach to children's overall wellbeing (see area for improvement 1).

We also discussed and referred the childminder to guidance on the use of chronologies, that helped with the identification of children's needs and directed action to support children well. Ref: Practice guide to chronologies - hub.careinspectorate.com

Parents strongly agreed and agreed that they had a strong connection with the childminder, they told us that communication was easy, they were always kept up to date and there was time for longer conversations/chats. The childminder had also been a great help in supporting both them and their child.

We advised the childminder to review any as required medication that helped to ensure that no changes. Ref: management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services-hub.careinspectorate.com

1.3 Play and Learning

The play space enabled children to move around safely and independently, both indoors and outdoors. Well considered innovations and creative approaches engaged children's imagination and enriched their play and learning, they were able to try things out for themselves.

Children benefited from spontaneous and planned play experiences that helped their brain development and skills in language, literacy and numeracy. A variety of books were easily accessible to the children. The childminder skilfully used their knowledge and practice to support quality play and learning. They encouraged the child to try things out for themselves to explore and learn how things worked to support their development. A child was having fun with a new easel, using chalk to draw lines/patterns. They spent sometime trying to thread cotton reels that also helped their co-ordination and strengthen their fingers and hands. Children had fun with xylophones enjoying the sounds that they made. Textured materials such as a wooden role play kitchen and textured materials encouraged tactile play and extended exploratory play.

The childminder observed and assessed children's progress and achievements, which was shared with parents. We suggested that inviting parents to comment/share any are focus for learning/development as part of the process, would help to enhance the opportunity for them to to be involved. Parents told us that their child's development was always supported through interesting and fun play experiences. They had seen their child thrive in a short space of time and become confident and independent.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through regular connections to their own and wider communities. Children visited soft play, cafes, woodlands, beach, castle grounds including natural play areas, and play parks.

Areas for improvement

1. To help ensure that families and children shared information that was central to the personal planning process, the childminder should establish a consistent system of review, a minimum of six monthly.

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) and 'I am fully involved in developing and reviewing my personal plan, which is always available to me' (HSCS 2.17).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Children benefitted from being cared for in a comfortable, clean, well furnished and homely environment. It helped to give the message to children that they mattered. Children had ample space for their needs. Ventilation and plenty of natural light contributed to children's psychological wellbeing.

The childminder had suitable equipment in place to support infection and prevention control such as, individual hand towels for washing hands and disposable gloves and aprons for personal care needs. Good hand hygiene practices were followed, children washed their hands before eating, and hands were wiped after they had eaten. The childminder planned to complete food hygiene training to support safe food practices.

Children were supported to enjoy challenging and fun play experiences that also enabled them to move around freely. The childminder was familiar with the Care Inspectorate, look, think, act campaign also known as SIMOA and practice notes that helped childminder's to keep children safe. They had identified and removed risks to children within the home. Activities such as outings had been analysed to assess the

benefits to the children and action to be taken to help minimise risk. Photo's showed children smiling when climbing trees in woodlands, that helped them to learn and manage their own limits.

The indoor play space was well arranged to take account of children's stages of development and learning. The open plan diner provided a variety of materials and play resources, low storage units meant that children could easily help themselves. Children had their snacks and meals seated at a child size table and chairs in the play area adjacent to the kitchen. The adjoining lounge with sofa's and chairs enabled children to sleep, rest and recuperate or enjoyed quieter activities.

A large secure garden was accessed directly from the dining/play area that was mostly lawn, although children were not using it at the time of the inspection. The childminder planned to improve their outside space so that it provided an inviting and exciting space for the children that included creative and messy play. We shared resources/guidance that would help to provide a stimulating outdoor environment that enhanced children's development and learning.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

The childminder had appropriate records that were readily accessible. The childminder had clear policies that supported them in running the service and provided a foundation for evaluation of the setting. We suggested that establishing a programme of review would help to ensure they reflected the provision of the setting and aligned with good practice guidance.

The childminder recognised the value of working in partnership with parents in a meaningful and supportive way. They maintained regular and open communication with families and shared their child's achievements with them. Thank you cards expressed parents appreciation of the service provided by the childminder. Parents told us that the childminder was open to any suggestions and wanted to do the best that she could for the children. We discussed opportunities for parents to be more widely consulted/involved with the childminder to help inform development of the setting.

The childminder was in the process of embedding a method of self-evaluation to support improvement. As a result they had prioritised the garden as an area for improvement leading to improved outcomes for the children. To enable a consistent and manageable programme of improvement that was sustained, we discussed the benefits of a concise format for recording changes as they occurred and noting the impact of such changes. We also referred the childminder to the early years improvement programme for childminders - hub.careinspectorate.com

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

The childminder had a clear understanding of how children developed and learned and this was supported in their practice and documentation. They were clearly motivated to support the best outcomes for children.

The childminder's enabling and responsive attitude was supportive of building children's confidence and promoting their independence. Their warmth and kindness towards the children helped them to feel valued, loved and secure.

The childminder was a member of a childminding organisation and they attended a local childminding group with the aim of sharing and keeping up to date with relevant practice. They also had regular contact with another childminder and shared activities and ideas. Parents commented on the benefits to their child and how 'they were a great team'.

We discussed the benefits of a reflective journal with the childminder that helped to identify how the childminder had used their learning to improve their practice and experiences for children and families. We suggested that this could be extended to the use of good practice guidance /research ref: hub.careinspectorate.com

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

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| 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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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