

Childminding with Sarah

Child Minding

Inverurie

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
3 December 2024

Service provided by:
Sarah West

Service provider number:
SP2020991412

Service no:
CS2020381471

About the service

Childminding with Sarah is a care service delivered from the childminder's home in a residential area of Old Meldrum in Aberdeenshire. The service is registered to provide care to 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/household. There were four minded children present during the inspection visit.

The service is close to local amenities such as schools, shops and parks. Children have access to the downstairs area of the childminder's home and an enclosed rear garden.

About the inspection

This was an announced (short notice) inspection which took place on 26 November 2024 between 08:00 and 09:00 and 15:30 and 17:15. 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, registration and complaint information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service
- received one completed questionnaire from parents/carers
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children received warm and caring interactions from the childminder.
- Children could lead their own play, accessing a range of appropriate resources to support this.
- Children had fun and were well settled in the childminder's care.
- Children and their families were beginning to be involved in the evaluation of the service, the childminder should continue to develop this.

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 quality indicator 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 benefitted from the positive relationship that had been formed with the childminder. Their interactions were warm and caring, supporting children's confidence and self-esteem. The childminder knew the children well. They were able to tell us about the children's interests, in and outside of the setting and spoke knowledgeably about their personalities and characters. This promoted positive outcomes for children as the childminder was able to develop children's interests. Children were observed to be happy, secure and settled. One parent responded to our request for feedback. They told us they were happy with the care provided saying, "She treats the kids like they are part of her family". The childminder had gathered feedback which showed parents were happy with the care their children received.

Children ate snack at the kitchen table when they returned from school. This included packaged food such as rice cakes and popcorn which children chose for themselves. Regularly including fresh fruit as a choice would support children's healthy eating. The snack time was relaxed and sociable, providing further opportunity for children to build and sustain relationships with the childminder and each other.

Each child had a personal plan which was used to gather information relevant to their continued care and wellbeing. These were completed with parents and children and supported the childminder to meet children's individual needs. The childminder had begun to develop these, gathering information from children about preferences and interests. We suggested that they include a short note about care and support being given to children. This will support accurate information sharing and an evaluation of care.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported as the childminder had a system in place for managing medication. This included a medication policy, a means of obtaining parental permission and a format for recording the administration of medication.

The childminder had recognised the importance of safeguarding children, and chronologies were in place to capture significant events in children's lives. These were used to highlight any potential safeguarding issues arising and ensure that appropriate action had been taken to keep children safe and protected.

The childminder recognised the importance of sleep to support children's wellbeing. Opportunities for resting had been well considered. The children had access to large comfy sofas in the living room, and we saw children use these to relax and nap.

We found the childminder supported the children and families well. The childminder shared information with parents verbally at pick up and through WhatsApp. This ensured families felt involved and included in their child's experiences.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children were happy and having fun in the childminder's care. They could freely access resources supporting free choice which empowered children to lead their own play.

The children had access to a wide range of quality developmentally appropriate toys and resources to support their play and learning. These included small world, role play, loose parts, games and puzzles. These encouraged children's creativity, problem solving and imagination. Children's numeracy and literacy was promoted with a good selection of resources available within the setting. These included mark making materials, books and games for the children to explore and develop their numeracy and literacy skills.

The childminder was responsive to children's current interests and provided resources to engage children in meaningful play experiences. This included providing space and resources for colouring and drawing during our visit. Children played well together relating their play to their own experiences. They were keen to show us things they were learning at gymnastics and the interactions from the childminder encouraged them to do this safely.

Children had good daily opportunities to benefit from fresh air and exercise. They were able to explore their local area while walking to and from school. The childminder recognised and valued the importance of being outdoors, spending time in the adventure playground and doing activities such as collecting conkers. This allowed the children to become familiar and feel a sense of belonging within their community.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator 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 were cared for in a warm, welcoming, and homely environment. They had access to the living room and play area, kitchen/dining room, and downstairs toilet. These areas were well maintained and allowed children ample space for their activities.

Children were confident in moving around the childminder's home. Resources were accessible to children, providing opportunities for them to direct their own play and be independent. Children were also able to make choices and develop their own interests. For example, they could choose to play with peers or alone and were able to rest or participate in quieter activities when they needed to.

Children's wellbeing was supported through regular access to the outdoors. Although the garden was not used during our visit, children walked to and from school. The childminder used local play areas and green spaces to extend children's outdoor experiences. Older children were able to meet with friends from school, promoting their relationships and choice.

Children's safety was promoted as measures were in place to minimise risk. Risk assessments identified potential hazards and helped ensure children's safety. The childminder supported children's awareness of risk through discussion and role modelling while walking to and from school and during their play indoors.

Children's health was promoted as the childminder understood the importance of maintaining a hygienic environment. Children were reminded to wash their hands at appropriate times, supporting their own personal hygiene routines. An infection control policy was in place and they had completed 'Infection, Prevention and Control' training to support their practice.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator 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 was working in accordance with the service aims and objectives and these were evident in the interactions and relationships developed with children and families. They had not yet involved children and families in a review of these aims. The childminder should do this to ensure that their service continues to meet the needs of children and their families. This would support parents to know what to expect, and what was important for the service to meet the needs of children and families.

The childminder understood the importance of using the views of children and families to inform activities and the development of the service. They had started to formally ask children for their views and record their responses. These were then used to implement changes such as the resources offered. Parents had also been asked for their views and those received were positive. The childminder should now consider how to more effectively gather views and suggestions that will instigate change and support them in developing their service.

The childminder was beginning to evaluate her service using the document 'A quality framework for daycare of children childminding and school aged children'. They had also accessed the self-evaluation tool kit on the Care Inspectorate Hub and were beginning to use this to identify what was going well with the service. We advised that they should continue to develop the self-evaluation of the service until it also shows where improvements could be made. This will support the childminder to continuously improve children's experiences and outcomes.

The childminder had a range of policies and procedures in place supporting them to provide a quality service. Policies had recently been updated and shared with parents, which contributed to them feeling included and well informed.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 4.1 - Skills knowledge and values

Children were benefitting from a calm and caring approach ensured that the childminder was responsive to meeting children's needs. The childminder was respectful of children's rights, providing care that was individualised and responsive to each child. They were able to discuss approaches used to form connections and trust with children. This contributed positively to children's wellbeing and helped them to feel settled and secure in the childminder's care.

Our discussions highlighted that the childminder was enthusiastic and committed to their role and the families using the service. They were able to discuss how they were supporting children and had a clear understanding of how they develop and learn. Parents strongly agreed that the childminder had the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to care for their children and support their learning.

The childminder made good use of professional development opportunities. They had completed training

courses including infection control, paediatric first aid, child protection, bullying and online security. We discussed the benefits of keeping a record of professional development including information about each course. This would support the childminder to reflect on training undertaken and ultimately improve outcomes for children. The childminder should now take time to document this learning and the impact it has had on their setting.

The childminder had increased their knowledge and understanding of best practice guidance. They were able to discuss how they were using this knowledge to improve the setting and outcomes for children. For example, through engaging with the quality framework the childminder had successfully identified what was going well. Knowledge of best practice documents supported the childminder in delivering care that was based on most recent research and information.

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 improvement to the service and ensure good outcomes for children, the childminder should ensure quality assurance systems, including the use of quality audit tools, are fully embedded into practice.

This is to ensure that 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 13 December 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had used best practice documents and gathered the children's views to inform an evaluation of their service. This had identified what the service was doing well. Parents had also been asked for their views and responses showed they were happy with the care provided. We asked the childminder to continue to develop how they gather views and formally evaluate the service until these processes identify areas for development.

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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