

O'Neill, Christine Child Minding

Crieff

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 January 2025

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2003905397

Service no:
CS2003009991

About the service

Christine O'Neill provides a childminding service from her property in the town of Crieff, Perth and Kinross. The service is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of five children up to 16 years of age.

The service is close to local primary schools, parks and the town centre. The children are cared for downstairs and use the kitchen, living room and bathroom. Children also have access to an enclosed garden to the rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 14 January 2024 between 13:15 and 15:15. 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 information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- received 2 completed questionnaires from parent or carers
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

Children benefitted from responsive and nurturing relationships, which contributed to children remaining happy and relaxed.

Children were cared for in a welcoming and homely environment.

Frequent use of the wider and local community and garden space is promoting children's identity and supported children's physical wellbeing.

Basic quality assurance processes were beginning to promote continuous improvement.

The childminder used a wealth of experience to support children's needs. They attended core training to develop their 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?	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 nurtured through daily experiences. The childminder was caring and respectful to children. She was mindful to give them time to process information, which supported them to make their own decisions and share age-appropriate responsibilities. All parents told us that they strongly agreed that they had a strong connection with their childminder. This resulted in children being content and thriving within a safe and caring environment.

All children had personal plans that reflected key information about their care needs, likes and dislikes. Parents completed these when their children first joined the setting. All parents told us that they felt the childminder communicated well. This enabled them to regularly discuss their child's needs and to share any necessary changes to their children's care and support. For example, one parent told us that, "I always know how my child is getting on. The childminder listens and implements new learning and feeds back from what we are doing at home". Effective communication resulted in families and the childminder being confident that information was accurate and represented children's needs and wishes well.

Children were fully supported to have periods of rest and sleep, as and when needed. The childminder was attuned to children's cues and was responsive to their needs. This impacted positively on children's health and wellbeing.

Mealtimes were a nurturing, relaxed experience. The childminder was mindful of children's needs and supported them to eat at a time that was right for them. This supported healthy eating habits and respected children's choice. The childminder sat and chatted with children as they ate, providing a positive social mealtime.

Children were kept safe because the childminder had a very good understanding around safeguarding children. Appropriate procedures were in place and she understood the importance of safe storage and administration of medication. Whilst no children required medication to be routinely administered, an appropriate policy and recording system was in place if needed.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had fun playing through a good balance of planned and spontaneous play and learning experiences. The childminder took time to provide toys that supported children's interests and development needs. They enjoyed playing with toy cars, attaching pegs to various objects and watching the fish in the fish tank. The childminder used their knowledge of children's development to introduce engaging activities for children. One parent told us the children are "always active. The childminder encourages good manners, a solid routine and encourages learning through fun activities." This enabled children to experience good quality play and learning.

The childminder used skilled interactions to challenge and motivate children. She was responsive to their cues, and recognised when it was best to intervene, or when to provide support that enable them to achieve on their own. This enabled children to build confidence and resilience.

Children were supported to reach their full potential. The childminder continually discussed children's play and learning with their parents, sharing ideas and achievements. One parent told us that the childminder included them through "daily updates and children's own book of activities that my child has taken part in". This enabled children's progress to be well recorded. This resulted in genuine collaboration between children, parents and the childminder to ensure children thrived.

The childminder shared information with families through text messaging, providing pictures of children taking part in activities and information about what they had been learning. We found evidence of how children's needs and interests influenced their play and learning experiences. This supported children to achieve.

Children had the opportunity to visit various places in the community, including play parks and various playgroups. This helped to extend their play and learning opportunities and to socialise with other children. Parents expressed that they were very happy with the experiences their children received. One parent told us a positive aspect of their child's experiences was "she takes my child on buses, trains, to new play settings and experiences. I feel so proud when I get updates at the end of each day."

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 clean, cosy and welcoming, which provided a homely environment for the children. There was good natural light, with ample space for the children to move around, play and learn in. Children had access to a living area that included comfortable chairs to sit and relax together. This demonstrated to children that they were valued and promoted a respectful and inclusive ethos within the service.

Setting's indoor and outdoor environments were developmentally appropriate spaces. Parents were happy with the service. They spoke positively of social experiences that their children experienced at local playgroups and the benefits of active play when they were outdoors. For example, one parent told us, "(my child) experiences days out to wildlife centres and is always encouraged to walk places if distance and weather allow. An enclosed garden at childminder's place is used as often as possible to encourage fresh air playtime". This enabled children to receive positive outcomes.

The property was well maintained indoors and outdoors. The property was fully enclosed, secure and offered children a safe space to play and enjoy fresh air. Children also benefitted from visits within their local community, for example libraries and playgroups. This broadened children's experiences and enabled them to build on their social skills.

The childminder carried out regular risk assessments and visual checks to identify and minimise hazards within the environment. The childminder used her very good knowledge of the children to adapt the space depending on their individual needs, age and stage of development. We observed that children's opportunities were not restricted as a result, as the childminder was mindful to enable risky play with full supervision. This supported children to explore their abilities and learn from their mistakes in a safe, well-maintained environment.

Infection control measures met current best practice. The childminder used personal protective equipment when required. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at key times of the day, reducing the risk of spread of infection.

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 provided a service that met the needs of individual children and families they cared for. Holidays and planned time away were well considered and families were supported with patterns of care they required. There was an emergency procedure in place with another childminder. This ensured that children and families were provided with consistent care and kept safe in the event of an emergency.

Aims and values were in place and reviewed regularly with children and parents. Regular check ins with parents provided opportunities for them to share their views and opinions. For example, a recent questionnaire found that parents were very happy with the nurture and care their child received and one parent shared they would like to hear more about their child's day. The childminder reflected on the communication methods she was using and discussed other ways they could share information with the parents. This allowed children and parents to influence the care they experienced and feel valued.

Families were meaningfully involved and influenced change within the setting. Their views and opinions were sought annually through questionnaires and informal conversations. Parents shared that, "(I am) asked regularly about my opinion regarding my child's care and I am encouraged to suggest any other activities should I wish them to be considered.". This promoted positive partnership working with families to ensure that the service was right for them and their child.

The childminder was beginning to effectively self-evaluate the service. They had taken time to reflect on their aims, objectives, vision and values. As a result, they identified strengths in their practice, such as nurture and patience. They were also able to share development they were keen to take forward in order to improve children's outcomes. This demonstrated a commitment to continually improving practice and valuing feedback from those using the service.

The childminder regularly engaged in professional discussions with other childminders. This allowed them to discuss training they had completed, ways to improve their practice and groups they attended. Through these discussions, the childminder identified further training they had planned to complete. This ensured outcomes for children were continually considered to support them to meet their full potential.

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: Skills, knowledge and values

Children's wellbeing was supported through the childminder's kind and nurturing approach. This ensured that children and families felt safe, valued and respected. The childminder had a clear understanding of how children learn and develop. They were kind and patient when interacting with children. All parents strongly agreed that they felt they had a strong connection with the childminder. They told us, "I've never coming across a more capable and kind person in my life" and another commented, "she is truly remarkable. Great with giving valuable advice with any hurdles I have with my children, flexible, fair, patient and I trust her implicitly with the care of my child". This positively impacted children's overall wellbeing and helped them to feel loved, valued and secure.

Children were at the heart of the service. A parent told us they were always welcomed into the childminder's home to discuss their child's care, play and learning. The childminder carefully considered their needs, likes and interests to support improvement within the service. We shared the benefits of keeping a reflective diary to enable them to focus on goals and provided more opportunities to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Overall, the childminder had a positive, enabling attitude that effectively used changing needs and feedback to improve the service.

The childminder had a wealth of knowledge and experience of working with children. They kept their knowledge and practice up to date through emails and updates from the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA), and the Care Inspectorate. They also maintained positive links with other childminders, which resulted in the sharing of good practice and ideas. This also provided the childminder with a good network of support, which further enhanced good quality practice and experiences for children.

The childminder showed some reflective practice that positively impacted children. They understood the importance of reflecting on their own professional development to ensure they provided a good standard of care, play and learning. A record of training and a clear action plan were not in place. This reduced opportunities to effectively reflect on learning and measure the impact on children's care, play and learning.

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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