

Busy B's Child Minding

Westhill

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 February 2025

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2011983151

Service no:
CS2011305310

About the service

Busy B's provides a childminding service from their property in a residential area in Westhill, Aberdeenshire. 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. Overnight care will not be provided.

The service is close to shops, green spaces and other amenities. Children have access to the kitchen, play area and a fully enclosed garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 6 February 2025 between the hours of 08:30 and 10:45. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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:

- spent time with children using the service
- received four responses to our request for feedback from parents
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy and comfortable in the childminder's care.
- Nurturing care and support contributed to children feeling secure and valued.
- Regular, positive communication with families promoted continuity of care.
- Children benefitted from daily access to the outdoors, including walks, trips and local groups which supported their social development and learning.
- Children and families were at the heart of the service and were supported by a childminder who knew them well.
- The childminder should now consider the impact of developments within the service, to support the 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?	5 - Very 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?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good. We identified significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children and their families experienced a service which was very welcoming and friendly. This supported strong relationships and clear communication. Families told us they felt very connected to the childminder as "communication is very open". A parent said, "I enjoy dropping and collecting [my child] as [the childminder] is always so welcoming." This meant that children and their families experienced warm and nurturing care.

Children appeared happy and very comfortable. The childminder responded to children in a compassionate and respectful manner, which supported them to feel safe. Children received cuddles and closeness regularly, allowing them to feel secure in the childminder's care.

The childminder knew the children and their families very well, which supported their wellbeing and promoted positive outcomes. Personal plans were tailored to each child's individual strengths, needs and interests. These were regularly reviewed to ensure the plans remained suitable and effective. Parents told us they felt meaningfully involved in their child's plan. The childminder used these to further develop children's individual learning needs.

We did not observe a mealtime experience, as the childminder was taking the children out for lunch. One child intended to have their lunch out, while one had a packed lunch provided from home. This had been arranged with families prior to the trip, and parent wishes were followed. The childminder advised that they encouraged and supported children to be independent. Children's choices were also considered by being asked when they would like to eat. The childminder actively promoted best practice guidance, such as 'Setting the Table', including suggesting meal options to families. This further supported children's health and wellbeing.

Children were treated with dignity and respect; in particular, when receiving personal care. Since the last inspection, consideration had been given to where children were changed to support privacy and infection control. The childminder involved children in this process, where suitable, and offered reassurance. This meant that children felt respected and valued.

Children were kept safe through the use of chronologies included within each child's personal plan. These detailed significant events in children's lives and highlighted actions taken that the childminder had implemented to safeguard children. This supported children to be kept safe and protected.

Effective medication systems and procedures helped keep children safe. Whilst children did not currently need medication administered, paperwork was in place should it be required. A policy supported the childminder's understanding and practice and promoted parents' awareness of their processes.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were very confident and engaged in their play. They were able to freely access toys, games and books in drawers and on shelves when they wanted, in line with their individual interests. A child-centred approach to play allowed children to select resources relevant to their age and stage of development. Children enjoyed playing with dolls, building blocks and toy figures. The childminder shared with us that they regularly took part in craft and sensory activities. There was a balance of planned and spontaneous learning opportunities, which allowed children to meaningfully engage in high-quality play.

Children had regular opportunities to be curious and creative. This was promoted through the childminder's 'treasure basket'. Children explored a variety of open-ended materials, such as feathers, bobbins and shells, which they sorted and arranged. Their interests were extended through the use of high-quality interactions from the childminder, by role modelling and encouraging different ways to explore. This supported children's skills for life and learning.

Literacy and numeracy opportunities were embedded throughout the home and within children's experiences. A range of toys promoted children's skills and enhanced learning, such as books, games and craft materials. The childminder supported children's language through play by modelling words. One parent told us, "[The childminder] always encourages [my child's] speech and I have noticed this has improved massively with lots of new words learnt." This supported children's early literacy and numeracy skills and development.

The childminder was very knowledgeable of children's interests and planned for their individual learning needs. One parent told us, "Wide range of resources available. Each day is different." Another parent shared, "She knows what [my child] likes to play with and always makes sure there is lots of toys available... she knows him so well." This helped children to grow in confidence and supported them to reach their potential.

Children were supported to recognise achievements and build on their skills. The childminder used praise and encouragement, acknowledging when children achieved their individual goals. Parents told us they highly valued the communication each day about their child's experiences and progress. We encouraged the childminder to further develop observations of children's learning, to show how their experiences support their development.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through connections to their wider community. The childminder advised that they go out mostly every day. The use of floor books highlighted the different experiences children could access in the local area. These included parks, walks and community groups. These opportunities meant children and families could become familiar with different social experiences within their community. This contributed to their sense of belonging.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were able to play and rest in a homely and welcoming environment. The play room provided ample space, which was bright and clean. Comfortable sofas provided a place for some children to relax. The childminder told us they used an indoor tent occasionally. No children required a sleep at the time of inspection; however, a travel cot was available, if required. We encouraged the childminder to consider introducing an accessible rest area, such as a cosy story corner, that younger children could use independently. This would further support children to be comfortable and relaxed.

Children were offered a variety of resources which supported and developed their learning. They were supported to choose what they wanted to play with. The childminder's floor book highlighted many interesting experiences on offer to the children. They shared that they had considered resources available to ensure they were relevant to children's ages and interests. This could be developed by including photos of resources to further support younger children to make choices and be independent.

Children had daily opportunities to be active. This was promoted through regular walks and trips, as well as direct access to a secure garden. One parent commented, "Lots of time spent outdoors... A great outdoor space is available." The large outdoor area allowed children to climb, explore and use their imagination, through the toy vehicles, sand pit and castle. These opportunities supported children to be fit and healthy.

Systems were in place which supported children to be safe, such as a stair gate preventing unsupervised access to the kitchen. It was clear that children were aware of its purpose. The childminder had considered suitable resources for children, ensuring items with small parts were out of younger children's reach. Benefit risk assessments were in place for indoor and outdoor experiences as well as trips. These highlighted hazards but also the benefits of different types of play. The childminder involved children in age-appropriate conversations to support their understanding of risk. This contributed to children keeping themselves safe and well.

Infection control measures provided a clean and hygienic environment, which supported children's health. The childminder encouraged children to blow their nose and washed hands after. We suggested that the childminder assist children with personal care which would support their independence skills. Effective cleaning practices and hand washing procedures were in place, encouraging children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. This supported good infection control measures.

The childminder protected children's personal information. All records were stored securely to ensure families' privacy and confidentiality.

How good is our leadership?**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good. We identified several strengths, which 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 currently did not have a vision, values and aims for their service; however, were able to talk about what they hoped to achieve. We highlighted the benefits of creating a vision, values and aims, which were relevant and specific. We discussed ways that children and families could be actively involved in this process and how it could be shared. This would support families to understand what to expect from the service.

Input from families was actively encouraged within the service. Parents were welcomed into the childminder's home and encouraged to share information, as well as complete questionnaires. Positive feedback had been received about the regular communication through WhatsApp, which the childminder used to ensure this was a priority each day. This supported learning being shared between the childminder's setting and home. Parents told us they felt confident to speak with the childminder if they had any concerns. They agreed that they were involved in a meaningful way to develop the service, through having regular opportunities to give feedback. This sustained the ongoing development of the service.

The childminder had started to self-evaluate their service, identifying areas of strength using, 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare'. They spoke confidently about developments they had recently implemented, such as adding more resources for younger children. We suggested recording these planned changes and reviewing the impact they had. This would support the childminder to reflect on their effectiveness, in improving outcomes for children.

Policies and procedures were in place and reviewed regularly. This supported parents to know what to expect from the service, keeping them up to date with relevant information.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children benefitted from strong relationships that had been formed between them, their family and the childminder. A calm ethos was evident in the childminder's home, where genuine care and interest was shown towards children. We observed positive interactions such as praise and encouragement, smiling and comforting, as well as questioning to promote children's curiosity. Parents strongly agreed or agreed that they felt connected to the childminder.

The childminder had a clear understanding of how children develop and learn. They discussed how they were supporting children with language development. We observed the childminder naturally talking to children and supporting their speech and understanding. Through using a range of vocabulary, repeating words and asking questions, the childminder supported each child's individual needs. Parents strongly agreed or agreed that they were happy with the overall care and support their child receives from the service. One parent said, "[My child] gets amazing opportunities to play with new toys and see new things. We have noticed [my child] has learned a lot of new words." The childminder clearly understood of the value of different learning experiences and how they were meaningful to children.

Children were at the heart of the service. The childminder had given careful consideration to experiences and resources. They had created unique, hand-made resin shapes to enhance learning opportunities, which encouraged children to use their senses to explore. Parents felt their child's development was supported through fun and interesting play. One parent told us that the childminder offers play experiences which were, "Very child led and plans activities to meet my child's interests. Used a wide range of resources." This meant that children experienced engaging play through a variety of ways.

The childminder had kept their skills and knowledge up to date through attending training and reading guidance. They had accessed core training in first aid and food hygiene. The childminder was familiar with the document 'Realising the Ambition: Being me' and this was evident in their interactions and play experiences for children. The childminder had identified that they would benefit from further learning around supporting younger children. We suggested accessing the 'Growing My Potential' practice note through the Care Inspectorate Hub to support this. To identify further learning opportunities, we discussed evaluating the impact training had on the service and outcomes for children.

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 appropriately support the health, wellbeing and safety of children the childminder is to ensure that, in addition to appropriate personal plan details, she maintains up-to-date chronology records for each of the children. These records to detail discussion with children and/or parents about significant events in a child's life, showing a record of any agreed changes to a child's care and support needs and how the service will continue to meet those needs.

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 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 8 November 2023.

Action taken since then

Children were kept safe through the use of chronologies included within each child's personal plan, which had been introduced since the last inspection. These detailed significant events in children's lives and highlighted actions taken that the childminder had implemented to safeguard children. This supported children to be kept safe and protected.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

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 8 November 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had started to self-evaluate their service, identifying areas of strength using, 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare.' They spoke confidently about developments they had recently implemented, such as adding more resources for younger children. We suggested recording these planned changes and reviewing the impact they had. This would support the childminder to reflect on their effectiveness, in improving outcomes for children.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very 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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