

Stuart, Jacqueline Child Minding

Dingwall

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 March 2025

Service provided by:
Jacqueline Stuart

Service provider number:
SP2003907792

Service no:
CS2003008052

About the service

Jacqueline Stuart provides a childminding service from her home in a quiet rural area close to the village of Maryburgh. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, 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.

The service is located close to a local primary school and nursery, parks, and other amenities. Childminding takes place on the ground floor of the home, with children having access to the main lounge and dining area, kitchen area, toilet and rear garden. The children have access to an enclosed garden at the rear of the property and make extensive use of the local woods, parks and walks.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 06 March 2025, between 09:35 and 11:15. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. Feedback was given via telephone on 10 March 2025

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:

- spoke with three children using the service;
- reviewed feedback received from three parents;
- spoke with the childminder;
- observed practice and daily life;
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

Children experienced warmth and nurture from the childminder which supported them to feel secure.

- Children experienced a welcoming, home from home environment that supported them to feel safe and comfortable.
- The children were happy and relaxed in the childminder's care.
- Children were at the heart of the service and were cared for by a childminder who knew them and their families well.
- Children's health and wellbeing were supported through opportunities to be active and engage in lots of outdoor play.
- The childminder should continue to develop their self-evaluation and quality assurance procedures.
- The childminder should further develop her knowledge and skills, and use these to improve the quality of experiences for children.
- The childminder engaged well with the inspection process and demonstrated a keenness to develop and improve 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?	3 - Adequate

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 made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

The childminder provided a caring and nurturing environment for the children in their care. We saw loving relationships between the childminder and children in her care. The childminder had a very good understanding of the importance of developing secure attachments and their practice was consistent throughout our visit. The childminder used positive language and meaningful praise when acknowledging children's achievements which helped build their confidence and self-esteem.

Children appeared happy and having fun. The childminder responded to children in a compassionate and respectful manner, which supported them to feel safe. Children received cuddles and reassurance, 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 planning information was used effectively. Parents were central to sharing relevant information about their child's routines, likes and dislikes. Information was updated when care needs changed, supporting the childminder to provide the care and support children needed at the right time. One parent told us "Jackie has conversations about milestones with us. She updates plans as we need them updated and there is always great communication, Jackie is caring towards all the children in her care". The childminder was aware of the impact that events in children's lives could have on them, supporting children and families with sensitivity.

The childminder recognised the importance of rest and sleep for children's overall wellbeing. She followed family routines, ensuring children had opportunities for rest throughout the day. This contributed to children's safety and emotional security.

The childminder was very aware of her responsibility to safeguard children. We were confident that the childminder was committed to her role and responsibilities in keeping children safe from harm.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had opportunities to lead their own play and learning in a stimulating environment with a range of resources. They had fun while exploring a variety of play experiences that took account of their developmental needs, interests and curiosities. On the day of inspection, the minded children spent a lot of their time in the playroom. The children had fun playing together with the childminder and we heard lots of chattering and laughter. The children confidently led their own play and the childminder used skilful interactions to extend their learning.

The children were happy and having fun in the childminder's care. Children confidently led their own play, exploring their interests and curiosities through a range of resources. Indoors, these included trains, cars, playdough and arts and crafts. Resources were accessible, promoting children's independence and allowing them to choose how they spent their time. The pace of the day was relaxed and unhurried, giving the child

time to play and learn.

From photographic evidence, we could see that children benefited from play experiences which provided opportunities to be creative, imaginative and develop curiosity. There was lots of evidence of children participating in outdoor play, walks and water play. One parent told us that "my child is given outdoor play at every opportunity. They also go lots of walks to explore the woods and local community". These opportunities supported children to be fit and healthy.

The childminder made very good use of the local area. This promoted children's wellbeing and sense of self in their community, for example, they visited the local woods, and parks in their area. These rich and varied play experiences supported children to develop skills for life.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder's home was clean, cosy and provided a homely environment for the children. The childminder's home was relaxed and safe for the children to explore and play allowing them to feel safe and comfortable. The children made use of all the available space and confidently moved around each area of the house. The children enjoyed the resources available that encouraged their imagination especially the train track / construction, playdough and arts and crafts. A range of toys were available for the children to choose from inside as well as the outdoor area.

The children had regular access to outdoor play which encouraged them to be active and to develop their physical co-ordination. Children had access to fresh air and energetic play in the fenced off area in the childminder's back garden, as well as walks to parks and woods in the area. The back garden had loose parts to enhance children's play and learning experiences. The mud kitchen, water areas, and sand play area had created an intriguing outdoor area. This contributed to children having opportunities to be active and lead a healthy lifestyle.

Children attending the service were kept safe through the various systems the childminder had in place. The childminder explained that she completed daily visual checks before the children arrived as well as at the end of the day. We sampled the risk assessments the childminder had in place and found that she was vigilant in her care of the minded children. This approach helped to make the environment safe for children. It minimised risk and helped keep children safe from harm.

Appropriate infection prevention and control procedures were in place to support a safe environment. The home and equipment were clean and well maintained. Children's wellbeing was supported by a range of measures to limit the spread of infection such as ventilation and hand washing routines.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder had visions, aims and values in place. These were shared with parents and displayed within the setting. These promoted and sustained a shared vision for the service that reflects the needs of the children, families and the wider community.

The childminder had established strong and trusting relationships with the families. This allowed for open communication and sharing of information. Parents confirmed that communication was good and that the childminder sought their views and wishes. The childminder stated that she shared information with the parents informally on a daily basis, at drop off and collection times. The childminder provides a flexible and accommodating service for the families she works with. We found she made good use of text messaging and private social media to communicate with families. This helped to ensure parents were included in their child's care and offered the opportunity to comment and/or make suggestions for improvement.

The childminder engaged well with the inspection process and was keen to take forward ideas for improvement. Effective self-evaluation and quality assurances were in the early stages of development. The childminder valued the views of the children attending her service, and their families, encouraging informal feedback through regular conversation and consultation. All parents who gave feedback as part of this inspection, strongly agreed that they were happy with the care and support their children received. We discussed with the childminder offering a variety of ways for families to give feedback, as they continue to develop their service.

The children felt able to express their views in age appropriate ways. For example, when the child had asked for playdough, the childminder provided the materials to allow them to follow their interests. This helped children feel respected and valued.

The childminder had policies and procedures in place. We suggested a few changes to policies which would reflect best practice guidance and relevance to her service. This helped parents to understand the work and ethos of the childminding service.

How good is our staff team? 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses

Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder was kind and compassionate. She was nurturing in her care and had formed strong attachments with the minded child. Positive relationships had been built with families which supported strong relationships. One parent told us "Jackie always has time to speak about any needs that my child has. She welcomes us into her home, she goes above and beyond for us". This supported children to be respected and cared for in the service.

The childminder recognised the importance of maintaining her skills and knowledge in keeping children safe and protected. She had attended training on First Aid, Child Protection and also completed her Food

Hygiene certificate. This meant that children were supported in all aspects of their care and development.

The childminder had limited knowledge of best practice documents and up to date guidance which impacted on her professional knowledge and skills. We discussed ways in which the childminder could use their SCMA membership along with the Care Inspectorate Hub and online resources as a way of accessing practice guidance. This would support the childminder's professional development and improvement in the service. We discussed ways in which she could use the online resources such as, 'Realising the Ambition, Being Me' and 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' as a way of accessing guidance and practice documents to support the ongoing development of the service. **(See area for improvement 1).**

Areas for improvement

1. The childminder should further develop her knowledge and skills, and use these to improve the quality of experiences for children. This should include, but is not limited to, accessing best practice guidance, training and information to support the development of her service. She should use her learning from these to evaluate her service, identifying areas for development which will have a positive impact for the children

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes'.
(HSCS 3.14);

'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities'. (HSCS 3.20).

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	5 - Very 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?	3 - Adequate
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	3 - Adequate

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