

# Strain, Christina Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 21 April 2022

**Service provided by:**  
Christina Strain

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003904792

**Care service number:**  
CS2003008362

## Introduction

Christina Strain is registered as a childminder with a maximum of 13 children when both assistants are working, of whom no more than 10 are not yet attending primary school.

The childminder operates from her home in a quiet residential area of Inverness. Two assistants work with the childminder who utilises a large, designated playroom within her home. Children have direct access to an enclosed garden, bathroom facilities and a bedroom. The childminder and her assistants make very good use of local amenities and attractions, including regular walks to shops and visits to parks.

## What we did during our inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 21 April 2022 between 10:00hrs and 12:30hrs. Two inspectors carried out the inspection. On the day of inspection the childminder and two assistants were caring for nine children who were happy and confident in their environment. We gave feedback to the childminder on the day of the inspection.

During the inspection we spoke with the childminder and her assistants and gathered evidence from various sources, including policies and procedures, children's files, records and other documents. We observed how the childminder and her assistants cared for and interacted with the children.

## Views of people using the service

As part of the inspection process we asked some parents to share their feedback. All of the parents we spoke to were very happy with the care their children received from the childminder and her assistants.

Some of the comments received included:

"They have been great, it is like a second home for my children."

"Tina has toys and resources for every age, they always have something to do."

"Very warm and caring"

"They have taken time to find out what my child likes, they really know them well."

"My child loves playing in the garden, so much for them to do."

"So many resources, they are never bored."

"My child often comes home with resources Tina has made, so we can play together at home."

On the day of inspection, nine children were present. All of the children were happy and busy in their play. The childminder and her assistants supported the children to explore the variety of resources on offer. Some of the comments children shared with us included:

"I'm in a tent."

"I like the colours in the rice."

"I'm having pasta for lunch."

"The shells are crunchy."

"Come in my car."

"I like the wooden shapes, I'm making a picture."

## Self assessment

The service was not asked to submit a self assessment prior to the inspection.

## What the service did well

The childminder provides very good care and support, placing children and families at the centre of her service. She has created a warm and homely environment where children are encouraged to play and explore a wide variety of natural and loose parts.

## What the service could do better

The childminder and her assistants know the children in their care very well, they should continue to develop their recording and tracking of children's individual progress, supporting children to reflect on their learning.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

The quality of care and support has been evaluated as very good. We found that there were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children.

Children received high quality and nurturing care from the childminder and her assistants. They received cuddles to reassure and comfort them when they were upset, this supported children to feel safe and secure while in the setting. The childminder and her assistants were enthusiastic in their work, they allowed children to lead their play, supporting them when needed while encouraging them to solve problems for themselves. As a result, children felt respected, loved and valued.

The childminder and her assistants had high aspirations for each child and had a clear understanding of their individual needs. In partnership with families, they used wellbeing wheels to effectively plan to meet the needs of each child. They consulted families regularly to discuss ongoing needs. As a result children received support to meet their individual needs.

Children were empowered to lead their own play and learning. The childminder and her assistants took time to find out children's interests and created play and learning opportunities for each child. One parent told us "They make little wooden dolls to match my child's interests, she has a large collection at home." Children's progress and learning was recorded in learning journals which were shared with parents regularly. Children were supported to develop their interests and curiosities.

Mealtimes were a very sociable and relaxed experience for children. The childminder and her assistants shared mealtimes with the children, recognising the importance of talking together and promoting manners and healthy eating habits. Children had developed close attachments with them and felt at ease. They were able to contribute to the preparation and serving of meals, developing their independence skills. As a result, children were confident individuals.

Well managed transitions supported children's security and well-being. The childminder provided parents with a handbook prior to their child starting. This shared information about the childminder and her assistants and how children would be supported to reach their potential within the setting. Information was also shared to other settings when children were moving on. As a result, children and families felt confident during transitions.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

The quality of the environment has been evaluated as very good. We found that there were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children.

Children experienced a warm and welcoming home environment. As a result, they appeared happy and confident in their surroundings. They were able to independently access a wide range of real, natural and open-ended resources. Staff extended children's play and learning by adding to resources based on high quality observation of children's interests, their individual needs and abilities. Children were able to develop their natural curiosity and use resources in a number of ways. Parents told us that their children often came home with resources which allowed them to support their children at home and further consolidate learning. This meant that children felt listened to and respected.

Children could choose where they wanted to play. The childminder and her assistants supported younger children to access the outdoor area which offered further access to natural resources as well as opportunities for more energetic play. Children were engaged in their play and were happy to share their experiences with inspectors. One child told us "This makes a crunchy noise." as they explored shells in the garden. Real life resources supported children to explore numeracy and literacy. Children were supported to enjoy fun and challenging experiences.

Extensive use was made of the local environment. Children regularly visited local shops, parks and attractions and were developing a sense of the world around them. This enabled children to learn about boundaries and how to keep themselves safe.

Children benefitted from safe and cosy areas to sleep, rest, and relax. The childminder and her assistants responded sensitively to their needs and followed their individual sleeping patterns to ensure they had a consistent routine. This supported children to feel nurtured and secure.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

The quality of staffing has been evaluated as very good. We found that there were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children.

The childminding assistants were highly skilled practitioners who reflected critically on their practice. Children were at the centre of their practice, and each child was valued as an individual. They had developed strong, positive relationships and attachments which helped children to feel safe, secure, and happy. Children were supported to achieve their potential.

The childminding assistants demonstrated very good knowledge and understanding of children's schematic play. They supported children to learn at a pace that was right for them, and children were engrossed in their play and learning. Effective use of skilled questioning and well-timed interactions helped children to extend their play and develop their problem thinking skills. As a result, children were achieving and making progress.

Both of the childminding assistants were committed and motivated to learn, and used their developing knowledge to improve outcomes for children. They regularly reviewed current guidance, such as "Realising the Ambition" to support them to evaluate the quality of the spaces, experiences and interactions children were experiencing. For example, they had a good understanding of how their interactions impacted on children's learning. They considered body language and expression as well as verbal communication when reviewing the quality of their interactions. Children received high quality care based on relevant evidence and best practice guidance.

Effective support and supervision by the childminder enabled the assistants to identify their strengths and any areas for improvement. Regular appraisals, along with fortnightly meetings together, allowed the childminder and her assistants to reflect individually and together on their practice and children's progress. As a result, any identified support or training needs could be planned. Records of training were recorded and reflected upon to evaluate the impact on the service. This meant that children received care from people who were well trained and competent in their role.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

The quality of management and leadership has been evaluated as very good. We found that there were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children.

The childminder acted as role model for her assistants through her personal learning and development. She was undertaking accreditation for the "Curiosity Approach" which was evident throughout the setting. Children benefited from a mindful approach that put them at the centre of the service. As a result, children were supported to be critical thinkers and were developing a sense of awe and wonder at the world around them.

The childminder empowered her assistants to be leaders within the setting. She encouraged them to take the lead on developing areas of practice, self-evaluation and sharing knowledge which had a positive impact on outcomes for children and their families. As a result, there was a positive ethos within the service.

Very effective quality assurance processes were in place. The childminder, and her assistants, understood the importance of seeking the views of children and families to inform the development of the service. The childminder regularly issued service quality questionnaires to families to gather feedback, as well as through informal, daily communication. Observations of children's play, learning and interactions were used to further develop the service. Children and families' view were respected and valued.

Meaningful self-evaluation had been carried out by the childminder and her assistants. They had evaluated the care and support provided against key documents such as 'Realising the Ambition' and 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged children'. As a result, areas for development had been identified to further enhance positive outcomes for children and families.

### Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

### Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

## What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

### Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

## What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

### Previous recommendations

#### Recommendation 1

The provider is to review sleeping arrangements currently in place for the children and seek to develop practice in line with best practice guidance.

## National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 14: Well-Managed Service

This recommendation was made on 5 April 2018.

### Action taken on previous recommendation

The childminder has met this recommendation. Children were supported to sleep in line with best practice guidance.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
15 Mar 2018	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
23 Feb 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
18 Mar 2015	2	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good



Date	Type	Gradings	
29 Sep 2011	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 4 - Good Not assessed
28 Jan 2011	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed Not assessed Not assessed
16 Mar 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	3 - Adequate Not assessed 4 - Good Not assessed
2 Sep 2008	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good

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