

Montgomery, Ann

Child Minding

Kilwinning

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
14 February 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2004933036

Service no:
CS2004074563

About the service

Ann Montgomery provides a childminding service from their home in the town of Kilwinning, North Ayrshire. Children have access to a large lounge, kitchen/dinning area, downstairs WC and secure back garden. The childminder's family home is situated within close proximity to local schools, nurseries and green spaces.

The childminder is registered to care for 6 children under the age of 16, of whom no more than 3, are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place on Wednesday 14 February 2024 between 12:15 and 13:45. 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:

- consulted four parents of children attending the service by Microsoft forms questionnaire
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life for children attending the service
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Strong connections and meaningful communication with children, families and external agencies ensured children's individual needs were exceptionally well supported and respected.
- Children were supported to feel safe, secure and loved as the childminder had built nurturing relationships with them.
- Children benefitted from quality experiences indoors, outdoors and within their local community to support their wellbeing.
- The childminder was extremely committed to their own professional development and attended training that supported positive outcomes for children and their families.
- The childminder should continue to develop the planning for play and learning processes to ensure they capture progress in learning and development for children.
- The childminder should ensure they have sufficient supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at all times.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very 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 found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

We found that the childminder provided excellent nurturing care and support for children, contributing to positive outcomes.

Children attending the service were extremely settled and happy. The childminder had formed very strong, nurturing connections with each of the children in their care and this supported their emotional wellbeing. We observed the childminder sensitively interact with children at their level, providing praise and supporting them to be creative and solve problems through play. This contributed to children's sense of security and confidence and as a result, children felt loved, valued and respected.

The childminder had a very clear understanding of each child's individual needs. They liaised closely with parents to ensure that personal plans were detailed, informative and tailored to each child. Each child's plan identified individual health welfare and safety needs and how these would be met to ensure children received the right support at the right time. All parents who responded to our questionnaire strongly agreed that the childminder knew their child well and that they were fully involved in developing and reviewing of their child's personal plan.

The childminder had sound knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibilities in safeguarding and protecting children. They had attended child protection training and contributed to multi-agency meetings where required. This ensured they would be well placed to take appropriate action if a concerns for the welfare or wellbeing of children should arise. Strong working partnerships with local professionals ensured families benefitted from a collaborative and holistic approach to supporting their wellbeing.

Children's wellbeing was further enhanced by a variety of extremely well planned activities that enabled them to access and connect with their local and wider communities and learn how to care for living things. Planned experiences included planting and growing foods, caring for the childminders pets, visits to a local stables to assist in the care of horses and planned outings in partnership with other local childminders and their minded children. These experiences helped to build peer relationships, stimulate children's interests and enhanced their development through connections to their wider communities.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were engaged and actively involved in leading their play and learning through quality play experiences that promoted children's choice and independence. We observed children requesting play resources and the childminder provided these promptly, demonstrating to children that their interests are important. We found that a variety of sensory, crafts and physical activities were provided supporting young children to develop life long skills and learn to take turns and engage in cooperative play with their peers. As a result, children were happy and confident as they explored their play environment.

The childminder made use of the local community and surrounding areas to develop and support children's play and learning. We could see from children's individual photo books a range of activities they took part in. Some of these included sensory play, stories, arts and crafts, and playing with outdoor toys in the

garden. All children enjoyed visits to the local woods, beaches and play parks. These opportunities supported children's holistic development and enabled them to build strong connections to their wider communities. All parents who responded to our electronic survey strongly agreed that their child had opportunities to play outdoors every day, supporting their wellbeing.

Whilst we recognise that the childminder offered play experiences in response to children's ideas and interests, we identified that planning for play and learning experiences could be further enhanced by the introduction of a planning tool such as a floor book or planning record. This would ensure that the childminder was documenting where they were scaffolding children's learning, supporting them to develop new skills and identifying next steps in learning and development. This would ensure children were fully supported to achieve their potential.

Children benefitted from some opportunities to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. The childminder used skilled interactions to support children develop these skills, for example, repeating words and labelling and introducing numbers during care routines and play. Part of the daily routine was to identify the day of the week and check the weather forecast, presenting an opportunity to recognise numbers and build pre-writing skills. This demonstrated the childminder's commitment to raising attainment.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

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

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

We found that the childminder had created a warm, comfortable, welcoming and homely environment for the children to play and relax in. There was good natural light and ventilation and the childminder ensured that children had ample space to move around, play and learn. A comfortable sofa in the lounge and a relaxing dining space enabled children to have space to rest and relax. The spaces available to children were well maintained ensuring that children benefitted from a service that was safe and secure.

Children had regular access to outdoor play which encouraged them to be active and to develop their physical co-ordination. Patio doors led from the kitchen and lounge area to the garden, which was fully enclosed allowing children access to fresh air and energetic play. The childminder's garden was a fun outdoor environment with many wheeled toys, sand pit and fairy garden, enabling children to play, learn and develop. We saw lots of photographic evidence of the outdoor experiences children took part in. The outdoor space promoted creative thinking and problem solving skills.

The childminder had undertaken detailed risk benefit assessments that promoted a safe environment for the children. Much consideration had been given to how to keep children safe in all areas of the childminder's home and areas of the community accessed by children when on outings. We found that children were experiencing opportunities to care for living things by assisting the childminder in the routine care of their animals which provided very good outcomes for children, however we have asked the childminder to seek parental permissions for children to have contact with any pets/animals. This will ensure parents are fully aware of, and consent to their child's involvement.

Due to the timings of inspection and children's individual care routines, we did not observe a meal time. However, we found that the childminder's kitchen was clean and free from unnecessary clutter to ensure safe food practices could be undertaken. We sampled photographic evidence and found that the

childminder offered varied snacks and meals which met the dietary needs and preferences of children in their care.

There were no children requiring personal care at the time of inspection, however, the childminder spoke to us about their nappy changing procedures. The childminder took a respectful approach to children's personal care and carried this out in an area that took account of their dignity and respect. However, at the time of our inspection the childminder was caring for young children who could require their nappy to be changed and did not have aprons available for protection. The childminder should ensure they have appropriate levels of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available at all times when they are caring for children to prevent the possible spread of infection.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder was highly committed to the ongoing improvement and development of their service. They focused on ensuring children were provided with the best possible care and support by working in partnership with families to meet their individual needs. The friendly, professional and open approach the childminder had with children and families supported the development of relationships based on mutual trust and respect.

The childminder's aims and objectives set out a clear vision for their service which were shared with families in a clearly worded and informative service welcome booklet that also included; policies, procedures and a welcome pack. This was shared with parents when registering to attend and meant that parents knew what to expect from the service.

The childminder provided a service that met the needs and interests of the children they were caring for. They did this through regular communication with the parents. For example, the use of electronic application, 'WhatsApp' helped them share children's experiences, successes and achievements timely with parents who were then able to respond and share their views. This approach helped parents feel they were included in their child's day and that the childminder valued their input.

The views of parents and children were valued, and feedback gathered through a variety of questionnaires was used as a starting point for future improvements, and were clearly recorded within the service improvement plan. This meant that the childminder was prioritising service improvements informed by the views, wishes and aspirations of stakeholders, enabling families to feel their opinions matter and their views were respected.

Self-evaluation processes were mostly informal. The childminder told us through daily reflections of practice and children's experiences they identified improvements and planned changes. The childminder should continue with their plans to develop ways to formally evaluate the service to support continuous development. We suggested using 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged childcare.' This would support them to carry out more effective and robust self-evaluation of the service.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

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

Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge, and values

The childminder was keen to be involved in the inspection process and welcomed any feedback to support improved outcomes for children. We observed the childminder to be attentive to children's needs as they skilfully balanced tasks with maintaining quality interactions. We observed warmth, kindness and compassion between the childminder and the children in their care which supported children to feel valued, loved, and secure. One parent told us, "I feel more than comfortable leaving my child with Ann. She is responsive to my child's needs, caring, kind, considerate of their differences and puts lots of effort in."

The childminder's commitment to ongoing professional development was reflected in the quality and quantity of in-depth training that they had undertaken to develop their expertise. A detailed training record demonstrated that the childminder kept updated with early years best practice and that training attended covered a broad range of areas including; Solihull, literacy and numeracy frameworks and PATHS which is a programme to support children with self regulation and emotional awareness. It was evident that training attended supported individual families and priority was given to maximising children's resilience and emotional wellbeing. However, the childminder could further strengthen the processes in place by completing detailed post training evaluations as this will allow them to reflect on any knowledge and skills gained, further enhancing improved outcomes for children.

The childminder provided a service in partnership with North Ayrshire council and they had established effective working links with other local childcare providers including childminders, who they met with for shared activities with children. This provided opportunities to share ideas and collaboratively reflect on good practice and improve experiences for children.

The childminder was organised and kept clear records, helping them to fulfil their professional responsibilities. However at the time of this inspection the childminder's registration and public liability insurance certificates were not on display or accessible to families using the service. We asked that the childminder have these available at all times when minding children and we received photographic evidence that they were on display for families prior to completion of this report.

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	6 - Excellent
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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