

# Innes, Laura Child Minding

South Queensferry

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
21 February 2024

**Service provided by:**

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003907534

**Service no:**  
CS2003013882

## About the service

Laura Innes is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time 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 the childminder's family.

The childminding service operates from a semi-detached house in a residential area of South Queensferry, Edinburgh. The property is close to local schools and transport links.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 20 February 2024 between 11:30 and 14:45. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service and received written feedback from five families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

The childminder provided children with nurturing care and support.

Good communication with families ensured children's needs were being met.

Children's wellbeing and development was supported through a wide range of interesting and varied play and learning experiences.

To continue to provide consistently positive outcomes for children, the childminder should ensure they keep up to date with current good practice in relation to early learning and childcare.

## 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 supported through warm interactions. The childminder was attentive to children's cues, which meant that their wishes were responded to. Children were provided with cuddles, comfort, and reassurance, which helped them to feel loved and secure. One parent told us, "Laura is a wonderful carer for our children. She absolutely has our children's best interest at heart, and we have complete trust in her."

Mealtimes were social and safe, with a homely feel that mirrored children's home experiences. Children enjoyed eating round the table together with the childminder. Mealtimes were used as an opportunity to chat about the day. Later in the inspection children had a snack in the living room. While this was comfortable, we signposted the childminder to good practice guidance to ensure all mealtime experiences were as nurturing and safe as possible.

Personal plans held key information that enabled the childminder to provide positive care and support. For example, plans included children's individual preferences. All parents strongly agreed with the statement, "The childminder knows my child well, including what they like and what is important for their care." Some reviews of personal plans had taken place. However, to ensure the information remained up to date and meaningful, all personal plans should be reviewed with parents every six months or sooner if required. The childminder recorded children's progress to help plan for their care, play and learning needs but this was not always consistent. Further work to enhance personal planning approaches should be conducted to ensure children's wellbeing and development are effectively planned for (see area for improvement 1).

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The childminder had a flexible approach to play and learning as they followed children's interests and responded to their choices. The pace of the day was relaxed. Children were involved in planning what activities and play experiences interested them. As a result, there was a range of planned and spontaneous opportunities, which motivated children and helped them to engage in sustained periods of play.

The childminder effectively promoted children's play through positive interactions. They used questions and made gentle suggestions that supported children to be creative and problem solve. The childminder had fun with children showing them that their play mattered. For example, the childminder and children enjoyed doing a yoga game together and it was clear this was a regular experience that children took part in. This experience benefitted their overall wellbeing as they had fun and learned about their bodies.

The childminder made good use of open-ended natural materials and loose parts, such as pebbles, pinecones, baskets and wooden utensils. These resources gave children opportunities to be creative and explore new ideas. Real-life items such as bags, telephones, kitchen scales and umbrellas were available for play, encouraging children to be imaginative and explore different play ideas.

Children's individual next steps for learning and development were considered through discussions with parents and informal observations. To enhance children's learning and track progress, the childminder

should ensure they effectively capture children's learning and development over time. The childminder had experimented with different ways of recording and tracking children's learning. For example, they had used floorbooks in the past and some children had observations recorded in their personal plans. We were confident the childminder would explore ways to take forward this area of development.

Children's play and learning was promoted through good use of the outdoor environment. During the inspection, children enjoyed exploring sensory materials in a well-resourced and inviting cabin situated within the childminder's garden. Children's play and learning was enhanced through strong connections to their own community and the wider community around them. For example, outings to woodland areas supported children to learn about the natural world, while enjoying time outdoors. Visits to toddler groups helped younger children to develop their social skills and enabled them to spend time with their peers. One parent said, "Laura is amazing, and we are so lucky to have her as our childminder. She takes children on so many activities and our child has learnt so much."

### Areas for improvement

1. To support children's individual needs, the childminder should develop children's personal plans to ensure they are a current reflection of the child. This should include, but not limited to, clear records of how their wellbeing and development needs are supported and reviews with parents every six months, or sooner if required.

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 me because it sets out how my needs will be met as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

### 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

Children experienced a homely environment, which provided them with opportunities to play and relax throughout the day. They could access a kitchen diner, living room, and downstairs bathroom. The enclosed rear garden included a large play cabin full of interesting resources, with an additional table and chairs for crafts and games. Children's artwork was attractively displayed around the play spaces. This gave children the message that they were valued and included in the service.

The layout of the environment and resources reflected children's individual needs and stages of development. Within the living space, children could freely self-select toys and materials enabling them to choose their own play experiences. The secure back garden provided children with regular opportunities to be active and enjoy fresh air. Within the garden there was a range of interesting experiences such as the well-resourced play cabin, sand and water materials and loose parts. The range of resources both indoors and outside enabled children to have fun and be creative.

Appropriate equipment such as high-chairs and stairgates were in place to help keep children safe. A cot was available to ensure babies were comfortable and safe. The childminder supervised children well and was alert to their changing needs throughout the session.

The childminder promoted children's health and wellbeing through effective handwashing procedures. Children washed their hands before and after eating and during personal care. However, during nappy changing the childminder did not follow good practice guidance as they did not wear appropriate personal protective equipment such as gloves. This had the potential to spread infection. The childminder was responsive to this advice, and we were confident they would make the improvements needed to maximise children's health and wellbeing.

Overall, the environment was clean and well-maintained. Soft furnishings were in a good condition and regular cleaning throughout the session helped minimise the spread of germs. Within some spaces there were areas of clutter that impacted on the space and could make the cleaning of these areas more difficult. The childminder had identified the need to minimise clutter through their own improvement plan and had started to remove items and organise spaces. Moving forward, the childminder should continue to develop the organisation of spaces to ensure children experience a consistently positive environment.

## 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 well led

Parents and children were valued within the service through warm and engaging relationships. Positive communication with parents helped them to feel included in their child's experiences. Regular updates through messaging services and discussions at pick up and drop offs enabled parents to feel confident about the care provided. One parent said, "I know that they are in a safe and caring environment. Laura provides lots of activities for the children. She keeps me fully informed of how the day has been." Children were respected as they were encouraged to share their ideas for activities and new resources. The childminder had recently considered the range of play equipment in the garden and asked children to make suggestions about any additions. This practice helped children to feel valued and gave them opportunities to influence their own experiences at the service.

Self-evaluation systems were developing and some of the processes in place were leading to improvements. The childminder used a self-evaluation tool provided by the local authority to plan for improvement. This was enabling them to consider the strengths of the service and identify areas of development. For example, they had identified that older children would benefit from more challenging resources. As a result, the childminder had increased the provision of loose parts and sourced other resources to support this age group. Moving forward, the childminder should continue to develop their practice in relation to self-evaluation and improvement planning. For example, following the changes being made to resources the childminder had not yet evaluated the impact this had on children's experiences. Strengthening and embedding the approach to self-evaluation could support the childminder to maintain a cycle of continuous improvement. We directed the childminder to the Care Inspectorate Hub, which has a range of improvement support materials and current best practice guidance.

Some quality assurance processes were in place, which enabled the childminder to keep children safe. For example, environmental risk assessments helped the childminder review the environment and manage risks. Moving forward, the childminder should implement further processes to enable them to quality assure other aspects of the service. This would include using best practice to develop their practice and ensure improvement. For example, the childminder should develop a process to ensure personal plans are

maintained in line with legislation and use infection, prevention and control guidance to inform nappy changing practices. Improving the approach to quality assurance and the use of best practice guidance, could help ensure the childminder provides a service that is consistently aligned with current theory and practice in early learning and childcare. (see area for improvement 1).

### Areas for improvement

1. To support a culture of continuous improvement, further quality assurance processes should be developed. This should include but not be limited to, the childminder increasing their use of current best practice guidance to support the approach to quality assurance.

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) and 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice (HSCS, 4.11).

### How good is our staff team?

**4 - Good**

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

#### Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder's interactions were warm and nurturing. Children were settled and comfortable in the setting. The childminder was responsive to children's cues for support and cuddles throughout the inspection. This helped children feel safe and secure. One parent said, "We would be lost without Laura. We very much appreciate everything she does for us." Another parent described the childminder as, "Friendly, approachable, understanding and flexible."

Children's safety and wellbeing was respected as the childminder kept up to date with core training such as first aid. The childminder was aware of their duty in protecting children and was able to identify concerns and how these should be dealt with. The childminder had identified that their most recent child protection training had expired and was in the process of sourcing training to keep up to date. This showed the childminder was aware of their own learning needs.

Since the last inspection, the childminder had completed a childcare qualification, which had enabled them to develop their practice and understanding of early learning and childcare. The childminder took part in regular training courses, which also supported their practice and the quality of the service. For example, outdoor play training was helping the childminder to consider the introduction of nature play activities for children. Overall, the training and development opportunities undertaken by the childminder supported children to experience a good quality of care.

A comprehensive training log enabled the childminder to keep track of their learning and identify when training may need refreshed. The childminder recorded reflections of their training and development experiences and used the reflection to consider how the learning could influence the service. This supported children's experiences and promoted the childminder's own professional development.

## 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

The childminder should provide more formal opportunities for parents to be involved in the continued development of the service. We recommend she develop a formal system for gaining parents views and evaluate the outcomes to help her improve her service.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.  
Standard: 14 Well-managed service.

**This area for improvement was made on 9 February 2016.**

#### Action taken since then

The childminder had developed open and trusting relationships with parents. There were regular informal opportunities for parents to give feedback. Yearly questionnaires were available and enabled parents to provide further feedback. One parent said, "She communicates well, is honest about the kids, and tries her hardest at all times to improve their lives and ours as a family."

This area for improvement has been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure she keeps up to date with any new legislation and guidance, we recommend that the childminder should visit the Care Inspectorate Website. This information can be found at [www.hub.careinspectorate.com](http://www.hub.careinspectorate.com).

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.  
Standard: 14 Well-managed service. Standard: 3 Health and well being.

**This area for improvement was made on 9 February 2016.**

#### Action taken since then

Since the last inspection the childminder had undertaken an early years qualification that had supported her understanding and knowledge of early years practice. At this inspection we found the childminder was providing a good quality of service to children and families. There were some gaps in practice and knowledge and we signposted the childminder to relevant guidance and legislation.

We have made a new area for improvement to reflect our current methodology (see key question, 'How good is our leadership?').



## 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).

## 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

## To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

## Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.