

Elaine's Childminding Services

Child Minding

Wishaw

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 February 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2012983327

Service no:
CS2012306832

About the service

Elaine's Childminding Service is provided from the childminder's home in the rural area of Morningside, in North Lanarkshire.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of six will be under 12, 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.

Childminding takes place within the home, with children having access to the living room, kitchen/dining area, hallway and toilet facilities. Children also benefitted from a dedicated playroom within the garden, with direct access to a large, spacious and secure garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday 22 February 2024 between 10:15 and 13:30. 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:

- observed children's play experiences
- observed interactions between the children and the childminder
- spoke with the childminder
- looked around the home and garden
- reviewed service documents and records
- reviewed feedback from eight parents.

Key messages

- The childminder had responsive, nurturing and caring relationships with children.
- Children experienced nurturing interactions with a childminder who was responsive to their individual needs and knew them well.
- The childminder listened to children and provided activities and experiences that linked to the children's interest, offering challenge and fun.
- Children had opportunities to learn within their local and wider community and played outdoors everyday.
- Effective communication with the parents meant that children's needs were supported and parents felt included in their child's care.
- The childminder attended training and participated in learning that helped improve the quality of children's experience.

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

Children were happy and settled in the service. They were relaxed and confident around the childminder and within the child minding environment.

The childminder was very attentive to the children's needs and interactions were warm, nurturing and respectful. It was clear the childminder knew minded children very well and they shared with us how their care and development needs were being supported. The childminder knew children's personalities and routines and listened to children to ensure they felt valued and secure in their care. Parents told us, "I love the relationship Elaine has with the children and the relationships she has helped to foster between the children" and "They are always encouraged to be themselves and supported to achieve success."

Personal plans were in place for all children. Individual plans were detailed and captured each child's key information, including specific health and wellbeing requirements, family preferences and children's wishes and choices. This contributed to care and support between the child's home and the childminding service. Communication was also a strength of the service, daily chats and updates on digital platforms kept families informed of their child's day and overall progress. This further supported continuity of care and partnership working. One parent told us, "Elaine's communication is excellent and the parents are very much part of the children's learning journeys and kept constantly updated on the children's activities and progress."

Snacks and mealtimes were calm, relaxed and unhurried. Children helped to prepare food, which developed their independence and life skills, whilst also supporting them to consider their safety. Their social development was supported as they chatted and ate with the childminder. They benefitted from healthy and varied choices which included fruit, vegetables and home cooked meals. The childminder was responsive to children's requests and preferences. For example, children actively chose lunch, they shopped for ingredients and helped prepare lunches.

Nappy changing routines were carried out in response to children's needs. Children were changed in a private area to ensure their privacy and dignity was respected. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was used effectively and good hand washing practices were in place. This helped minimise the risk of infection.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The childminder had a good understanding of child development, which meant experiences and play were based on children's development and individual learning needs. Children were actively involved in leading their play, ensuring a true child centred approach was embedded within the service.

We observed sensitive and supportive interactions, which were appropriate to the age and stage of development and supported children's play and learning. Children were supported to engage in a variety of play experiences that developed their skills in language, literacy and numeracy. For example, measuring out ingredients whilst baking cakes.

One parent shared, "children experience such a wide variety of engaging and exciting learning activities whilst at Elaine's. The progress my children have made since attending Elaine's has been incredible."

Children had the freedom to explore a variety of natural, open ended resources within their environment. This helped children develop their curiosity, imagination and thinking skills, whilst also enriching play and learning. For example, children used natural resources such as mud, grass and flowers in their exploration of the mud kitchen outdoors. We observed children deeply engaged in their play for extended periods of time.

The childminder understood the importance of children having opportunities to play outdoors and promoted this very well in their service. In addition to playing in the garden, children had opportunities to visit interesting and fun places in the local and wider community. This helped enrich children's learning and formed strong links with their community. One parent told us, "the children spend a lot of time outdoors, even going to the nearby forest."

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

A warm, welcoming and homely environment was provided for children, to take part in a wide range of play experiences. The childminder's home was relaxed and safe for the children to explore and play, helping them feel secure and comfortable. Parents told us "I love the safe and inclusive environment that Elaine has created" and described the setting as homely, warm and comfortable.

The playroom was set out with a range of resources to support current interest and stage of development. These resources were rotated and changed to support differing ages of children who attended the service. Toys and resources were accessible for children to choose from. One parent told us the setting was "designed to be accessible for the children and they are comfortable accessing everything and know where everything is. The toys and activities are regularly rotated to offer children new learning activities."

The childminder had thought carefully about where furniture was placed so children could have spaces to relax, spaces to play with friends and spaces to be messy. For example, children benefitted from a separate room with a cosy sofa where they could rest and relax, this also was used as a yoga studio for children to participate in yoga, supporting children's wellbeing. The environment gave children the message that they mattered and their needs and interest were respected.

Importance was placed on being outdoors. Children had access to a large secure garden space, with all weather surfaces. Children had space to play together, climb, to hide and to explore the mud kitchen. Children also had space to explore risky play, using real life resources, such as ladders, large wooden sleepers and tyres. This carefully thought out space provided children with opportunities to develop physical skills, confidence in their abilities and how to be safe.

The childminder's home was clean and infection prevention control measures were in place. Detailed risk assessments were in place to ensure high quality facilities and safety of all children.

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

Children benefitted from the childminder's positive and nurturing ethos. The childminder's caring approach supported children to make choices and be independent. This reflected the aims of the service, supporting children to feel valued, respected and loved.

The childminder actively encouraged parents to contribute to the service by sharing their ideas through questionnaires and daily verbal interactions. Children were also regularly consulted on all aspects of their care, completing questionnaires and contributing their thoughts, feelings and ideas to play experiences. Parents' told us "children are included in designing their space and are involved in decisions about purchases they are going to make" and "I love that the children are always included in decision making at Elaine's." This helped ensure children were at the heart of the service.

Successes and achievements were communicated with families, strengthening partnership working that met children's needs. Parents told us "Elaine maintains excellent communication with the parents and meticulously documents children's learning experiences" and "Elaine is very transparent and nothing is ever a bother. Elaine communicates often with us about [my child] and the various activities planned with the children and checks in with us regularly if there's anything they can do to help bring [my child] along."

Policies and procedures were in place to support practice within the service. These were shared with parents, so they knew what to expect from the service. The childminder should continue to review these regularly to ensure they remain inline with current legislation and practice.

The childminder was very reflective. They evaluated the service which supported them to identify strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, they had identified scope to develop and improve their skills, this included accessing further training to support partnership working and literacy skills through 'Bookbug' training. Their professional approach and commitment to improvement ensured children experienced consistently high quality care, play and learning.

The childminder had a clear vision for their service. We discussed developing an improvement plan, where they could identify areas to improve within the service. This should include evidence that clearly documents their progress and development.

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 value

Children benefitted from the childminder's warmth, kindness and compassion. They had an enabling attitude, which supported children to achieve their potential.

The childminder knew the minded children well and was intuitive to their individual needs, providing personalised care. They supported children by playing with them, chatting and building strong attachments. One parent told us, "Elaine is extremely welcoming. Sending my [child] to Elaine is like having a member of the family looking after her. Elaine truly cares about the children. The childminder goes over and above for them all."

The childminder used skilled questioning to stimulate children's independence, problem solving and curiosity. They had fun as they played together which supported children's learning, confidence and wellbeing. For example, using language such as how many more and I wonder what might happen next.

The childminder has developed positive links with other childminders and this encouraged the sharing of good practice and ideas. This also provided the childminder with a network of support, which further enhanced high quality practice and experiences for children.

The childminder demonstrated a commitment to their own learning and development. Recent training included, Infant mental health, first aid and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). We suggested that the childminder should now record post training evaluations, to include a reflection of learning. Reflections of learning would enable the childminder to revisit and reflect on how learning opportunities have supported them to develop their practice, support children's wellbeing or further outcomes for children.

The childminder had a very good understanding of her professional responsibilities. They worked within their conditions of registration and ensured children's safety by gaining insurance, keeping registers, and maintaining the premises to a high standard.

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?	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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