

Chrystal, Laura Child Minding

Montrose

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
20 March 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2008968647

Service no:
CS2008169989

About the service

Laura Chrystal is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of 6 will be under 12, of whom no more than 3 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. Overnight service will not be provided.

This childminding service is provided from the childminder's home situated in the coastal village of Gourdon. Internally, children have access to a playroom and downstairs bathroom. An enclosed garden situated at the rear of the property is also used for outdoor play.

About the inspection

This was a short, announced inspection which took place on 20 March 2024. 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 registration information, previous inspection findings, information submitted by the service and any intelligence gathered since registration.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed the children at play and their interactions with the childminder
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily routines
- received feedback from seven families
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, settled and having fun.
- Children were cared for by an experienced, kind, nurturing and caring childminder who knew them very well.
- Effective communication supported families to be involved in their child's care.
- Children had regular access to the local and wider community, supporting them to feel included.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy and relaxed in the childminder's company and benefitted from warm, caring interactions. This supported children to feel comforted and secure. Children were encouraged and praised which supported their self-esteem. Parents shared that they were very happy with the care and support their child received and commented, "We could not be happier with the care, play and learning our daughter receives with Laura" and "Laura always goes above and beyond in the care of our child. Our child is very happy and content and we strongly agree that Laura and her calm, comfortable and safe setting has had a lot to do with this".

A flexible approach was taken to children settling in. The childminder spoke about the benefits of knowing children and families well and collaborated with parents to support this process. A detailed welcome pack was shared with families to support them to feel included.

Information was gathered for all the children through personal plans. The childminder spoke confidently about the children's ages and stages of development and any strategies used to support children. Plans clearly set out how children's needs would be met. Chronologies were used effectively to record significant events in a child's life that may impact on their health and wellbeing. These documents were reviewed regularly with families. This ensured the childminder had accurate and up to date information to support them to fully meet the needs of children in their care. Parents agreed and one shared with us, "Our child has delayed speech and Laura has worked really hard with us to help then along with that with the different activities that they do. Our child is never left out of any activities and loves to get involved with what the others are doing".

We looked at paperwork required to support the safe administration of medication. Consent and administration forms were completed fully and paperwork was in line with best practice which supported children's safety. Medication was stored appropriately. We suggested some additional information should be added to the medication policy to further support children's wellbeing.

Families provided lunches for their children which the childminder prepared safely and hygienically. Fresh water was available for children from their water bottles to support them to stay hydrated. We suggested, when possible, the childminder could sit with children to support language development and promote good eating habits

Where children required personal care including nappy changing, interactions were warm and caring. Children's dignity and privacy were respected throughout. The childminder shared she had attended the Care Inspectorate's webinar on potty training in early years and found this beneficial to her practice and how she supported children and families through this process.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Activities and resources were easily accessible to children and as a result children were able to choose what

they wanted to play with and shape their own learning experiences. There were a range of toys and play activities available which included role play, construction, books and puzzles. Resources were clean, in very good condition and appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Children participated in good quality play that was stimulating, fun and relevant to their stage of development. The childminder discussed the children's interests and how she supported the children in their play. The children played happily during our visit and the childminder supported the children where necessary letting them lead their own play. Parents shared with us, "She's fun, organised, keen to be outside no matter what the weather, kind, flexible, good selection of resources" and "The children love attending and all the activities and exploring they get to do".

Additional sensory activities were provided daily for the children. For example, children played with kinetic sand, which dinosaurs and loose parts were added to support children's imaginations. The childminder shared she also offered arts and crafts activities and regularly baked with the children to support high quality play experiences. The childminder was observed naturally promoting opportunities for literacy and numeracy learning throughout play experiences. She also extended children's play interests with an effective use of questioning.

The childminder had a very good understanding about the importance of children having opportunities to play outdoors and a strong emphasis was placed on outdoor play. Children benefitted from lots of fresh air and exercise. Outside in the garden the children had opportunities to develop their gross motor skills.

Very good use was made of the local community. The childminder told us that they regularly went to the woods, park, the beach and a music class. Other outings included visits to soft play, and farms where they enjoyed picnics in the open air. The childminder told us that she regularly went for walks with children to support their development and promote road safety skills. Parents shared with us, "My child loves it when she takes them to parks after school" and "She always has varied outings organised".

The childminder had learning folders in place for children and had an effective overview of children's learning and development to meet individual children's needs. The quality of recorded observations of children and their next steps in development and learning was on the whole very good and these referred to best practice guidance.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder's home provided a homely, welcoming and comfortable environment for children. The indoor environment provided sufficient space for children to play and relax in comfort. Children had access to a designated playroom which was laid out with a range of toys which the children were interested in. Parents shared the environment was, "Home from home" and "The setting is a great second home for our child. It is warm and welcoming".

Risk assessments were in place which covered aspects of the home, outdoor play and outings. These were routinely reviewed and updated to reflect any changes to support children's safety.

Very good safety measures protected children from harm. Children regularly took part in fire safety drills

and road safety was regularly discussed with children when outdoors.

We were satisfied that the service had appropriate infection prevention and control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children. All areas were visibly clean and tidy. Surfaces were cleaned before and after eating and the childminder and children washed their hands before eating and after nappy changes.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The vision, values and aims of the service were care, play and nurture based, which reflected the service provided. The childminder shared these with families when they visited the service in a detailed welcome pack.

Policies and procedures were in place which underpinned the service. These were shared with families and reviewed regularly. We suggested some small amendments to some policies to reflect current best practice and guidance.

The childminder was in the early stages of using the Care Inspectorate guidance 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged children' as a self-evaluation tool. The childminder had identified she would like to improve her menu and play opportunities for children. Children and families had been involved in this process to support them to feel included. The childminder should continue to use this tool to support her to deliver high quality care and learning for children.

The childminder also gathered feedback about her service through regular family questionnaires and children had been involved in mind maps to offer suggestions for a menu and to request activities and outings. Parents confirmed that communication was good and that the childminder sought their views and wishes. Parents who shared their views were very happy with the service provided by the childminder. Families shared with us, "We trust Laura's opinions and advice as she is very knowledgeable and has vast experience" and "Laura has a wealth of experience and keeps up to date with all documents".

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff, skills, knowledge and values

The childminder was warm and approachable and had established very good relationships with children and their families. She shared information with parents through daily conversations at drop off/pick up times. These were good opportunities to ensure parents were included and involved in what their children were doing when attending the service to support continuity of care.

The childminder had many years of experience of being a childminder. In addition to core training which included first aid, food hygiene and child protection, the childminder had also attended a number of

additional courses to support her practice which included; Autism and neurodiversity and Attachments and loss. She also shared she would like to undertake a formal childcare qualification to further develop her practice. A reflective journal supported the childminder to identify the benefit and impact of training.

The childminder made very good use of her links with the local authority and updates from the Care Inspectorate to keep informed about developments in the early year sector. Close ties with other childminders in the area also supported her professional development.

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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