

Mather, Ann Child Minding

Grangemouth

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 April 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2004919207

Service no:
CS2004079502

About the service

Ann Mather is registered to provide a childminding service for a maximum of eight children at any one time. The service is provided from the childminder's home in a residential area of Grangemouth. It is located close to local schools, nurseries and other amenities such as parks, shops and a stadium.

Children have access to the living room, hallway and downstairs bathroom. Children can also play in a rear enclosed garden which is accessed through the kitchen.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 8 April 2024 between 08:45 and 10:30. 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:

- spent time with two children
- received feedback from six family members
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- received feedback from visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and secure with the childminder because there were strong and trusting relationships with families.
- Families were very happy with the quality of care, play and learning their children experienced.
- Children's needs, rights and choices were respected and valued by the childminder who made changes to their care, play and learning based on their unique needs.
- The childminder made good use of the local community to offer children fun, exciting and meaningful play and learning experiences.
- The childminder had made changes to the premises to improve children's experiences while keeping them safe and healthy.
- Personal planning approaches could be improved to celebrate children's achievements more openly and include better observations linked to children's wellbeing needs.
- The childminder should continue to build their confidence, knowledge and experience in using best practice guidance and quality frameworks to promote positive outcomes for children.

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 happy, confident and secure in the childminder's care. The childminder was warm, kind and nurturing, offering children a safe, secure and loving experience. All families spoke positively about the strong and trusting relationships they had with the childminder. They valued the support, guidance and loving approach that was offered. They recognised this approach supported positive outcomes for them and their children. Children also told us that they enjoyed being with the childminder. One child said, "I love going to Ann's so much and she really takes care of me and looks after me and I love playing with all the other children." The childminder sensitively listened to children's actions, emotions and words to meet their needs while respecting their rights and choices.

Each child had a personal plan that detailed their needs; for example, any medical, dietary or health needs. This information helped the childminder to keep children safe and healthy. Families felt included in choosing their child's care, play and learning. One parent said, "Ann is a fantastic childminder and always keeps us parents up to date of the child's progress and is very friendly and chats at drop off and pick-ups." The childminder was beginning to use the wellbeing indicators to recognise children's needs, rights and choices in the plans. This was starting to ensure that children were achieving their potential in a planned and supportive way. We encouraged the childminder to continue improving the observations and recording of children's needs so there was a more complete picture of their progress. We also discussed how the childminder could use relevant personal planning guidance to help them include children and families more fully in this process. For example, some parts of the plan could be more accessible, using photos, to encourage children to talk about their experiences and revisit these in a fun way.

Parents provided most meals for children and the childminder supported them to provide healthy and nutritious options. The childminder had fruit, vegetables and other healthy snacks available if children were hungry throughout the day and each child had their own water bottle so they stayed well hydrated. Snack time after school was a social experience where children could choose from a few healthy options. Children were also included in cooking and baking opportunities so they built positive relationships with food from an early age. The childminder had good procedures in place to ensure children ate well on outings while keeping children safe and healthy. This reduced the interruptions to their play and interests and helped children to feel respected and valued.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were settled and confident playing in the childminder's home. They were able to choose their own play experiences independently. The childminder was encouraging and supportive of their ideas and interests, changing the resources available to meet their needs. Children told us they enjoyed their play and learning with the childminder. One child said, "Ann is fun and teaches me lots of new things." All families were happy with the play and learning their children experienced. They identified outdoor play and use of the local community as particular strengths of the childminder's approach. One parent told us, "Ann is constantly out with the kids, rain or shine, and my daughter loves this", and another said, "Ann always fills the days up with activities and learning."

The childminder was creative and imaginative in finding new ideas for play that kept children excited and having fun. The Care Inspectorate document, 'Growing my potential', supports practitioners to provide safe, responsive, nurturing care and learning experiences for babies and young children. We asked the childminder to reflect on how this may support them to offer high quality play and learning for the youngest children.

Children's interests and right to play was at the heart of the childminder's approach. Families told us the childminder regularly asked them about children's interests, ideas and choices so they could build this into their play and learning. The childminder made good use of the local community to extend children's real life experiences and make their play meaningful. As a result, they were developing skills for life. Older children enjoyed taking a caring role with younger children, supporting them to learn new things. This created a responsible, respectful and inclusive space for everyone to feel valued. The childminder knew children very well and spoke confidently about each child's unique interests. We encouraged the childminder to consider how this could be celebrated more openly using children's personal plans to record their successes, achievements and choices. This would give them more opportunities to build children's self-esteem and confidence.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of **good** for this key question where we identified strengths and some improvements would maximise children's wellbeing.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were happy and settled in the childminder's home. There were spaces to play and relax that children could explore independently. Children's toys and resources were accessible for them to choose their own play, including some loose parts. The space was generally well presented and organised creating a welcoming space for children's play. The garden space was a favourite with children and families. They enjoyed being outdoors and the childminder had plans to develop the garden over time. For example, they were keen to extend the muddy, messy play area and include a blackboard for children to be creative on. The childminder also purchased resources so all children's interests were included and respected. They had invested in outdoor wetsuits so that children could enjoy outdoor play comfortably. We encouraged the childminder to continue developing the resources available for children's play. For example, more open-ended and unusual objects would encourage children to be more creative and imaginative in their play. They could also reduce the volume of resources available so these are targeted to meeting children's needs.

The home was mostly clean and well-maintained. We made an area for improvement at the last inspection asking the childminder to ensure the premises were safe, clean and tidy at all times. This was to reduce the risk of the spread of infection and keep children safe and healthy. The childminder had made significant improvements to their practice, including having the fencing and gates in the garden replaced so it was fully safe and secure. The setting was visibly clean and the childminder was mindful of maintaining good infection prevention and control practices. They had improved their understanding of assessing risk and we were confident children would be safe and protected from harm. Therefore, we found that the area for improvement had been met. We reminded the childminder to continue to remove resources that were old, tired or in need of repair. We discussed that the quality of resources was more valuable for children's development than the quantity and asked the childminder to consider this as they develop their setting over time.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We found important strengths that clearly outweighed areas for improvement in this key question. This contributed to positive outcomes for children and, therefore, we made an evaluation of **good**.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder was passionate about their role and offered children and families a loving, caring and nurturing experience. Children and families' opinions and views were used when the childminder made any changes to their practice. All families told us they felt included and respected. One parent said, "Myself and my child are asked our opinions included in activities and our opinions and feedback taken on board." The childminder was well respected in the local community and had developed close links with other childminders. This helped them to share ideas and discuss practice regularly while also building community connections. A professional supporting the childminder told us, "Within the community Ann is a well-known childminder and continues to strive to make a difference for children and their families through groups that she helps with as well." This strong relationship with the community and families promoted positive outcomes for children.

The childminder was developing their knowledge and understanding of self-evaluation and improvement planning. They had worked closely with the local authority to discuss their strengths and areas for improvement, in line with relevant quality frameworks. This was helping the childminder to make well-informed changes that improved children's experiences. For example, the childminder was part of a pilot project to improve relationships between care services where children attended more than one setting. This was improving the consistency and continuity of care for children so their needs were met across their daily experiences. The childminder participated actively in discussions and asked questions to evaluate their work. As the childminder builds their confidence in self-evaluation, we encouraged them to consider how they can use best practice guidance more often to understand national expectations and make targeted changes to their work. We also discussed how the childminder could use the feedback from this inspection to develop an action plan for improvement that is measurable and achievable. This would ensure children experience high quality care, play and learning that continues to improve over time.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as **good** where performance impacted positively on children's outcomes and this outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children were treated with warmth, kindness and compassion through their daily experiences. The childminder was nurturing, caring and responsive to their needs, rights and choices. The children we observed smiled and giggled in their play with the childminder's support. They were comfortable and settled throughout our time with them which showed the strong connections the childminder had built with them. The childminder was keen to ensure all children felt valued, loved and secure in their care. Families told us they had positive, strong and trusting relationships with the childminder that supported positive outcomes for their children. One parent said, "I am very happy with the care my son receives at Ann's. He is settled being left at Ann's and has built a good bond with her and the other children that she cares for."

Another parent told us, "Ann is a lovely caring childminder... I can contact Ann anytime and she always has time for us." As a result, we were confident the childminder supported children's wellbeing positively through compassionate and responsive care.

The childminder was committed to their own learning and development. They had recently achieved a Scottish Vocational Qualification relating to their role in early learning and childcare. This had helped them to recognise their role and the key aspects of high quality care, play and learning needed to promote positive outcomes for children. We were told by one professional that "Ann has spent time accessing different resources to develop her own knowledge and practice and enhance the experiences she provides for the children in her care." The childminder should now build on this experience, learning and development by remaining up to date with best practice guidance and applying this in practice. For example, children's rights are being written into Scots law and it will be important for the childminder to show how they respect these rights in their work. This would improve and strengthen the childminder's approach to children's care, play and learning in a respectful and inclusive way.

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

To keep children safe and healthy, the provider should ensure the premises are safe, clean and tidy at all times. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) ensuring the rear garden is fully enclosed with appropriate gates and fencing
- b) keeping all hazardous materials out of reach of children
- c) decluttering surfaces and storage areas so these can be cleaned effectively
- d) ensuring the bathroom is always clean and well presented
- e) keeping food preparation areas clean, tidy and clutter free
- f) repairing or removing damaged and broken equipment.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment" (HSCS 5.22).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate practice notes, 'Keeping children safe' and the Health Protection Scotland document, 'Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Daycare and Childminding Settings).

This area for improvement was made on 11 July 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had made significant improvements to the premises to meet this area for improvement. We were confident that children would be kept safe and healthy because of the measures in place to minimise risk.

The childminder was mindful of good infection prevention and control practices and was committed to maintaining the premises to a good standard. We shared the most recent guidance on health protection with the childminder so they could continue to improve their practice.

This area for improvement has been met.

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?	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

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