

Sarah's Childminding Services

Child Minding

Linlithgow

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 May 2024

Service provided by:
Sarah McKeown

Service provider number:
SP2022000142

Service no:
CS2022000200

About the service

Sarah's Childminding Services offers a care of children service from their family home in Linlithgow, West Lothian. They are registered to provide care for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age. Of whom, no more than three are not yet attending primary school, of whom, no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers include the childminders family. Children have access to the living room, large back garden, kitchen, and toilet facilities.

The service is close to schools and nurseries, local amenities, green spaces and can be reached by transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 13 May between 08:50 and 11:30. 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:

- received feedback electronically from one family
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with children and observed their play.

Key messages

- Children were settled, happy and having fun as they enjoyed positive interactions with the childminder.
- Children were able to lead their play from a selection of quality resources and books.
- The childminders calm and nurturing manner supported children to feel safe and secure.
- Mealtimes were relaxed and offered children a balance of healthy food choices.
- Children's rights were promoted as the childminder listened to them and responded to their wishes.
- The childminder should evidence how they gather families' views to support the development of the service.

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 experienced kind and nurturing interactions from the childminder. They enjoyed being close and reading books they had chosen. We could see positive attachments had been made. One family told us "Sarah is lovely, kind, and trustworthy. She provides regular updates and I feel like my children are in good hands ". This promoted a sense of safety and security for children.

Mealtimes were relaxed and at the children's pace. They were consulted about when they would like to eat. The childminder responded to children's preference to have a picnic and provided a rug. Children sat together with the childminder and enjoyed a balance of healthy food and drink choices. As a result, children experienced a calm, sociable mealtime. The childminder recognised opportunities to develop independence skills could be further developed. We encouraged them to continue to look at this routine so children can have more ownership.

Children were able to rest and relax in the Livingroom throughout the day as the childminder had large floor cushions. Children enjoyed sitting at this space, looking at books and engaging in role play. Sleep mats and blankets were available to support children to sleep in line with best practice guidance. This promoted rest and relaxation and benefitted their wellbeing.

Personal plans were in place for children. The childminder understood the importance of reviewing this information regularly with families. We suggested ways to gather further information to ensure they record what is important to each child.

Families were kept informed through an online platform, messaging system, and face to face discussions. They told us they liked receiving this information and that they received a hand over at the end of every session. This meant they were aware of activities children had enjoyed and how they had spent their day.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Planning for play and learning was informal. Children were asked what they wanted to do and were able to make independent choices from a selection of resources. This included role play, creativity, books, and numeracy materials. We saw children sharing their favourite stories with the childminder and there was plenty high-quality books for different stages of development.

The childminder used the opportunity when reading to children to promote language through effective questioning and talking with children about their experiences. One child had an interest in dinosaurs. The childminder provided sorting materials that were small, coloured dinosaurs. This engaged the child for a sustained period. The childminder was responsive to children's requests. For example, one child wanted to make a bed for their doll. They collected boxes and were able to use their imagination to create their ideas. One family told us their child is always happy to go and have fun doing different activities . As a result, children were able to lead their play.

The childminder used an online platform to share pictures and observations of children's play and learning with families. Observations were of a high quality and showed the skills children were developing. A floor book had been started previously. We encouraged the childminder to look at how children can revisit their play and learning and talk about their experiences.

Children benefited from regular opportunities to explore their community. They attended groups, visited the park, enjoyed walks at the canal and other green spaces. Children told us they liked going to the park. This meant they had a connection with the community and able to enjoy the benefits of being in nature.

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 welcoming, homely environment that was comfortable and ventilated. They were able to access the Livingroom, back garden, kitchen area when supported by the childminder and upstairs toilet facilities. Spaces were ample for the small number of children that attended.

The childminder carried out daily checks of spaces children accessed but did not have a system in place to record these or actions they had taken when a potential risk had been identified. We encouraged them to review their procedures to ensure they evidence and review safety and maintenance checks (see area for improvement 1.)

The childminder had detailed risk assessments in place that included the garden, kitchen, trips, and outings. These had been reviewed regularly and amended when required. This meant that children's safety and wellbeing was considered.

Children washed their hands at key times as effective hand hygiene routines were in place. They were encouraged to wash their hands before meals and after personal care routines had been carried out. The childminder had a system in place for the laundering of blankets and cleaning of toys. This meant that children had access to well-maintained resources.

Areas for improvement

1. The childminder should review their daily procedures for identifying potential risks. These should be effective, meaningful and relevant for the daily operation of the service. This should include, but not limited to, evidencing the clear actions they have taken to minimise risks that promote children safety and wellbeing.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy, and well-maintained premises, furnishings, and equipment (HSCS:5.24)

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 improvements and led well

Children and families experienced a welcoming ethos from the childminder who aimed to offer a stimulating and friendly environment that supports children to thrive through learning and fun experiences. Children told us they liked coming to the childminders home as they had fun.

The childminder had begun to engage in a cycle of self-evaluation using the Care Inspectorate document 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school aged childcare' (Care Inspectorate 2022). This had supported them to identify what was going well in the service and areas they would like to develop. We encouraged them to continue with this as it was effective in supporting improvements.

The service had an improvement plan in place with a focus on garden development. We discussed including the actions that they had identified from their self-evaluation in their plan. This would ensure all areas of the service and experiences for children were considered.

The childminder understood the importance of consultation with all stakeholders to support their service improvements. We encouraged them to look at ways to gather children and families' views. This would ensure they were fully involved in developing the service (see area for improvement 1.)

Areas for improvement

1. The childminder should gather the views of children and families as part of their quality assurance process. This will help support them in identifying what is going well and what children and families would like to see developed in the service as part of their improvement plan.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: I can be meaningfully involved in how the organisations that support and care for me work and develop (HSCS 4.6).

How good is our staff team?

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 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge, and values

Children experienced caring and respectful interactions from the childminder who had a good awareness of their individual needs, wishes and stage of development. The childminder supported children to understand the needs of each other. For example, talking with them about how babies communicate and explore their environment so they can learn and have fun.

Families had confidence and trust in the childminder. They commented ""Sarah is reliable and takes the time to invest with the children. "Kids love Sarah's and I have no concerns with her ability to care for my children "

The childminder was able to talk about some training and professional learning they had taken part in previously and training planned. We encouraged them to record this and reflect on the impact learning and professional reading had on supporting positive outcomes for children (see area for improvement 1.)

The childminder had good links with the childminding community in Linlithgow and wider areas. This meant they were able to support each other, discuss guidance and offer children opportunities to connect with peers in their community through organised events.

The childminder was registered with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and made use of the information and support they offered. This ensured they received up to date guidance and felt informed about updates relevant to their role.

Areas for improvement

1. To provide the best possible outcomes for children, the childminder should ensure they evidence they have engaged in training and relevant reading of guidance to keep their knowledge and understanding current.

This is to ensure I have confidence in the people who support and care for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards(HSCS) which state, 'I experience high quality care and support that is right for me and is based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11).

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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