

Watson, Linda Child Minding

Edinburgh

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 May 2024

Service provided by:
Watson, Mrs Linda Watson, Mrs Linda

Service provider number:
SP2003906122

Service no:
CS2003012397

About the service

Linda Watson provides a childminding service from their property in a quiet residential area of Corstorphine, Edinburgh. The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of eight children under 16, of whom a maximum of six will be under 12 years, 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. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate. At the time of our inspection six children were registered with the service. The childminder was not in partnership with the local authority to provide funded places.

The service is close to local primary schools, shops, parks, and other amenities. The children are cared for in the living room, with access to the upstairs bathroom. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 9 April 2024 between 11:15 and 13:45.

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, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. To inform our evaluation we:

- invited all parents to complete our questionnaire and provided contact details for them to make direct contact with the inspector, we received no responses
- spoke with the childminder
- spoke with children
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

Children's wellbeing was promoted by the childminder's warm and responsive interactions.

The childminder should ensure that all children have a meaningful personal plan. This would enable them to support children's overall, care, wellbeing and learning needs.

The childminder should enhance the range of resources and toys available to ensure that children have a breadth of stimulating and interesting experiences to promote their curiosity, imagination and creativity.

To improve outcomes for children and ensure ongoing development in the service, the childminder should develop quality assurance processes. This would influence positive change to outcomes for children and families.

The childminder should develop their knowledge and understanding of good practice guidance to further build upon the experiences children have at the setting.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children were settled and happy because the childminder was nurturing and loving in their interactions with them. Children sought comfort from the childminder and were given reassurance and cuddles, which supported their emotional wellbeing. The childminder offered praise and recognition when children achieved, supporting them to develop their self-worth. Interactions throughout were warm, caring, and nurtured children's security, confidence and positive relationships.

Not all children had a purposeful personal plan. All children should have a plan to support how care will be provided. This should be agreed in partnership with parents, to ensure a consistent approach to caring for individual children. Personal plans should set out how an individual's assessed needs will be met, as well as their wishes and choices. The childminder should develop their understanding about the purpose of personal plans and introduce plans for all children which are meaningful, working documents. This is to support children's overall care, wellbeing, and learning needs. We signposted the childminder to Care Inspectorate guidance: Guide for Providers on Personal Planning: Early Learning and Childcare (Care Inspectorate, 2021) **(see area for improvement 1)**.

The childminder provided snacks and some meals for children. Older children sat at the adult sized table to eat. Younger children sat on a blanket on the kitchen floor. The childminder should ensure that younger children are given the same opportunity to sit at an appropriately sized table when eating. This would provide opportunities for all children to promote independence skills, such as preparing and serving their food and drinks. The childminder could adapt the daily routine to allow them to be able to sit and have a conversation with children at mealtimes. This would promote language and social skills, as well as healthy eating habits. We signposted the childminder to the best practice guidance, Food Matters (Care Inspectorate, 2018) to support the improvement of food experiences for children. **(see area for improvement 2)**.

The childminder had not sufficiently developed and implemented effective child protection policies and procedures. They could not confidently demonstrate that they had an understanding of their role and responsibilities, should a child protection or safeguarding concern arise. The childminder should now renew their child protection training, to be fully knowledgeable with current child protection guidance. This is to ensure they are able to competently respond and act on any wellbeing, child protection or safeguarding concerns, to keep children safe. We signposted them to the best practice guidance: National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023 (Scottish Government, 2023) **(see area for improvement 3)**.

The childminder chose not to administer medication to children when caring for them. They should now update their medication policy to inform parents that this is their practice.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children were having fun and enjoying the companionship of the childminder. The pace of the day was relaxed and led by the children.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through good connections to their wider community. Children regularly attended local playgroups where they had opportunities to develop social and language skills. Frequent trips to local parks encouraged children to be active and develop confidence in new skills.

Children's language development was supported through supportive conversations with the childminder. Literacy and numeracy opportunities could be further enhanced through the introduction and use of a wider range of books, creative materials and mark making resources. This could encourage children to develop a love for reading, writing and drawing.

Observations of children could be recorded and used to plan experiences and next steps to support children to make good progress and development. This would support the childminder to plan appropriate high-quality play experiences, based on children's needs. We discussed the use of photographs of children at play when in the childminder's care. This would allow children to revisit and reflect on their learning, develop language skills, and support them to become involved in planning future play experiences.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the childminder should further develop personal plans for each child to show how their needs are being identified and met. This should be done in consultation with parents and reviewed when there is a significant change in a child's health, welfare or safety needs, or at least once in every six month period. To understand the purpose of personal plans, the childminder should refer to the best practice guidance, 'Guide for Providers on Personal Planning, Early Learning and Childcare' (Care Inspectorate 2021).

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).

2. To help children to experience relaxed and sociable snack and mealtime experiences, which support independence and language development, the childminder should improve such experiences in line with best practice guidance. This should include, but not be limited to, all children being able to sit at a table and being supported by the childminder when eating and drinking.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state 'I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35).

3. To keep children safe and protected from harm, the childminder should renew their child protection training to be fully knowledgeable with current child protection guidance. This is to ensure they are able to competently respond and act on any wellbeing, child protection or safeguarding concerns. We signposted them to the best practice guidance: National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023 (Scottish Government, 2023)

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

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's wellbeing was promoted from being included in a homely setting. The childminder's home was warm, clean and well-ventilated with plenty of natural light. The childminder had created an environment where children felt welcome and had a sense of ownership of the space. Children had space to play and also to rest and relax on soft furnishings.

We noted that the majority of toys and resources offered were manufactured, offering limited creativity and imagination opportunities. We discussed the value of providing 'loose parts' for children. Loose parts are natural or open ended materials, which help children develop their imagination and help them to problem solve as they explore different shapes and textures. We did not observe the children playing outside during the inspection. We encouraged the childminder to regularly use the fully enclosed garden when children were in the service. Having a deeper connection with the natural world and sensory materials supports brain development, as children explore how their actions impact on what's around them.

Infection prevention and control procedures supported a safe environment. For example, we observed the childminder supporting children with handwashing at appropriate times. Children's risk of cross infection was reduced, as the childminder maintained a clean environment. This supported a hygienic environment and contributed to children remaining healthy. However, we reminded the childminder about the importance of wearing an apron when changing nappies. This is important to help to keep children healthy by reducing the risk of cross contamination and spreading germs.

Children's safety was maintained through a range of measures in place. This included covering up the fireplace and hearth to prevent them from falling onto a hard surface. The childminder was booked on to renew their first aid training to ensure they were able to respond appropriately should an accident occur. Children loved the small dog who lived in the setting. This provided opportunities for them to be around and care for an animal, supporting them to develop empathy and caring skills.

Children's confidentiality was maintained, as the childminder understood the importance of this. However, they were not registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and had limited understanding of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This meant that they were not aware of how to manage the principles of general data protection (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children and families' personal information is respected, stored, and used confidentially and lawfully, the childminder should register with and follow Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) guidelines.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Aims and objectives, and policies were shared with families when they began. We found these had not been reviewed for some time. We encouraged the childminder to revisit these to ensure information was current, and reflected the service offered, giving clear expectations to parents about the service.

The childminder provided a warm and welcoming service, helping children feel loved, safe and secure. They engaged with families and children, and asked for feedback about the service through informal chats.

There were limited systems in place to evaluate the quality of the service and identify areas for improvement. As a result, experiences for children were not always being developed. We discussed the benefits of using quality audit tools, such as: 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' and 'My Childminding Journey', as a starting point in reflecting on what was working well, and where improvements could be made.

(see area of improvement 1).

At the last inspection, we made a recommendation that childminder should seek the views, opinions and suggestions of the parents and children who use the service on a regular basis. This was to allow them to demonstrate how changes were made to improve the service, based on the feedback from the people who use it. Consultation with children and families tended to be verbal and informal, for example children were routinely consulted about resources and activities they would like to support their play. However, there was no formal consultation process to seek the views, opinions and suggestions of the parents and children who use the service on a regular basis. The childminder should invite parents to share what they felt worked well in the service, and areas that they felt could be improved upon. This would support parents to feel respected and included in the development of the service. **This recommendation was not been met and has been reworded and made an area for improvement. (see area of improvement 1).**

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure a high-quality service for children and families; the childminder should develop a system to enable them to identify improvements and be able to demonstrate their impact. This will help to raise standards and to drive and sustain improvement. This should include, but not be limited to, a record of ongoing participation and involvement of children and their families, risk assessments and children's personal plans. To support this the childminder should make use of good practice guidance: 'A quality framework for daycare, childminding and school aged children' (Care Inspectorate, 2022) and 'Your Childminding Journey' (Care Inspectorate, 2017).

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).

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills knowledge and values

The childminder's warmth and kindness towards the children enabled them to feel valued, loved and secure. Through our discussion it was clear that the childminder was attuned and responsive to the individual needs of the children that helped to form close attachments.

At the last inspection, we recommended that the childminder should further develop their knowledge of best practice guidance, national strategies and relevant aspects of practice through further professional development. However, the childminder had not accessed any professional learning to develop their skills and knowledge to enhance outcomes for children, since the last inspection. We spoke with the childminder about the responsibilities for meeting expected standards of being a registered service. This included the importance of keeping up to date with current guidance and best practice through professional reading or wider training. We emailed them some links to best practice documents from the HUB area of our website, to inform their professional reading. We discussed ways the childminder could document the impact of professional learning on children's experiences. **This recommendation was not met and has been reworded and made an area for improvement (see area for improvement 1).**

The childminder was not aware of their responsibility of notification reporting to the Care Inspectorate. We emailed the following guidance to them, 'Records childminding services must keep and guidance on notification reporting (Care Inspectorate, 2015).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children are given the best opportunities, the childminder should demonstrate a commitment to participate in professional learning opportunities. This would improve their practice and outcomes for children. This should include, but not be limited to, the childminder familiarising themselves with the range of best practice documents. The childminder should record their learning to support them to reflect and plan how they will improve their practice as a result of their learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

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 provider should seek the views, opinions and suggestions of the parents and children who use the service on a regular basis. This will allow her to demonstrate how changes were made to improve the service based on the feedback from the people who use it.

National Care Standards 13, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Improving the Service - You can be confident that the service will evaluate what it does and make improvements.

This area for improvement was made on 19 April 2017.

Action taken since then

Consultation with children and families tended to be verbal and informal, for example children were routinely consulted about resources and activities they would like to support their play. However, there was no formal consultation process to seek the views, opinions and suggestions of the parents and children who use the service on a regular basis. The childminder had not made any improvements to enhance the service since the last inspection.

This area for improvement has not been met. It will be reworded and included in key question 3 'How good is our leadership?' section of this report.

Previous area for improvement 2

The childminder should further develop her knowledge of best practice guidance, national strategies and relevant aspects of practice through further professional development.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 13 - Improving the Service, Standard 14 - Well-managed Service.

This area for improvement was made on 19 April 2017.

Action taken since then

The childminder had not participated in any training since the last inspection. This meant that they had not further developed their knowledge of best practice guidance, national strategies and relevant aspects of practice through further professional development.

This area for improvement has not been met. It will be reworded and included in key question 4 'How good is our staff team?' section of this report.

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?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	3 - Adequate
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	3 - Adequate

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