

Currie, Kirsty Child Minding

Glasgow

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 May 2024

Service provided by:
Kirsty Currie

Service provider number:
SP2008972164

Service no:
CS2008188574

About the service

The service operates from the childminder's family home in Blantyre, South Lanarkshire. The childminding service is registered to provide care for up to six children under the age of 16 at any one time, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school, and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. The numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's own family. There is a time limited condition on the service registration, which is due to expire on 26 June 2024. This allowed the childminder to care for up to four children not yet attending primary school, on a Wednesday. We reminded the childminder to submit a variation to lift this condition by that date.

Children are mainly cared for in a playroom that has been converted from the garage in the grounds of the childminder's home. The playroom has direct access to safely enclosed gardens, which children can explore while enjoying active play in the fresh air. The service is close to local nurseries, schools, shops, parks and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 22 May 2024 between 09:45 and 11:45. One inspector carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with the childminder about the service they provided and observed four minded children in their play
- observed practice including the interactions between the childminder and minded children
- walked around areas of the home used by minded children, looking at resources available and the use of space
- reviewed documents related to the service.

Key messages

- Children were supported to feel safe, secure and loved, as the childminder had built respectful and nurturing relationships with them.
- Children led their play and learning experiences, which encouraged their right to choice and independence.
- Children were learning new skills as they had regular access to high quality outdoor play and learning.
- Families felt included and respected as the childminder valued their views about how the service could be developed.
- The childminder was committed to their professional development and was proactive in seeking out training that would support 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?	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 had built strong attachments with the childminder. Their wellbeing was nurtured by the childminder, who knew them well and was sensitive to their individual needs. We observed the childminder skilfully respond to children's verbal and non-verbal cues for seeking comfort and reassurance. Their positive interactions enabled children to feel valued, loved and secure. This was confirmed by parents' comments, who believed the whole family had built meaningful relationships with the childminder. For example, "The relationship we have with Kirsty is important and we have a great relationship with her. My children are always looking forward to going to Kirsty's and seeing the bond they have with her is really encouraging and reassuring" and "Kirsty has looked after both my children and always goes above and beyond to establish a great long lasting relationship."

Children's personal plans were detailed and informative. Parents were invited to share in their child's care and learning using a secure online platform and also through WhatsApp messaging. The childminder used the SHANARRI (safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included) wellbeing indicators from Scottish Government guidance 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC) to record how children's individual needs should be supported to ensure the best outcomes for them. Sharing experiences and strategies between the childminding setting and child's home helped ensure continuity in children's care and routines.

We observed the routines that the childminder had in place to create a homely atmosphere where children were safe, healthy and nurtured. Children brought their own lunch however, the childminder offered snacks and had registered as a food business and completed training in food hygiene to ensure that they followed safe practice when preparing food for children. Food safety is very important for childminders because children are a vulnerable group. This means children can be more seriously affected by food poisoning and food allergies than some other groups of people. Children chose collectively whether they wanted to have their lunch in the dining room within the childminder's home or at a lower table within the playroom. We discussed how it would be more sociable and inclusive if all children sat at the same level to eat, which was not possible in the dining room. We also suggested that pacing the contents of children's lunch boxes, rather than serving on one plate would support children to develop a positive relationship with food where they made healthy choices. We referred the childminder to our guidance 'Food Matters. Nurturing happy, healthy children' (Care Inspectorate, 2019).

No children required medication at the time of the inspection. The childminder had shared their medication policy with parents and had adapted Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) templates for recording children's medication, should this be required. The templates were in keeping with good practice guidance and ensured children's health, safety and wellbeing needs would be met. The childminder understood the importance of safeguarding children's welfare and wellbeing. They had participated in an enhanced child protection course so that they were clear on their own roles and responsibilities for raising any concerns about children. The childminder had shared their child protection policy with parents to provide them with reassurance that children's safety was of the utmost importance to them.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children led their play and learning experiences, which encouraged their right to choice and independence. Children were offered a range of play opportunities by the childminder, who was mindful of their interests and abilities. Toys, books and resources including arts and crafts, were reflective of children's stage of development and easy for children to access by themselves to support their play ideas. The four young children present were developing confidence and resilience because the childminder responded positively and sensitively to their play cues. The childminder modelled sharing and respect for others. When the youngest child tried to catch a ball, the childminder encouraged other children to join a game of rolling and bouncing the ball to each other, recognising their stage of development and celebrating their achievements. The activity naturally introduced turn taking and numeracy into play as children counted out bounces of the ball and shots taken.

The childminder undertook professional reading to identify ideas for activities that would spark children's interests and imagination. For example, theories and good practice guidance around the curiosity approach. This meant there were lots of open ended and natural materials, sometimes referred to as 'loose parts', both indoors and outside. Children had opportunities for sensory exploration, such as playdough and digging in soil, which built strong connections in their brain and improved their ability to respond to tasks, to self-regulate and to experiment.

The childminder had developed the garden to include planting and growing opportunities and added resources that would provoke children's thinking. For example, there was a herb garden with a mud kitchen nearby where children could create imaginative meals. One child was proud to tell us, "we planted thyme and oregano" and knew these herbs might be used for pizzas. As a result play experiences were helping to develop children's skills in language, health and wellbeing.

Visits in the wider community further engaged children's wonder in nature. Most recently children had collected tadpoles and these were displayed in a large tank so that children could observe their growth and take responsibility for their care. There was a chart displaying the lifecycle of the tadpole and children were excited to share this with us, including gravely explaining that the tadpoles might not be strong enough to survive. This demonstrated that the childminder had introduced concepts of life and death to children in a way that they understood. The experience provided an opportunity for children to talk about their emotions and feelings of loss in a safe environment.

Parents who responded to our survey felt fully informed and involved in their child's learning journey, they particularly appreciated the outdoor play experiences. Their comments included, "Outdoor learning is always available to the children. Kirsty always ensures the children's voice is heard too and they get the choice of what experiences they would like to do."

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.

Children benefitted greatly from a well maintained and thoughtfully planned environment. The childminding setting was centred within a designated playroom with its own entrance. A further set of doors to the garden provided plenty of natural light and ventilation. The playroom had attractively organised areas with natural and open ended resources, which invited children's exploration through play therefore promoting their curiosity and creativity. Free flow access from the playroom to a large enclosed garden enabled

children to actively follow their play intentions, and supported their physical development. All parents we consulted strongly agreed that their children had opportunities to play outdoors. Their comments included, "Kirsty is a huge advocate for going outside with kids. As well as the garden there is an under cover patio for the kids to shelter under while the weather isn't great. They always go on woodland walks, trips to the park, country parks and trips to the beach. We have learned about so many places to take our kids as the places they visit change so often."

Children benefitted from a safe and clean environment. The childminder visually checked children's environments before each session and recorded any new hazards to children's safety in a notebook. We could see that these were colour coded so that the childminder could track when any issues had been identified and subsequently addressed to keep children safe from harm. Although the childminder risk assessed where children went on outings, they should be mindful of the transition between the playroom and the childminder's house. We observed that the children understood the boundaries during this journey but the childminder was carrying a child and other large items, which limited their freedom to respond quickly when another child tripped. Planning ahead what items might be needed in different areas would minimise this risk and keep children safe at all times.

The childminder paid close attention to hygiene through their cleaning routines. It was very good practice that everyone took their outdoor shoes off at the entrance vestibule. This meant that no dirt and germs were transferred to areas where babies might be crawling or putting items from the floor in their mouth. The practice supported children's health and wellbeing. Children could independently access the toilet facilities within the accommodation, which were clean and well organised. Nappy changing was not observed during the inspection. The childminder was able to confidently explain their effective and safe nappy changing procedures. Children knew to respect the privacy of their play mates during this routine. One told us, "it's a private thing." The childminder frequently washed their hands at appropriate times throughout our visit and supported children to wash their own hands to prevent the spread of infection.

The childminder had effective systems in place to record details of any accidents or incidents involving children with their parents, so that they could support their ongoing care and wellbeing. The childminder had registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). This meant they could use technology to support their childminding service, whilst ensuring they respected families' confidentiality when storing or sharing information. For example the childminder used a family app to share information about children with parents, including photographs. This helped to keep children safe.

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.

Throughout the inspection process the childminder demonstrated a motivated, enthusiastic approach to continuous improvement. The childminder was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and referred to some of their templates to record core information about their service. SCMA is a national umbrella organisation whose main aim is to promote childminding as a quality childcare service. Information about how the service was regulated was displayed for families to see in the entrance vestibule.

It was clear from parent responses to our survey that they were very happy with the overall quality of the service and transparent communication from the childminder, which ensured there was continuity in their

children's care. Parents also believed their family were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. Their comments included, "Kirsty is continually seeking feedback and adapting the environment to suit the children she has and their needs at that time" and "Frequent feedback forms are provided for Kirsty in which she asks for our opinion and we are able to suggest ways to develop. I also feel her relationship with myself and the parents is strong enough that we could suggest anything at any time without being asked."

We were impressed that the childminder had participated in training on the voice of the child, to develop their practice in consulting with very young children and respecting their views. Subsequently the childminder had distributed questionnaires to parents to gauge their opinions on how this approach was taken forward to make improvements to children's experiences. The childminder displayed the 'Infant Pledge' on their family noticeboard to highlight their commitment to upholding children's rights and taking account of their perspective. 'Voice of the Infant Best Practice Guideline's and 'Infant Pledge' were produced by Scottish Government to support infants to be active participants in the services they use. The Guidelines offer suggestions about how practitioners can interpret infants' feelings, ideas and preferences through their body language and vocalisations.

The childminder had high aspirations for quality which was evident in their robust record keeping and self-evaluation of practice, underpinned by national policy and good practice guidance. For example, they had begun to use 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare' (Care Inspectorate, February 2022) to aid self evaluation. We encouraged the childminder to continue to embed self evaluation, involving parents and, where appropriate, children within the process. This will contribute to families feeling respected and included in the development of the service. Self-evaluation enables services to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children and families' particular needs and choices.

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: Childminder skills, knowledge, and values.

The childminder was warm, kind and caring toward children, which resulted in them feeling content and loved within the setting. They had created a nurturing inclusive ethos where children's needs were supported and their interests respected. It was evident from our observations of the childminder, and confirmed by parent feedback, that the childminder had built strong relationships with children and families. Parents' comments about the childminder's professional qualities included, "My child has developed in a huge way at childminding since day one. She is fully supported physically, educationally & emotionally. I am always content that my child is safe, happy and prioritised whenever she is there" and "She is warm, compassionate, kind and very capable. She is enthusiastic about what she does and that comes across. (Our child) thrives in Kirsty's care and often talks about her or experiences he's had there at home. He loves looking at photos from Kirsty's and telling us about his learning. He has enjoyed many cuddles while reading books and I know he feels very loved by Kirsty".

The childminder was committed and extremely passionate about their role and was proactive in seeking out training, which would support positive outcomes for children. Apart from core training such as advanced child protection, infection control and paediatric first aid, more focussed topics had included the voice of the child. The childminder participated in an online childminders' forum and also engaged in professional reading, which deepened their understanding of national developments and theories that underpin children's play, learning and development. As a result, the childminder was knowledgeable about aspects of

their service that could be further developed. We encouraged the childminder to formally record their reflections on the impact of their learning on outcomes for children, as well as the overall development of their service. This would help them to formulate an improvement plan for their service, and to identify additional professional development they might need to fulfil their improvement priorities. The childminder agreed to give this consideration.

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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