

Little Treasures Child Minding

Isle of Lewis

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
24 June 2024

Service provided by:
Liza MacSween

Service provider number:
SP2023000048

Service no:
CS2023000063

About the service

Little Treasures childminding service operates from the the childminder's home on the Isle of Lewis. The service is not far from town and is close to a local school, nursery and beaches. When working with an assistant the childminder is registered to provide care to a maximum of ten children at any one time up to 16 years of age, of whom, no more than ten are under 12 years, of whom, no more than seven are not yet attending school and of whom, no more than two are under 12 months. Numbers include the childminder's family. Children have access to a designated playroom, living room, kitchen, toilet and secure rear garden area.

About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place on 19 June 2024 between 14:00 and 17:00. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration. This was the service's first inspection since registering in March 2023. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with five children using the service and two parents
- received electronic feedback from 13 people whose children attend the service
- spoke with one of the childminder's assistants
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were settled, happy and having fun in the childminder's care.
- Children's needs were being met as the childminder was attuned to their individual likes, preferences and stages of development.
- Play and learning experiences were well planned to meet children's needs, wishes and choices.
- The childminder was extremely committed, well informed and kept up to date with good practice guidance to enhance their practice.

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?	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?

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 attending the service experienced warm, caring, and nurturing support from the childminder and their assistant. Nine children were present on the day of inspection, it was clear they had formed positive relationships with the childminder, who provided cuddles, praise, and comfort at appropriate times. This helped children feel loved and secure in the setting.

Prior to starting the service children and families could visit the service and share information with the childminder about their children's individual needs, routines, likes and dislikes. The childminder used this information as a foundation to children's personal plans. During our inspection a baby was visiting the service. We observed information being shared between the child's parent, the childminder and the assistant. The childminder and assistant provided reassurance to the parent whilst arranging another visit prior to the child starting formally. These interactions promoted the start of trusting relationships and showed how the childminder valued and respected parents as primary carers.

The childminder used SHANNARI wellbeing indicators when identifying and planning to meet children's individual needs. Children's individual learning journeys were recorded in online learning journals which parents had secure access to and which they could add to and share information. The childminder recognised and was sensitive to the different stages of development children were at and planned activities, outings and experiences to support this. Personal plans were organised, up to date and reviewed with families. This ensured children's current health, wellbeing and developmental needs were supported effectively by the childminder. Parents who provided feedback were very positive about how they had been involved in their child's personal plan and how the childminder used them to meet their needs and report progress. Some of their comments included:

"The care plan is reviewed regularly and I can see it was updated throughout the year. We discussed her care informally too, at drop-off and pick-up, and through sharing updates and observations on the Family app, I am kept informed every day of what my child has been learning."

"The childminder is always on top of sending us our child's personal plan and keeping it updated. She keeps us very well informed at pick up and on her Family app how our child is doing."

"The childminder regularly updates her care plans and informs us of how my child is developing. She works with us to help develop a better diet for my child and helped us with dealing with big emotions."

To further improve, the childminder should ensure that personal plans are developed and maintained for older children who attend the service after school.

The childminder planned and provided nutritious snacks and drinks for the children. Parents provided lunches. We observed children at snack time. Snack time was a fun sociable experience for the children. Children sat around a small table in the kitchen, they had their own placemats which they helped to design with their names on. This helped to introduce print to the children who were confident in recognising their own names.

Safe and appropriate procedures were in place to ensure that children who required medication received it. The childminder followed best practice guidance around seeking consent, instructions, storage and administration of medication.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were having fun with the childminder and their assistant. There were a range of age appropriate toys available in the living room which included puzzles, books and dressing up clothes. A range of books and other resources were available in the small playroom. We observed both the childminder and her assistant responding to children as they played. Children were confident in choosing resources and telling the childminder what they wanted to do. An example of this was when children asked for music to be put on and all of the children and the childminding assistant participated in a music and movement activity.

Children had online learning journals which included possible next steps in their learning. It also captured achievements, pictures of outings and activities they had taken part in. We sampled some of the children's learning journals on the service's App. We noted that records provided parents with a very good representation of the types of activities, experiences and outings their children participated in at the childminders.

Children benefitted from learning outdoors in the well resourced rear garden area and in their local community. The childminder had recently purchased a van which enabled her and her assistant to transport the children to places further afield such as beaches, parks and soft play areas. On the day of our inspection children had spent the morning on the beach at a corncrake and machair festival, they were very excited to tell us about the time they spent on the beach where they had been learning about corncrakes and making the noises they make using musical instruments.

The childminder consulted and involved children and parents in their learning. Children reflected on the experiences they had been involved in and their learning which was recorded in a big book. During our inspection children enjoyed looking through the big book with the inspector and telling us about their experiences. Recently the childminder had visited the dentist with the children and had the dental team visit her home to promote good oral health with the children. The childminder told us that this was as a result of a parent suggestion. This was confirmed by a parent who provided feedback who told us; "I suggested a topic on toothbrushing as my son became interested in teeth. Straight away the childminder took this on board and taught the children the importance of teeth brushing through a huge variety of games, role play and engaging ways. She arranged for professionals to come speak to the children in her home and arranged for a visit to the dentist. This is one example of how the childminder listens to parents and gives 110% in delivery focused play and learning."

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

Children were cared for in an environment that was welcoming, clean and homely. The space was safe and set up to meet the needs of the children attending. Children had space to play together, relax on a sofa or have time to themselves if they wished. Children had access to a large living room, kitchen, toilet and small playroom.

Arrangements for safe sleeping were in place. Young children slept in travel cots and were closely monitored by the childminder or her assistant every ten minutes. The childminder provided bedding for travel cots which were washed daily. This helped to keep children safe and minimise the spread of infection.

Children's personal care, such as nappy changing and toileting was dealt with sensitively and respectfully. Children used the toilet or had their nappies changed in privacy. The childminder had all the necessary resources to minimise and reduce the spread of infection during nappy changing. Both the childminder and the children washed their hands prior to eating and after personal care. This helped to reduce the risk of infection.

Children were able to make choices and select from a range of toys and resources, which were suitable to their age and stage of development. The room had been organised to ensure children could independently access equipment stored on shelves and baskets. The childminder could improve learning experiences for children indoors by providing more natural, open-ended materials and loose parts in order to stimulate children's curiosity and extend their play.

The childminder made very good use of the local environment to engage children's learning. Children benefitted from regular outings and outdoor play. Some parents who provided feedback told us:

"Lots of outdoors play and experiences, picnics, sports day, walks, fun days, walks to the beach, days out at various playparks, using climbing equipment. Fun in the garden experimenting with wind, water, mud etc."

"They play out in the garden a lot and my child loves it. They also do a lot of outings to beaches and places which is amazing as my child loves being outdoors."

The childminder was aware of their responsibility for keeping children in their care safe. Risk assessments were in place for the home, outings and accessing the community. Appropriate and valid car and public liability insurance had been purchased in order to protect the childminder, her assistants and the children and families using the service.

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 improvements are well led

The childminder knew children and their families well and had positive relationships with them which supported them to get it right for every child. The childminder valued the opinions of those using the service and sought their views regularly. For example, face to face discussions, through formal questionnaires and suggestion board and boxes in the entrance hallway. Parents who provided feedback strongly agreed that they felt involved and consulted in the service. Some of their comments included:

"The childminder had a suggestion box for any parent to use should they need to and also I feel personally I could approach if need be."

"We were asked recently to provide feedback on little treasures service, what was good and what could be improved on and we wrote those on stars and shooting stars."

"The childminder often asks for parent's feedback. Something recently she did was to ask parents for two things they do well and one they could do better. We wrote these on stars and it is displayed at the entrance for all parents to feel involved."

In order to evaluate and monitor the quality of the service the childminder had developed an improvement plan which documented success in the service and areas where improvements were required. The childminder had used the Care Inspectorate self evaluation toolkit to support her in this task. Reflecting on practice and seeking opinions from children and families led to an ethos of continuous improvement and positive outcomes for children.

The childminder was a member of SCMA (The Scottish Childminding Association) and a regular visitor to the Care Inspectorate website and HUB. Engaging in training and webinars through these organisations helped to keep them up to date with developments in the sector and ensure their practice remained in line with current legislation and good practice guidance.

The childminder had developed a range of policies and procedures that were shared with parents ensuring that they knew what to expect from the service. The childminder should continue to review these regularly and amend in line with any changes in good practice guidance and frameworks as they materialise. We asked the childminder to develop and share with parents and carers a safe sleeping policy. Although we observed safe practice during sleep times a written policy would inform parents of procedures and expectations. The childminder actioned this request and provided the Care Inspectorate with a copy prior to sharing with parents.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The childminder employed two assistants to support them to deliver the service. Although family members, the childminder had developed a recruitment policy, job description and induction for assistants. This meant that assistants were clear about their roles and responsibilities, and of the childminder's expectations.

One assistant worked on a full time basis and worked with the childminder and children every day. The other was registered as an assistant to support in the case of illness or absence. The second assistant had a full time job and had little engagement with the children.

We observed interactions between the full time assistant and the children. It was clear that they knew children very well and that children felt comfortable and secure in their care. Children were having fun with the assistant. Parent's who provided feedback were very positive about the fulltime assistant, some of their comments included:

"The assistant is fantastic. She is always a pleasure to talk to and my child has a good bond with her. She is always talkative and involved in all activities with the kids, a great asset to little treasures."

"The assistant is very loving, encouraging and fun. She is kind and works very well with the childminder to make the service run smoothly."

"The assistant provides amazing support to the childminder and goes above and beyond."

The assistant was aware of her responsibilities to support the childminder to care for the children. In order to ensure that she was a competent support she had engaged in core training such as first aid and child protection. Ensuring their knowledge and understanding of these topics helped to keep children safe and well.

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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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