

Nicola's Childminding Service

Child Minding

Ayr

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 July 2024

Service provided by:
Nicola McPike

Service provider number:
SP2020991359

Service no:
CS2020381045

About the service

Nicola's Childminding provides a childminding service from their property in the town of Coylton, South Ayrshire. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children up to 16 years of age. An assistant has been employed within the service. At the time of the inspection there were five children present, of whom three were minded.

The service is close to local primary schools, shops, parks and other amenities. The children are cared for in the lounge, dining area and dedicated playroom. Children also have access to a downstairs toilet and an enclosed rear garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 2 July 2024 between 10:45 and 13:15. 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:

- spoke with the childminder and their assistant
- gained feedback from seven parent/carers through Microsoft Form Questionnaires
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Warm nurturing interactions between the children, childminder and assistant enabled children to feel safe and secure.
- Children were happy and settled in an environment that was clean, warm and bright.
- Children were having fun as they explored indoors and outdoors.
- Children were developing their language through a range of activities.
- Children were building connections in their local community through regular visits to local parks and walks in the local area.
- To enhance positive outcomes for children the childminder and assistant should continue with plans to access further training.

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.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

The childminder and their assistant displayed warm, nurturing interactions with children. They offered appropriate reassurance, and the children sought comfort from them. This enabled children to feel safe and secure.

The childminder worked in partnership with parents to gather information and follow home based routines. This supported continuity of care and familiarity for children. Communication with parents throughout the day helped them feel reassured and involved in their children's experiences. Parents told us "Nicola gives daily updates on the children's time with her."

The childminder and assistant were responsive to children. They spent time interacting and conversing with children. They listened to and responded sensitively to children's ideas, making them feel valued and respected.

The childminder knew children well. They knew about their individual care and health needs and how to support them. This was supported by information contained within personal plans, created in consultation with parents. We asked the childminder to ensure plans were dated to show the information within them was relevant and up to date. This would ensure that plans contained information to support children's individual needs.

Children sat at the table to eat lunch. This was supported by the childminder and assistant who sat with the children and engaged in conversation. This supported a calm, sociable experience which met children's needs. Younger children were supported to join in through gestures and sounds.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children were having fun and they could access a variety of toys that interested them. For example, children enjoyed playing with cars indoors and accessing large play equipment such as the chute outdoors. As a result, children were engaged in play.

There were some opportunities to support children in developing their creativity, curiosity, and imagination. For example, children were pretending to make toast in the play kitchen. This could be further enhanced by introducing more natural resources and loose part play experiences. Loose parts are materials that can be moved, redesigned, and used in multiple ways. This would further support children's curiosity, imagination, and creativity in play experiences. We signposted the childminder to The Loose Parts Toolkit on the Care Inspectorate's Hub to extend and explore further opportunities.

The childminder and assistant supported children's language development through conversations and role-modelling. Children also engaged in fun activities to support literacy and numeracy, such as stories, discussing colours and shapes, and technology experiences. As a result, children were developing their skills in language, literacy and numeracy.

Children had opportunities to lead their play, and the childminder supported them as they explored toys and materials. For example, children accessed a range of books, and the childminder supported them by exploring the book with them. This enabled the children to increase their knowledge as they explored items of interest.

Children's learning and achievements were shared with parents through a private social media page. This allowed parents to see what their children had been doing and continue the learning at home.

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder's home was warm and welcoming with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Children had space to play and relax which supported their overall wellbeing.

The layout of the childminder's home was well considered to reflect children's needs. Children could choose to play or rest when needed. They could move freely between the house and garden with appropriate supervision which ensured their safety.

The environment was clean and toys and games were stored so that children could access them independently. Children were kept safe while accessing the service - the childminder kept a log of children attending daily and ensured they were accounted for at all times. Regular cleaning and checking of resources ensured these were safe for children.

Some infection prevention and control procedures were in place to support children's wellbeing. Children were encouraged to wash their hands, at important times, such as before eating, and the use of disposable towels to dry their hands helped reduced the spread of infection. We suggested that children's soothers and bottles are covered and stored away when not in use. This would help keep children safe.

The childminder was aware of the importance of confidentiality, and children's personal information was stored securely. This enabled them to have good access to the information they needed without compromising data protection, privacy, and dignity of children.

Children were able to build connections with the local community and local resources to extend their play, learning, and life experiences. They regularly visited local parks and took part in nature walks within the local community. Parents told us: "Nicola often takes the children on outings to play parks etc."

The childminder identified and removed risks for children. For example, they removed toys from the floor to prevent children from tripping. Risk assessments supported the childminder to identify risks and put mitigations in place to keep children safe.

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.

3.1 Quality Assurance and improvements are led well

The childminder shared their aims and objectives with parents when they started at the service. This meant families knew what to expect.

The childminder built positive relationships with children, parents, and carers. Ongoing consultations with parents and children supported the childminder to make improvements within the service. Parents told us: "Nicola asks if there is any changes or amendments she can make to suit the needs of the children." The childminder consulted with parents to plan improvements, for example through annual feedback and by seeking their views about settling in procedures. We discussed with the service how they could make these consultations more focused to gain specific feedback. This would enable them to highlight particular areas for improvement and provide better outcomes for children. To support this, we signposted the service to the Care Inspectorate's guidance document 'Self Evaluation for improvement-your guide'.

Observations of children and regular consultations between the childminder and their assistant enabled them to support children's learning and development. For example, the children had shown an interest in an interactive book a child had brought in from home. This led to the childminder purchasing more of these books for the children to use within the service. This supported children in engaging in experiences relating to their interests.

The childminder and their assistant worked together to review the learning environment for children. They had recently discussed and reviewed how they could support children to self-select toys and materials. They had since purchased a storage unit that allowed children to select their own resources. This supported children to lead their own learning.

The childminder was proactive in evaluating and assessing risks within the environment. For example, they had identified that using the downstairs toilet to change children better met children's needs. This helped keep children safe.

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.

4.3 Staff Deployment

Children benefitted from a childminder and assistant who worked well together and promoted a culture of respect. They supported each other and communicated well to ensure the safety and supervision of children. For example, when leaving the room or preparing lunch. They were committed to providing the best possible service for children and families. Parents told us "They are a good team and work well together."

The childminder had engaged in relevant training to support them in their role. They had kept a log of this and reflected on what impact this would have on practice. This enabled them to provide better outcomes for children.

The childminder and assistant met regularly to reflect on and review their practice and the childminder role modelled good practice. Further access to training would strengthen children's experiences and improve outcomes.

Children's routines and the childminder's home and garden were carefully considered to support children's needs. The childminder and their assistant ensured they were available to support children for example, when using the garden. This enabled children to choose where they wanted to play, keeping them safe.

The childminder and their assistant promoted continuity of care across the day and ensured positive transitions and effective communication with families. Parents were invited into the childminder's home when picking up their children. This provided opportunities to pass on important information about the child's day, and parents could see where their children played. Parents told us "Nicola is happy for all parents to enter their home and show where the children play, eat and interact."

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 support the service to consistently deliver safe, high-quality care and support, the childminder should develop effective quality assurance processes.

These should include but are not limited to regular and effective consultation with parents and children. reflection of practice, self-evaluation, audits and reviews of risk assessments.

This is to ensure that management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 28 June 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had consulted with parents through questionnaires and gained feedback on the service. This had enabled them to highlight areas for improvement and provide better outcomes for children. The childminder had updated risk assessments to reflect current risks within the service and had added appropriate review dates to these to ensure they were kept up to date and reviewed regularly.

Regular ongoing consultations between the childminder and their assistant enabled them to ensure they were meeting children's individual needs and interests as they shared their observations with each other and enhanced learning for children.

Children could choose where they wanted to play and with what they wanted to play with, and the childminder and their assistant respected their ideas, opinions and interests through consultations.

Therefore, 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
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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