

Wildones Child Minding

Fort William

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 July 2024

Service provided by:
Lisa Headley

Service provider number:
SP2022000212

Service no:
CS2022000318

About the service

The childminder provides a service from their property in the small community of Blaich around 15 miles from the town of Fort William in Highland. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children up to 16 years of age:

- of whom no more than six are 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 include the children of the childminder's family/household.

Minded children can only be cared for by persons named on the certificate.

No overnight care will be provided.

Childminding takes place within the childminder's home as well as areas within the local community including woodlands and playparks. Children have access to a dedicated play space adjacent to the kitchen as well as access to the living room, kitchen and toilet facilities. Children can access an enclosed decked outdoor space from the living room. There is also close access to natural outdoor spaces within the local community.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 22 July 2024 between 12:30 and 14:15. 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 one child using the service;
- reviewed online questionnaire feedback from four families;
- spoke with the childminder;
- observed practice and children's experiences; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder provided a warm and welcoming service, helping children feel loved, safe and secure.
- Skilled interactions from the childminder supported children's learning and development.
- There were a range of high quality opportunities for children to play and have fun with language through songs, stories and rhymes.
- The childminder demonstrated a very good understanding of child development, relevant theory and practice and used this to support planning for high quality experiences for children.
- Children's play experiences were enhanced by regular visits to the local community.
- The childminder was reflective and responsive to the changing needs of their service to ensure that children experienced high quality care and support.
- All families commented positively on their experience of using the service.
- The childminder's commitment to their own professional learning was improving 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

The child attending the service was happy, settled and relaxed in the care of the childminder. Their needs were met through nurturing and responsive interactions, which helped them feel loved, safe and secure. When support was required with personal care, interactions throughout were warm and caring and nurtured children's security, confidence and independence. Parents told us: "My son has been with Lisa for over a year now and we haven't had one issue or concern. He's always very happy to go and says he misses her when he has his days off." and "...he loves going to Lisa's to see her, her boys and her other mindees who he has formed friendships with."

Personal plans were in place for all children and contained important information that supported meeting children's needs. For example, details about their care and health needs as well as likes and dislikes. The childminder spoke with parents regularly about the individual needs of children. This approach supported effective communication and consistency of care for children. All families who responded to our survey strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: 'I am fully involved in my child's care, including developing and reviewing their personal plan'. As a result, children received the care that was right for them and tailored to their individual needs.

Lunchtime was unhurried and relaxed, which ensured a caring and positive experience for the minded child. The childminder recognised that mealtimes were a rich opportunity to promote close attachments and develop language and used this time to sit with the child and support nurturing conversations together. Although families provided all meals and snacks, the childminder shared examples of times where children supported the preparation of snacks and were involved in baking and cooking activities. As a result, children were given opportunities to develop their independence and skills for life.

We reviewed procedures and paperwork in place for the safe administration and management of medication. We were satisfied that effective procedures were in place, to help ensure children's health needs could be met.

The childminder understood the importance of sleep for children's overall development. They consulted with families to ensure sleep routines were reflective of individual children's needs and family wishes. Whilst no children experienced a sleep during the inspection, sleeping mats and individual bedding were available for children to help promote a safe sleep environment with comfort and warmth. The childminder was aware of strategies to promote safer sleeping routines for babies and young children. This promoted children's safety and emotional security.

The approach to transitions within the service placed the children and their family at the heart of any decision-making. The childminder worked closely with families to ensure that each child settled into the service at their own pace and worked proactively to remove barriers to facilitate attendance for some children. For children transitioning out of their service, the childminder had developed good connections with receiving services to ensure continuity and consistency in care at this time of change. This supported children's overall security and well-being.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The minded child was meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning through a balance of spontaneous and planned high quality experiences which promoted their choice and independence. They were able to choose from a selection of toys and play equipment, that met their stage of development and interests. For example, they had access to various resources to support their curiosity and problem solving skills. These included construction materials, small world toys, books of interest and invitations to play related to an interest in ladybirds. Families who responded to our survey stated that their child was always or very often supported through interesting and fun play experiences. One parent commented: "Lisa is great at organising activities catered to our child and other mindee's interests - e.g. taking our child to see the steam train! She also sets up play areas with educational, seasonal activities, and if our child mentions a specific animal she sets up an "invitation to play" all related to that animal. This is very thoughtful of her." These experiences supported children to feel valued and have their wishes and choices respected.

Skilled interactions from the childminder supported children's learning and development. For example, the childminder scaffolded learning sensitively for the minded child by modelling and repeating new words during the lunchtime routine and during play experiences. As well as this, the childminder carefully introduced concepts of number by counting out objects during play experiences and encouraging the child to notice and recognise numbers in their environment as they played. One parent commented: "My son has come on brilliantly since being with Lisa, he teaches me songs and words he's learnt. He's made friends and gotten to do things he hasn't done before." These opportunities supported children to develop key skills in language, literacy and numeracy.

There were a range of high quality opportunities for children to play and have fun with language through songs, stories and rhymes. For example, the childminder sang and recited songs and rhymes linked to the visual representation of numbers using props and sensory objects. Children had also created their own storybooks using photographs of real life experiences which they were able to take home and share with families. These well considered creative approaches successfully engaged children's imagination and enriched their play and learning.

Children benefited from effective planning that considered their interests, allowing them to feel valued. The childminder demonstrated a very good understanding of child development, relevant theory and practice and used this to support planning for high quality experiences for children. For example, the childminder used best practice guidance 'Realising the Ambition' to frame and record observations of children's learning and development. These learning updates were regularly reviewed and next steps set in consultation with families. Parents commented: "Lisa is a very thoughtful, kind and hardworking childminder. We have seen remarkable development in our child while he has been with Lisa, and we are totally confident that he's happy, safe and stimulated while he's with her." and "Lisa is always enthusiastic to see our son, and I feel plans fun and exciting activities that are age-appropriate for when he's in her care." This demonstrated families were valued and respected as partners in their children's learning.

Children's play experiences were enhanced by regular visits to the local community. They took part in regular walks within Blaich and nearby Fort William, visiting local parks and the woods which gave children opportunities to play in natural outdoor environments. Trips to areas of interest such as Glen Nevis, a local sensory room, the Fire Station, Nevis Range and a community café, extended children's knowledge and understanding of their local area and sense of place. Strong links to other local childminders also helped to facilitate shared learning experiences and provided occasions to promote children's social skills and develop their confidence.

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 benefited from a homely environment that was well furnished, comfortable and offered plenty of natural light and ventilation. The play and learning spaces were well organised and children benefited from having easy access to resources in the dedicated play space adjacent to the kitchen as well as outdoors. This enabled children to lead their play and learning and gave a strong message that they mattered. The indoor area also had a cosy space for younger children to relax, feel content, cosy and happy which promoted a strong sense of care and wellbeing.

Children benefited from a wide range of resources that reflected their curiosities and interests. These were easily accessible and included transport toys, small world play, books and role play resources. One parent commented: "Lisa often has themes set up in her house, for example Easter, spring, insects, for the kids to play and learn about different things. They spend a lot of time outside exploring and learning about the outdoors." This supported children's choice and overall sense of wellbeing. In the outdoor space, children could access a range of resources including loose parts such as sticks, tyres and stones which they could use to develop imaginative and creative play experiences. There were areas to climb, slide and explore which supported children's physical development and overall wellbeing. Regular access to nearby natural outdoors spaces also provided opportunities for children to connect to their local community and develop a sense of place.

The property was well maintained indoors and outdoors. Risk assessment strategies were implemented to ensure that children's safety was promoted and potential risks were minimised.

The service was clean with appropriate infection control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children. We observed the minded child being supported to understand the need for good hygiene and hand washing at necessary times. This ensured children experienced care in an environment which was safe and clean.

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

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 and questionnaires. One parent commented: "Lisa always welcomes feedback and suggestions. Very easy to communicate with." This helped the childminder to reflect on the needs of the children and make changes to support them. Policies and procedures were in place to keep children safe and support their health and wellbeing. These were shared with families prior to starting at the setting and were regularly reviewed.

The childminder provided opportunities for meaningful communication with families. Children's play experiences and achievements and other important information was shared with parents through a variety of methods. These included through an individualised and group messaging app as well as through face to face discussions. This helped the childminder to maintain clear and effective communication which supported families to feel valued and respected.

The childminder was motivated to provide a service that met the needs of children and families well. The childminder was reflective and responsive to the changing needs of their service to ensure that children experienced high quality care and support. For example, the childminder had adapted and changed the information sharing around snack with families in response to their preferences. As well as this, the childminder used best practice guidance from the Care Inspectorate hub as well as key documents such as Realising the Ambitions to inform practice and make improvements to children's play and learning experiences. We signposted 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare' to further support the service to identify strengths and any areas for development and promote continuous improvement.

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: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The minded child experienced warmth, kindness and compassion in the responsive interactions we observed with the childminder. By using skilled questioning and interacting in a sensitive and stimulating way, children's curiosity, independence and confidence was promoted. Reviewing observations of children's learning and development showed that the service provided individualised support by effectively engaging with children whilst taking account their views and experiences. This demonstrated an aspirational outlook and enabling attitude which supported children to achieve their potential.

The childminder recognised the importance of maintaining their skills and knowledge in keeping children safe and protected. They had attended training in food hygiene as well as practical paediatric first aid. The childminder had very good knowledge of child protection procedures and understood the appropriate steps to take if they had a child protection concern. This ensured children's safety and wellbeing.

The childminder understood what children needed to help them grow and develop and made very good use of professional learning opportunities to enhance outcome for children. In addition to core training, the childminder was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association and had accessed resources and completed training opportunities provided through their membership. The childminder is a member of "Hygge in the Early Years". They have completed previous mini courses related to this and are working on a year long course called "Re-wilding my wanderlust". The childminder could talk confidently about the positive impact this had made to their practice and on children's experiences, particularly through enhancing and developing children's experiences outdoors. The childminder used knowledge gained from these professional learning opportunities to reflect on practice and improve experiences for children and their families.

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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