

Barron, Joanne Child Minding

Kirkcudbright

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 July 2024

Service provided by:
Joanne Barron

Service provider number:
SP2003905796

Service no:
CS2003011697

About the service

Joanne Barron provides a childminding service from her home in Kirkcudbright, Dumfries and Galloway. The service is close to local schools, nurseries, shops, parks, the library and other amenities. Children are cared for in the living/dining room, kitchen and have access to the downstairs WC. Children do not access the childminder's back garden.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family/household.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 3 July 2024. We gave feedback to the service on 4 July 2024. 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, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed and spoke with three children using the service
- sent out a family questionnaire and received seven responses
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder was committed to supporting children to learn through play.
- Children were at the heart of the service and were cared for by a childminder who knew them and their families well.
- Children's health and wellbeing needs were met well.
- Children were cared for in a loving, nurturing and respectful environment.
- The childminder enabled children to lead their own play based on their interests.

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 children's outcomes and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children attending the service were happy and relaxed in the care of the childminder. Their needs were met through warm and nurturing interactions. The childminder responded to children sensitively, providing reassurance and cuddles when they needed them. This meant children felt loved, safe and secure.

The childminder knew children well, including their needs and preferences. She provided gentle encouragement and praised their successes. This provided reassurance and ensured children were supported in the service. One child told us "I like going to Joanne's because it's a very friendly environment, Joanne always makes sure that we are happy, fed and safe."

Personal plans included information to support children's health and wellbeing and interests. The childminder worked with parents to support children's routines. To meet children's needs, the childminder should now include information which shows how their ongoing development is being supported.

Mealtimes were calm and relaxed. The childminder recognised the importance of supervising snack and mealtimes. She sat with children and spoke to them as they ate. She modelled healthy eating and encouraged them to taste new foods. The childminder cooked fresh meals that the children enjoyed tasting. Children's independence was supported as they were encouraged to use cutlery. This ensured children were safe and promoted their health.

The childminder had a friendly and open approach with children and families which supported the development of trusting relationships. As a result, effective communication kept parents informed. Conversations when children were dropped off or collected meant there were opportunities for informal chats about each child's day. This meant families were included in children's experiences and care. One parent told us, "We have a very good relationship with Joanne, she is very open and friendly and always takes a lot of time to keep us updated on what the children have been doing."

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children benefited from being involved in leading their play. Younger children had fun as they manipulated magnets and created models with sticks. The childminder joined in to support them, providing vocabulary, and helping them to create patterns. As a result, children were happy and learning from their play experiences.

Children were encouraged to share their thoughts and interests, and the childminder supported these well. For example, one child had an interest in motorbikes, and she discussed parts of the bike and riding habits. Developing an understanding of motorbikes stimulated other children to be interested, and as a result, all children in the service learned about bike safety.

Children were able to explore a range of toys and activities which encouraged their learning. Children could choose from a good selection of resources which supported their interests. The childminder should continue to extend the range of open-ended resources. These would encourage children to be curious and creative and would provide challenge.

The childminder demonstrated a good understanding of child development. She supported literacy and numeracy as she played with children. Because she knew them well, she was responsive to them, including to their nonverbal communication. This meant children were developing and making progress.

Children's play experiences were enhanced from opportunities within their community. They enjoyed going to the local parks, play areas and museum. As a result, children were developing skills, forming new relationships, and developing confidence.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in an environment that was homely and welcoming. Children had comfortable places to play, relax and sleep and the home was bright and well-maintained. Areas used for childminding were spacious and provided enough space for children to play. As a result, children were settled and were given the message that they mattered. One parent told us; "Joanne always invites us into the house and makes time to chat."

Children benefited from a well-considered indoor environment. Children were supported by a range of developmentally appropriate resources and experiences. Storage had been reviewed and offered older children some choice and independence. Natural resources had been extended to encourage children's imagination. The childminder should continue to extend open ended resources to develop curiosity and challenge children's thinking. We highlighted best practice guidance to support this such as the Play Scotland Loose Parts Play toolkit.

Experiences outdoors supported children to be healthy, active and to develop confidence. They had daily opportunities to play in local parks and woodland. Children did not have access to the childminder's garden, as it was not a suitable space. One parent told us: "There is a big range of toys to play with that encourage the kids to use their imagination. Also outdoor play at the park to encourage the kids to get out and move about."

Information about children was kept securely. Sensitive information was only shared with those who needed it to meet children's needs. As a result, children's information was protected, and storage complied with relevant best practice.

Infection prevention and control procedures supported children's wellbeing. The childminder had developed an infection control policy and had reviewed nappy changing procedures. Children were supported to wash their hands at key times and effective cleaning procedures were in place. As a result, infection risks were minimised.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Self-evaluation had helped the childminder to reflect on the service and identify areas to improve. Improvement planning was helping to shape progress which included providing new resources. Developing consistent approaches to quality assurance and improvement planning would help desired outcomes to be achieved to enhance outcomes for children. We saw that improvement work had been successfully undertaken since the previous inspection visit.

Policies, procedures and risk assessments supported children's wellbeing. The childminder had reviewed and updated existing policies and had developed record keeping processes for medication. To ensure children's continued safety, the childminder should ensure that risk assessments are reviewed regularly and updated as circumstances change.

Children were encouraged to share their thoughts and views. The childminder was developing approaches to evidence parents' feedback. Collecting their views regularly would help to plan improvements and support parents to feel valued and included. However, one parent told us; "We are asked our opinion on anything that can be done better or differently to support our children."

The childminder was aware that best practice could be used to develop the service and had begun to familiarise herself with some of these. To support further improvements in the service, we suggested the childminder extends the use of the Care Inspectorate guidance A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged children and Realising the ambition: Being Me.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder was kind and caring which ensured children felt valued and loved. She recognised the importance of strong attachments, was nurturing in her approach and understood children's needs. She had formed strong and trusting relationships with children and parents, giving them confidence and security in the care she provided. One parent told us, "Weather dependent, they walk from nursery to Joanne's house and I am sure they have some fun on the way!"

The childminder had a good understanding of child development and was beginning to use best practice guidance to improve her practice. She had an interest in schematic play and planned to do further research to support young children. This meant outcomes for children were enhanced by a childminder who continued to develop her knowledge and skills.

Children benefited from a childminder who promoted their confidence and recognised the importance of fun for them. The childminder used information from the Care Inspectorate to keep up-to-date with best practice. She recognised that identifying further professional learning opportunities to extend her knowledge would continue to improve experiences and outcomes for children. We signposted the childminder to best practice guidance on the Care Inspectorate Hub to further support practice.

Children were protected from harm by a childminder who understood their responsibility in relation to safeguarding. The childminder had an appropriate policy and procedure in place and was confident in recognising and responding to any concerns.

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 childminder should refresh child protection training, review and update the child protection policy to ensure it contains relevant contact details for the child protection team. This will support accurate and appropriate reporting of concerns.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 29 August 2023.

Action taken since then

Updated child protection training has been successfully completed. The certificate was available to evidence.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children's personal plans are suitable to meet children's individual needs, the childminder should ensure each child's plan includes information about the child's health, safety and wellbeing needs and their likes and dislikes. Parent/carer input should be evidenced and agreed in writing.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 29 August 2023.

Action taken since then

Personal plans had been developed.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To improve children's experiences, the childminder should reduce plastic toys and replace with more open-ended toys and activities to extend learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling" (HSCS 1.31) and "As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials" (HSCS 1.30).

This area for improvement was made on 29 August 2023.

Action taken since then

Resources for heuristic play and some loose parts play had been improved.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To support improvement to the service and ensure good outcomes for children, the childminder should at a minimum:

- review and update written policies to better reflect current practice
- improve record-keeping for medication administration
- ensure quality assurance systems, including the use of quality audit tools, are fully embedded into practice.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 29 August 2023.

Action taken since then

Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) medication records had been adopted, however no child required medicine administered during the inspection visit. Self evaluation training had been undertaken successfully. The childminder had a self evaluation document that was being used to identify improvements.

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
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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