

Lowell, Ann Child Minding

Lanark

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 September 2024

Service provided by:
Ann Lowell

Service provider number:
SP2003903879

Service no:
CS2003006581

About the service

Ann Lowell provides her childcare service from her home in the Kirkmuirhill area of South Lanarkshire. The service is close to the local school, nursery, park and library. The accommodation used by minded children is on the ground floor and consists of the living room, kitchen/diner and bathroom. The enclosed front and back gardens are also accessed by the children.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under the age of 12, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. There are currently three children attending the service on a part-time basis.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 02 September 2024. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. A team manager was also present as part of the Care Inspectorate's quality assurance processes.

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:

- gathered the views of three family members, of children using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- we observed the childminder's practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder's interactions were very caring and loving. They had formed extremely close bonds with the children and families.
- The daily experiences were planned to meet children's needs, wishes and choices.
- Self evaluation was informal. The childminder was happy with this method, as it met the needs of the service and the parents agreed.
- The childminder kept informed of good practice guidance and had good links with other childminding services.

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.

Quality Indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support

New families were welcomed into the service to meet the childminder and other minded children. Settling in visits to build positive relationships were planned around the families needs. One parent told us 'After meeting Ann I felt at home and secure in my choice for Ann to be my child's childminder.'

Each child's welcome into the service, gave them time to become familiar with their new surroundings and create positive bonds with the childminder. The childminder recognised this as a very important step for new children and their families to ensure a smooth transition.

The childminder's home created a calm and relaxed environment for children to feel safe and secure. Parents told us that they were always welcomed into the childminder's home and had formed positive relationships with them. One parent shared 'Ann is very welcoming and always keeps me up to date with photos throughout the day. This makes me feel at ease as an anxious parent.' and another shared 'Ann has always had a warm nurturing approach. It's like going to a family's house rather than a childminder's.'

The childminder had gathered meaningful information, needed to meet the children's needs. They used this to plan daily experiences around routines, such as sleep and mealtimes. The childminder gave confident accounts of the children's personal preferences, demonstrating they knew the children well and how to best to support their needs. We discussed for the childminder to include an agreed written plan, along with the daily notes on children's experiences to record how they planned to meet their needs.

The childminder had formed positive bonds with the minded child. We observed a child confidently cuddle into the childminder for comfort and reassurance, giving them a feeling of security and love. The childminder had created a nurturing and caring environment, where young children could feel safe.

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children being cared for were under three years old. Daily play and learning was planned around their needs. For the youngest children, the majority of time was planned around being in the home, providing time for them to explore how to use their bodies to develop their physical needs. For the older children, activities were planned to promote social skills, such as attending local toddler groups. Parents were happy with the play experiences offered, one parent shared 'they will take them into their garden to explore sand and water, ride on toys and will chat about flowers and bugs.'

The childminder shared with us how the children's current interests were music, books and growing plants in the garden. They shared that, through observation and speaking to the families, they kept informed of children's interests and needs. As a result, they had various touch and feel books for the children to learn how to turn pages and explore the different textures. The childminder recognised the importance of early literacy and providing quality time for children to develop their early literacy skills.

The childminder had a range of toys for children to access. Each day they selected toys and placed them around the minded area. This allowed children to move freely and self select what they wanted. To further expand the materials and toys, we discussed for them to introduce more natural, open ended materials, such as house hold items, pebbles, fabrics. Items that allow children to develop and assign their own purpose and meaning.

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.

Quality Indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder's home was well ventilated, heated and had lots of natural light. We found the childminder's home to be clean, tidy and well presented.

The areas used for childminding within the home were risk assessed. Appropriate safety measures were in place. We asked the childminder to ensure safety measures were regularly updated to reflect the age and stage of children. For example, securing kitchen drawers to keep dangerous items out of reach of children, once they can reach these.

The gardens were secure and provided space for the children to play. The rear garden was grassed and provided children with the opportunity to explore nature, looking for bugs and learn about growing plants. The front garden was mono blocked which provided space for children to use bikes and pedal cars. Parents confirmed that children were regularly outdoors, playing. The childminder had made good use of the space available to them, giving children access to fresh air and the right to play outside.

Children had lunch and snacks in the kitchen, at the table. Mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried, therefore children at a positive relationship with food. They also participated in more messy play, such as baking in the kitchen.

The childminder followed good infection control practices, to reduce the spread of infection. This included good hand hygiene and nappy changing procedures.

Children were transported by car when they visited some of the local amenities. The childminder's car was well maintained and had appropriate insurances. Giving us reassurance that appropriate safety measures were followed to ensure the car used to transport children was suitable.

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.

Quality Indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder had been minding for many years and had a good knowledge of providing a quality childminding service. To date, they had received lots of positive feedback from parents and children, giving the reassurance that they were providing a service that met their needs.

The childminder was content using informal methods to assess how well they were doing. Parents told us they were happy with their level of input and that the childminder kept them well informed about their child's care. The childminder consulted with the children and families to ensure children received the right care and support.

During discussions and reflections with the childminder about aspects within the service, we identified some areas where further development could be made. This was in relation to recording of agreed plans to support children's needs and ensuring they kept safety measures under review. The childminder agreed to reflect on our discussions and make changes where needed to further enhance the outcome for children.

To keep themselves informed about good practice guidance and current child care thinking, they accessed information online and through links with other childcare services. The childminder used this knowledge to review and develop their practice, meaning children were experiencing care that was reflective of current best practice.

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.

Quality Indicators 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder was caring, compassionate and loving towards the children and families using the service. They had created an environment where children's needs were being supported and their interests followed. The childminder knew each child very well and worked closely with parents to meet their needs and expectations. One parent shared with us that they had regular communications, which keeps both parties up to date.

When talking about children and families, the childminder did so with love, respect and kindness. All parents told us they had a strong connection with the childminder. Therefore they worked in partnership to meet children's needs.

The childminder's values and skills were embedded into the service. They reflected on their own skills, knowledge and practice. Since the last inspection, they had attended training in first aid and child protection, to ensure they were well informed of current good practice.

The wellbeing indicators and children's rights were embedded within the service. The care, play and learning provided quality care and support that was right for each child. The parents, when asked what would make the service better, made no suggestions. One parent said they do a fantastic job and ensure children have an enriched day.

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 access child protection training.

National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to age 16 - Standard 3: Health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2016.

Action taken since then

The childminder had attended child protection training since last inspection. They had a child protection policy in place. They shared they would be confident implementing this, if needed.

The childminder was aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe. **As a result, this area for improvement had been met.**

Previous area for improvement 2

The childminder should review and update her medication forms in line with best practice.

National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to age 16 - Standard 3: Health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2016.

Action taken since then

The service had updated the medication forms in place. However, they had not had to complete these, as no child had required medication. The forms reviewed would provide them with appropriate information to administer medication safely.

The childminder gave a satisfactory account of the service management of medication procedures and agreed to ensure appropriate information would be recorded, when needed.

The medication policy followed good practice guidance. **As a result, this area for improvement had been met.**

Previous area for improvement 3

The childminder should access a copy of My World Outdoors.

National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to age 16 - Standard 2: A safe environment.

This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2016.

Action taken since then

Childminder and parents confirmed that they had various physical equipment for children to use. They also shared photographs of children accessing such equipment.

The children currently using the service were under three. They continued to access physical play to support movement in the house, garden, local parks and local amenities such as soft play. **As a result, this area for improvement had been met.**

Previous area for improvement 4

The childminder should access a range of training to update her knowledge and skills.

National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to age 16 - Standard 13: Improving the service.

This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2016.

Action taken since then

The childminder had undertaken training and professional reading as requested since the last inspection. They accessed online information and had professional discussions with other childminding services.

The childminder was well informed of their roles and responsibilities as a childminder. **As a result, this area for improvement had 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	5 - Very 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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